

## EXPOSITION OF JOHN

### Message #18

### John 3:31-36

When you want information about a particular place, you typically talk with someone from that place or area. For example, if you want to gain information about traveling on a cruise, you will contact someone who has done it. Why? Because they know what they are talking about. They know how things work, they know the ins and outs, they know the truth.

I have done many funerals for people I have loved. On a few occasions I have been asked to do a funeral for someone I did not know. When I agree to do such a funeral, I always request a meeting with the family. I spend an hour or two talking with the family because they knew the person intimately. When I want true information about a family, I talk with members of that family because they can give you real insight into the truth of that person's life.

The same is true when it comes to God. If you really want true information about God, you must get that information from God or from someone who is from the Godhead family. If you want information about heaven, you must listen to someone who has come from heaven. If you want to know what it takes to get to heaven, the place where God exists, you must listen to someone who has come out of heaven to instruct us. Any information that we have which is accurate about God, must come from God Himself. God must reveal truth to us. We must keep in our minds that the purpose of John (20:31) writing John is so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God so that we might have life.

John chapter three is one of the great chapters of the Bible. In this chapter, Jesus has developed two lines of thought - 1) In order for a person to go to heaven, one must be born again ; 2) In order for a person to be born again, one must believe on Jesus Christ - particularly believe in His cross-work. The final portion of John 3 weaves many of its key themes together, but it emphasizes that this truth revealed did not come from an airplane pilot, or engineer, or doctor, or lawyer, or teacher, or factory worker or farmer, **this truth came directly from God! In the immediate context , this certainly reinforces why John must decrease and Jesus must increase.** As John 3 comes to its conclusion, the main point is this:

**WE MUST BE WILLING TO ACCEPT WHAT JESUS CHRIST SAYS ABOUT ETERNAL THINGS FOR HE ALONE HAS COME OUT OF HEAVEN TO INFORM US OF ETERNAL THINGS SO WE MAY BELIEVE AND HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.**

It is not known for sure who actually is speaking in verses 31-36. Some have said it is John the Baptist and others have said it is John the Apostle. Many scholars believe this section was written by John the Apostle, because the language and style fits him and his theology.

The important point is not who is writing, but what is written and what is written is this - if you want to know the truth about eternal things, **you had better listen to Jesus Christ who came out of eternity to inform us of eternal things.** Jesus Christ did not come to this earth for the fun of it, simply because He couldn't find anything else to do with His time, **He came to reveal . God to man. He came to provide salvation from real pending wrath .**

There are five very important thoughts:

**THOUGHT #1** – Jesus Christ came from heaven and is above all. 3:31

This verse does not just establish a heavenly purpose, but also a heavenly person. John was now very old and the new person he had traveled with was not your normal human. Notice it is stated that He is “above all.” In Greek the word “all” refers to both all things and all people. He is above all powers, all things seen and unseen. To be above all things One must be God. **Not only is Jesus above John in rank, He is above everything in rank. He has “universal sovereignty.”**

Now the adverb “from above” is one that emphasizes Christ’s Divine nature whereas the prepositional phrase “from the heaven” emphasizes Christ’s preexistence. Together these two simple statements clearly establish that Jesus Christ is God, the Heavenly Person who always existed in heaven. **Jesus Christ did not just come on the scene authorized out of heaven, He literally came out of heaven. He was not a man sent from God, He was God who came out of heaven as a man.**

Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh. He came out of the Throne of God heaven. He is above everyone and everything which is on earth. He is God coming to earth to carry out a heavenly mission, which He will completely accomplish (John 17:4).

**Now one key point of this verse is to contrast Jesus Christ, who is the only One who comes out of the heaven, with all others who are from the earth.** Every other human being who has ever existed has come out of the earth. Any other teacher who has ever taught on this earth, has come from the earth. John the Baptist, according to Jesus Christ, was the greatest man born among men (Matthew 11:11). But as great as he was, he was still an earth man. No matter how popular a person may be, that person is still an earth person. Notice this verse certainly contradicts those who say they previously existed in heaven, God’s Word clearly says they didn’t.

Now the One who comes out of heaven is “above all.” Twice this point is stressed in this verse - Jesus Christ is above all. You can literally understand this Greek phrase as meaning - Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Person, is preeminent above everything and anything. **The One who was above all came to this earth for all.** If you will believe on Him, you will be saved from all of your sins.

You had better think very seriously about what you believe about Jesus Christ and you had better take seriously the teachings of Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ says very dogmatically that He is the only way to everlasting life - this is God speaking to you (John 14:6).

**THOUGHT #2** – Jesus Christ who is from heaven testifies of true heavenly things. 3:32

Now Jesus Christ is not speaking from a theoretical perspective, but from an observable factual perspective. He is testifying of things He knows and has seen. Christ is giving exact accurate detail that to be born again you must believe in Him.

Jesus Christ is God come to teach. There were many things He taught, **but the most critical thing He taught was truth pertaining to eternal life.** If a person is to have eternal life, he must be born again and if a person is to be born again, he must believe on Jesus Christ and invite Christ into his life. If Jesus Christ says the only way to be born again is to believe on Him, we had better accept it because He specifically came out of the heaven to inform us of this.

Now I want you to notice the last part of verse 32 - "no man" receives His witness. No person, in and of himself, will choose to accept Jesus Christ and what He teaches. In fact, the vast majority will reject Him. Man is proud of himself. He does not want to view himself as a sinful beggar whose righteousness in the sight of God is nothing more than "filthy rags." He does not want to see himself as one who can offer nothing good to God. He is puffed up and arrogant and wants to save himself and be his own "god." The whole of mankind not only rejects Christ's testimony, it rejects Him. Dr. Ironside said, "The natural man, unaided by divine grace, never receives the testimony of God" (*John*, p. 128). If you ever come across a person truly seeking a relationship with God based on God's terms, you may be absolutely certain that it is the Spirit of God working in the heart of that person.

This is something every person needs to carefully think about - **the natural impulse of man is to reject the truth of God.** Especially in religious spheres. **The natural inclination is rejection.** You and I normally do not receive Jesus Christ and we do not naturally accept what He says. Our natural tendency is to move away from God's truth, not toward God's truth.

Numerically speaking so few people will actually come to faith in Jesus Christ. I don't think it was any mere coincidence that Jesus called His flock a "little flock" (Luke 12:32). John Chrysostom was in a church in Antioch, which was a city of 500,000 people, and he once said, "I don't think 1 in 100 will be saved" (William Van Doren, *Gospel of John*, p. 300).

At this point someone might ask if no one receives what Christ says, how does anyone ever come to the point where they believe on Him? Verses 33-34 give us the answer, by the work of the Holy Spirit.

**THOUGHT #3** – Those who receive Christ's teachings, will acknowledge Jesus Christ is God and what He teaches is God's truth. 3:33-34

Now notice carefully what this verse is implying - Jesus Christ is God and what He is teaching is God's truth and any person who is really right with God will acknowledge this and believe this. If a person is not willing to accept the fact that Jesus Christ is God, he is not right with God. A person may go to as many church services as he wants, he can sing hymns and give money and listen to sermonettes, but he is not right with God. Jesus Christ is God who came out of heaven and any who really receive Him and His Word will acknowledge this truth. This one will acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation.

Martin Luther said when a person truly believes in Jesus Christ, there will be no doubts that He is the only one who can save you from your sins. If you have continual doubts about Christ's ability to save you, then, Luther concluded, you have probably not been securely sealed and there is real possibility you have not been saved.

Now notice the conjunction “for” of verse 34 explains how the process works - **God the Father sent forth God the Son to speak forth the words of God and God the Son gives God the Spirit without measure to all who believe on Him. You have the entire Trinity in verse 34.**

Prior to Jesus Christ coming into this world, God’s Spirit was given by measure to any who came in contact with Him. For example prophets had a measure of God’s Spirit and so did kings. But Christ came to this earth and authorizes an “unmeasured” level of the Spirit of God to any who will believe. He presents the full truth of God and He does so in the full power of God. Any who will believe will receive a full measure of the Spirit of God so there will be no doubt about eternal life being found in Jesus Christ.

Any who truly believe on Jesus Christ will quickly acknowledge that He is God and that He is the only way to be saved.

**THOUGHT #4** – God the Father loves God the Son and has turned everything over to Him.  
3:35

See this verse and mark it in your thinking. Everything connected to God the Father has been turned over to God the Son. **If you refuse to believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son, you will never see God the Father.** Jesus Christ is God and has the full authority of God. When He says that the only way to the Father is by believing on Him, He is telling the truth. When He says whoever believes has eternal life, He is telling the truth. The package of salvation has been turned over to Him. What did He say you must do to be saved? “Believe in Him” (John 3:16, 18).

**THOUGHT #5** – The one who believes in Jesus Christ has eternal life and the one who does not is heading to the wrath of God. 3:36

**There are two classes of people on earth - those who believe in Christ to save them and those who don’t (3:18).** According to John 3:36, the one who believes “has” eternal life. It is a “now possession.” One who believes in Christ has eternal life now and forever. The present tense of the verb “has” means it is a continual possession and the indicative mood of the verb means it is a fact. This is not a may have it or the possibility of having it, it is a fact that one who believes has eternal life right now. The adjective “eternal” negates the possibility of it being temporal. If you believe on Jesus Christ, you have eternal life that will never end or cease.

A minister was approached by a woman who had doubts about her salvation and he took her to this verse and asked her to read it. When she read it, he asked her what it said. She said, “It says one who believes in the Son ‘has’ eternal life.” He asked her if she believed in Jesus Christ, and she said, “Yes.” He said, “Then do you have eternal life?” She said, “I hope so.” He had her read the text again and asked her the same questions and she kept giving the same answer. Finally he said to her, “I see your problem.” She said, “What is it?” He said, “You can’t spell.” She said, “What do you mean?” He said, “You read the word ‘h-a-s’ but you apparently spell it ‘h-o-p-e.’” With this the light went on and she left with joyful assurance that she was saved. If you believe in Jesus Christ you have eternal life right now.

However, the one who does not obey what the Son commands one to do, which is to believe on Him for salvation, has the wrath of God abiding on him. Notice, not believing in Jesus Christ is an act of disobedience. To not believe in Jesus Christ to save you is to disobey what Jesus Christ told you to do to be saved. He came out of heaven to tell us this truth. So if we refuse to obey what He tells us to do, we deserve God's wrath.

This is the only place in John where he uses the scary noun "wrath." This word speaks of a passionate anger of God because of sin, which ends in burning fire and eternal condemnation. Notice what is said here, if a person does not believe in Jesus Christ for salvation, "the wrath of God abides on him." Literally "the wrath of the God" continually remains upon him. One who rejects Christ will face the wrath of a sin-hating God.

There are millions of people who refuse to believe on Jesus Christ as Savior. They go through life thinking God loves them in their unbelief and rejection of His Son. Nothing could be more absurd. If you think for one minute that God loves someone who rejects His amazing sacrifice of His own Divine Son, your mind is theologically delusional. It is not just that they will not ever see the Kingdom of God, God's wrath is on them. God is angry at you because you won't agree to His terms and you won't accept His grace gift. His Son willingly took His wrath upon Himself and if you reject His Son, His ferocious anger is aimed straight at you. His burning fire is raging and your time is moving to the moment when you will be cast into hell. Reject Christ and you are the target of God's wrath right now. If you refuse to believe on Jesus Christ, you are under the sentence of the fiery wrath and anger of God. Jesus Christ is your whole issue of eternity. Indecision is a fatal decision. You either believe that He can give you eternal life or you don't. It is that simple. For the one who believes, He has eternal life; for the one who doesn't, he is already under the wrath of God.

Just a few days ago, it was a typical day for many in Minneapolis. They were driving their normal route on I-35 which would take them across a bridge some 50 feet above the Mississippi. In a day typically 100,000 people drove across that bridge. All driving thought they were safe. What those people didn't know that day is that the bridge would not hold them anymore. Some people were on their way home from work. Some were on their way to a Twins baseball game. Some were on their way shopping. Some were going to visit a friend. Some were on their way home from school. As the people drove toward the bridge they just thought it was another day - talking on cell phones; listening to music; alone in their thoughts; and honking horns. All who were driving felt secure, but in one instant their world collapsed, their bridge collapsed. Those people had no idea they were driving to their doom. No matter how nice those people were, no matter how well they were liked or loved, no matter how good they were at their job, dozens of vehicles plunged into the Mississippi. Many perished because that bridge would not hold them.

There are many nice people heading to their doom. They are just traveling through life thinking everything is okay, but what they are trusting in to save them from sin, will not hold them. Oh for a while they will get by, but then in one moment of time they will drop off into eternity and they will discover they were trusting in something that can't save them. Your whole eternity hinges on one question - who is Jesus Christ to you? Is He a prophet, a teacher, a religious figure or your Savior? He came out of heaven to offer people on earth salvation. He will give that salvation to you if you will believe in Him.