

Last week I mentioned—that verses 31-36 are either the continuation of John the Baptist or else the additional reflection and commentary of John the apostle—for our purposes it really makes little difference—yet, personally I would suggest they are most likely the continuation of John the Baptist's final testimony of His beloved master...

Taken in this sense—vv27-30 contain John's conviction of Christ's prominence, and vv21-36 contain his reasons or rationale why—that is—within vv31-36 John provides three basic reasons—why Christ must increase and he decrease...

- I. His Origin—v31
- II. His Testimony—vv32-34
- III. His Sovereignty—vv35-36

I. His Origin—v31

1. V31—"He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all..."
2. Here John provides the first reason why Christ must increase—"He who comes from above (heaven) is above all..."
3. Simply put—Christ must have the preeminence because of who He is—He is from above, He is from heaven...
4. Now—what is meant by coming from above or heaven is hinted at in John's contrast or comparison with himself...
5. V31—"he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth"—what does it mean to be—"of the earth..."
6. Well—it certainly refers to ORIGIN—to be "of the earth" is to be "from the earth"—it's to be a mere frail creature...
7. Man is from the earth—he was taken from the earth—he is MERE MAN man—limited, weak, and frail humanity...
8. Thus "earthly" doesn't here mean sinful—but it simply means limited—and specifically as a means of revelation...
9. V31—"he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth"—that is—he speaks what he receives from above...
10. Now—as a prophet—John the Baptist spoke divine things—John was an instrument through which God spoke...
11. Thus—when John says that he speaks "of the earth"—that doesn't mean—he speaks carnal or sinful things...
12. There's simply the contrast of ORIGIN—John the baptist comes from this earth, while Christ comes from heaven...
13. F.F. Bruce—"There is no suggestion of evil in being 'from the earth', but rather one of limitation. Even John's witness, excellent as it was, was subject to limitation because, while he was 'a man sent from God' (Jn.1:6), he did not come down from heaven as the Son of Man did..."
14. Thus—before I leave this first heading—let me take a few minutes and improve upon this phrase—"is above all..."
15. That is—because Christ came from heaven—He is above all—I suggest He is above all in dignity and ability...
16. [1] He is above all in DIGNITY—Christ is above all in majesty and splendor—He's more glorious than all else...
17. At times I think most of us are guilty—of failing to ponder this great truth—that Christ came down from heaven...
18. He's the eternal Son of God—royalty in the fullest sense—yet we forget this because His glory was largely hidden...

19. For example—think of a king in a distant land—who sends his only son to a university for educational purposes...
20. But for safety purposes he hides his identity from the other students—he's simply viewed as another student...
21. But brethren—in fact he is far from just another student—he is royalty—he is the ruler of the entire country...
22. Well—so it is with Christ—because He assumed real humanity He appears as just another man—but He is more...
23. We must ever be mindful—that as God's eternal Son—Christ possesses a native dignity that surpasses all else...
24. Regardless how noble a man is—every other man is only from the earth—Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon...
25. [2] He is above all in ABILITY—because Christ is God's Son, equal with the Father, He possesses divine ability...
26. Christ is above every man in wisdom, knowledge, and power—Christ surpasses all men in terms of ability...
27. Though Moses was a meek man, David was a mighty man, and Solomon a wise man—Christ is ABOVE ALL...
28. Oh my brethren—God did not send a mere man to save His people—He sent none other than His own Son...
29. Furthermore—God didn't send a mighty angel—not even Michael the Archangel—by He sent one above all...

II. His Testimony—vv32-34

1. Having described His origin—John now describes His testimony—two things that necessarily go together...
2. In other words—because He is from above or heaven—He has firsthand knowledge of what He testifies to...
3. [1] Its certainty, v32—"And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies"—that is—what He knows from heaven...
4. Christ didn't receive His knowledge like John—John received His knowledge FROM heaven—Christ received His knowledge IN Heaven...
5. Thus—the phrase—"what He has seen and heard"—refers to what our Savior taught in His earthly ministry...
6. He testified about God, about Himself, about man, about salvation, about the final judgment, heaven, and hell...
7. In summary—He came to bear witness or testify about the gospel—the good news that in Christ there's salvation...
8. He had "seen and heard" about these things in the eternal covenant that took place in the eternal council of God...
9. Now—there were only three persons present in that council—the Father, Son, and Spirit—no one else existed...
10. This is referred to as the eternal covenant or the covenant of redemption because it happened in eternity and concerned redemption...
11. Thus—Christ came into this world—to testify about this redemption—about its source, need, and provision...
12. [a] Its SOURCE is the love of God—Christ came to testify to the fact that God is both righteous and loving...
13. He came as a testimony for the Father—He Himself said—"If you see Me you see the Father...I and the Father are one..."
14. 1Jn.1:18—"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him..."

15. [b] Its NEED is man's native depravity—Christ came to testify that man is natively both—filthy and guilty...
16. Jn.3:11—"Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness..."
17. [c] Its PROVISION is the person and work of God—Christ came to testify about Himself—His person and work...
18. 1Jn.5:11—"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son"—this is the essence of Christ's testimony...
19. Christ came to bear testify of the fact—that He was the bread and light of the world—there's eternal life in Him...
20. Thus—throughout His earthly ministry our Savior repeatedly exhorted sinners to come to Him to find rest...
21. [2] Its rejection, v32—"and no one receives His testimony"—that is—no one believes or receives His message...
22. Now—this of course doesn't mean that no one at all received His message—for that simply wouldn't be true...
23. [a] By nature NO ONE receives it—that is—no man by nature receives or believes the message of the gospel...
24. Man by nature refuses to believe Christ's testimony savingly—he may or may not believe it in some sense...
25. He may believe there's a God, he may believe that Christ is a Savior, he may even believe that he isn't perfect...
26. [b] By comparison FEW received it—that is—few in compassion to the multitudes who refused to believe...
27. These of course receive or believe as the result of God's powerful and regenerating grace—He makes them willing...
28. Jn.1:11-13—"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God..."
29. [3] Its reception, v33—"He who has received His testimony, has certified [literally 'set his seal'] that God is true..."
30. The imagery of that of a seal—to certify is to place your seal of approval that a particular document is trustworthy...
31. For example—we recently had to purchase a new dryer—and so we went to Sears and chose one that we wanted...
32. The salesman drew up an agreement—they agreed to deliver the dyer and we agreed to pay Seas a certain amount...
33. After he typed everything up—he then had me sign the document—I set my seal to it—I agreed it was true...
34. This is basically what every sinner does when he receives Christ's testimony—he's setting his seal to the document...
35. What does the document say—it says—we believe and accept as true everything God says is true of Him and us...
36. Now—here I want to remind you—that historically our reformed forefathers spoke of a Covenant of Grace...
37. The Covenant of Grace is in essence the gospel message—that is—in the gospel God covenant's with sinners...
38. What does God covenant to do—well simply put—God promises to receive us on the basis of Christ's work...
39. What do we covenant to do—well simply put—we promise to believe solely in Christ as the means of salvation...
40. Thus—to refuse to sign the document—to set your seal to it—is in essence accusing God of being untrustworthy...

41. In fact—we actually cast a shadow of doubt upon each of the three persons with the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit...
42. V34—"For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure..."
43. That is—Christ speaks the words of God—His testimony is God's testimony—not to believe Him is to disbelieve God...
44. Jn.13:20—"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me..."
45. 1Jn.5:10—"he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son..."
46. But notice—to receive the testimony of Christ is not only to receive the testimony of the Father but also the Spirit...
47. V34—"For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure..."
48. That is—the Father has given the Holy Spirit to Christ without measure—or the Spirit rested upon Him in full...
49. Every prophet was anointed with the Spirit to enable him to perform His task—he received the Spirit in measure...
50. But—Christ as the Greatest Prophet—was anointed with the Spirit without measure—He had the Spirit in full...
51. Thus—to receive the testimony of Christ, is to receive the testimony of the Father, and the testimony of the Spirit...

III. His Sovereignty—vv35-36

1. The absolute sovereignty or prominence of Christ is underscored in that the Father has put all things in His hand...
2. [1] When does the Father put all things in His hand—from eternity in the eternal council, at His exaltation...
3. [a] From eternity—that is—in the eternal council—the Father determined to put all things in Christ's hand...
4. Thus—John speaks in the past tense, v35—"The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand..."
5. The Father "has given" past tense—it was put in His hand from eternity past—in that eternal council or covenant...
6. [b] At His exaltation—that is—while it was purposed from everlasting—it was actually put in His hand at His exaltation...
7. Eph.1:20-22—"which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church..."
8. [2] Why does the Father put all things in His hand, v35—"The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand..."
9. The Father gives all things to Christ—because He loves Him—He loves His obedient Son who always obeyed...
10. Again, this goes back to what I've already said—everything was given Him in reward to His perfect obedience...
11. [3] What does the Father put in His hands—"The Father has given all things in to His hand"—that is—everything...
12. Now by "hand" is meant "authority"—to put all things in His hand means to give Him authority over all things...
13. Now—the authority given to Christ is given to Him as the God-Man Mediator—in view of His humiliation...

14. Thus—I suggest that by ALL THINGS is meant—the Father gave Him authority over all creation and salvation...
15. [a] All creation—that is—all authority in heaven and earth—over ALL MEN and ANGELS—good or bad...
16. Matt.28:18—"Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth..."
17. 1Cor.3:21—"Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours...And you are Christ's..."
18. [b] All salvation—that is—Christ has authority to give life, to give His Spirit, to give forgiveness, and to judge...
19. Everything has been put in Christ's hand—our calling, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification...
20. Jn.5:20-23—"For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that he Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him..."
21. Jn.5:26-27—"For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man..."
22. Jn.17:1-2—"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him (Matt.11:27; Jn.13:3; 1Cor.15:27; Heb.1:2)..."
23. Prov.3:16—"Length of days *is* in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor. Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, And all her paths *are* peace. She *is* a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy *are all* who retain her..."
24. Thus—v36 is really an application of what John has previously said—all salvation is found in Christ's hand...
25. V36—"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life: and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him..."
26. [1] The benefit of believing the Son, 36—"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life"—this is the Son's testimony...
27. Everything associated with life eternal is found in Christ's hand—everything needed for this life and the next...
28. Gen.41:44—"Pharaoh also said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt...So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt..."
29. Gen.41:55—"So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, Go to Joseph: whatever he says to you, do..."
30. [2] The danger of not obeying the Son, v36—"he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him..."
31. Thus—this amazing passage (filled with love and salvation) ends with wrath—something mentioned throughout...
32. Verses 14 and 15 speak about "perishing" and verses 18 and 19 about "condemnation"—perishing, condemnation, and wrath—are a central part of Christ's testimony...