

# JOHN

AND THE WORD WAS GOD

## JOHN THE BAPTIST EXALTS JESUS

John 3:22–36

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### RELATED SCRIPTURES

John 1:19–27 | Matthew 11:7–11 | Philippians 2:1–11

### STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 3.1.26

### SUMMARY

This week's passage covers John the Baptist's second appearance in the gospel of John. John 1:19-27 records John the Baptist's testimony about himself and Jesus. He confesses that he is neither Elijah nor a prophet (John 1:21), but he fulfills the prophecies in Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 of the one who comes to prepare the way for Christ. John's fulfillment of prophecy and his familial connection to Jesus (Luke 1:36, 60) could have easily built up his pride, as we see when the apostles James and John (the gospel writer) ask Jesus to allow them to sit at his side in glory (Mark 10:37).

Instead, John the Baptist understood his role. He was not the one to be exalted. He was not bothered that many of his own disciples were choosing to follow Jesus. Instead, he compared himself to the friend of a bridegroom who celebrates the bridegroom's wedding by focusing on the couple rather than himself. His joy was complete in seeing Jesus, the bridegroom, come for his bride, the church. Jesus himself later told his disciples that "among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11a), but John considered himself unworthy to untie Jesus' sandal (John 1:27). His ministry was to point others to Jesus. The baptism he offered was a sign pointing to Jesus' ultimate purification of sins (Hebrews 1:3). John offered a sign, while Jesus offered eternal life (John 1:36).

The apostle Paul encouraged the Philippians to live in a way that points others to Jesus: "Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:2-4).

### GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of John 3:22-36.

Jesus says in Matthew 11:11 that "there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." How can the one who receives eternal life be greater than John the Baptist?

What are ways we can imitate John the Baptist's posture of humility in the church that will point others to Jesus?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

### CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.