

I. THE BETWEEN

A. Read verse 22 & 23 with verse 25 to see “then”

1. John was baptizing
2. Jesus was baptizing
3. A question arose!
 - a. Isn't that always the way
 - b. You'd think that everyone here would be happy!
 - c. The Gospel was being preached
 - d. Sinners were coming to repentance
 - e. And here came a question
4. Now in the context here, this wasn't a simple clarification
 - a. No one was saying “so... I'm not sure I get it.”
 - b. They weren't asking for more information
 - c. We will have to call this what it is: a division
 - d. See? It was “between” some of them (vs. 25)

B. The Disciples and the Jews

1. Just a guess – but the disciples of John
 - a. Probably heard him point to Jesus as the Christ
 - b. Probably were excited about the Lord
 - c. But perhaps they were novices
 - i. Who were “fans” of John
 - ii. Who “knew” John's baptism was better than all others
2. The Jews
 - a. They were likely the ones keeping track of numbers
 - b. Hey, I keep track of numbers too – right after Leviticus!
 - c. They wanted to talk about “purifying” (vs. 25)
 - i. Like the ones who were concerned that the apostles ate with unwashed hands
 - ii. Like the ones that Jesus called whited sepulchers
 - d. They called John “Rabbi” (vs. 26)
3. Had to do with baptism (judging from vs. 22 & 23)
 - a. They missed it!
 - b. No earthly water purifies!
 - c. Eph 5:26 – “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,”

C. Division

1. The Lord hates it
 - a. Hate is a strong word but that's the one God uses
 - b. Pro 6:16 – “These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:”

- c. Pro 6:17 – “A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,”
 - d. Pro 6:18 – “An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,”
 - e. Pro 6:19 – “A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”
2. The Devil is in the business of chaos and destruction
 - a. There is nothing that God has built that he hasn’t tried to destroy
 - i. The world in the Garden of Eden
 - ii. Marriage in divorce
 - iii. He stole God’s Rainbow
 - iv. He convinced mothers to kill their own babies
 - b. You better believe the devil hates churches
 3. So they come to ask John (vs. 26)
 - a. He was a nobody when He came to you (not true)
 - b. He stole your idea – baptism (not true)
 - c. ALL men come to Him (also not true)
 4. The Baptist answers the question

II. THE BAPTIST

- A. A Man Can Receive Nothing (vs. 27)
 1. John pointed out quickly that this was NOT his ministry
 - a. Paul echoes these sentiments in I Corinthians 3:6 – “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”
 - b. He was not out here in power of the flesh
 2. Moses had a similar instance
 3. Numbers 11:29 – “And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD’S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!”
- B. You said it yourselves!
 1. You bore me witness (vs. 28)
 2. I said I am NOT the Christ
 - a. I am not Elias
 - b. I am not “that” prophet
 - c. I am A VOICE
 3. I am sent before Him
- C. John the Baptist was not surprised
 1. All of Israel may have been shocked by the sudden appearance of Christ
 2. But it was the one thing for which John had been WATCHING
 3. Mark 1:3 – “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”
 - a. Prepare YE
 - b. Not prepare US

- D. The Appearance of Jesus Christ
 - 1. Was John the Baptist's purpose
 - 2. Was John the Baptist's fondest wish
 - 3. He preached Christ
 - 4. We should too
 - 5. He is the Bridegroom

III. THE BRIDEGROOM

- A. Jewish Weddings
 - 1. Jewish vs. Roman
 - 2. Stages
 - a. Betrothed
 - b. Espoused
 - c. Married
 - 3. Romans cut the espoused portion...
 - a. We call "betrothed" engaged
 - b. But it really isn't the same thing
 - c. Not really a practical / financial element
- B. The Best Man – Friend of the Bridegroom
 - 1. The friend of the bridegroom had certain duties
 - 2. But NONE of the duties involved wooing the bride away!
 - 3. No! When the BRIDEGROOM takes the vows
 - a. The FRIEND OF THE BRIDEGROOM rejoices!
 - b. This my joy therefore is fulfilled
 - 4. Why "therefore"?
 - 5. Because the BRIDEGROOM had arrived and was preaching!
- C. Increase and Decrease
 - 1. John was not sent to create a church
 - a. John was sent to store up the building materials!
 - b. What do we build buildings out of? Wood, stone, sheetrock
 - c. What does Christ build churches out of? Baptized believers!
 - 2. John was not sent to Compete
 - a. John was sent to compliment
 - b. John was "sent"
 - c. John was NOT the authority

IV. THE BADGE

- A. Who can speak with authority?
 - 1. I can tell you a lot about cyber security
 - a. I can speak to you quite a bit about raising cattle
 - b. Painting of a cow at Hobby Lobby..
 - 2. Vs. 31 – It matters what you know

- B. The one that comes from above is above all
 - 1. Don't miss it – Jesus HAS all authority
 - 2. Not speaking of the Godhead, but Jesus (Father sent the Son...)
 - 3. But if He had been sent as a servant like John
 - 4. Then He would have no authority
 - 5. But He CAME from above
 - a. Willingly of His own accord
 - b. Because He Loved the World
- C. When He speaks of Heaven
 - 1. He has firsthand information
 - 2. He is an eyewitness!
 - 3. And He is testifying to us about the ways of God (vs. 32)
- D. ANYONE who receives His Testimony (vs. 33)
 - 1. Set to his seal – God is true!
 - 2. Romans 3:4 – “God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.”
- E. If you are Saved, you know that God is TRUE
 - 1. That the Bible is True
 - 2. Psalm 12:6 – “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”
 - 3. Not just a little bit (by measure) but through and through!

V. THE BIG PICTURE

- A. The Father loveth the Son
- B. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life
 - 1. Not hopes for everlasting lift
 - 2. But HATH
- C. He that believeth not the Son shall NOT see life
- D. But the wrath of God abideth on him
 - 1. Remains
 - 2. Destroys the error of universal salvation and soul annihilation
 - 3. Eternity in hell
- E. Get Saved today!