

The Gospel of John

3:22-27

Welcome back to this week's study in the book of John.

✠ **John 3:22-24** *After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. For John had not yet been thrown into prison.*

Last week we finished off with Jesus and Nicodemus talking about being born again and how to inherit the kingdom of God, that's what it means when it says "**After these things**"

We also have to remember where Jesus was. **Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast. John 2:23a**

So Jesus traveled around 50-100 miles going from Jerusalem to the land of Judea. Remember, no cars, planes or trains were around at this time. They either walked or had camels or horses. Most people walked.

Also when it speaks of Jesus baptizing, we must remember that Jesus never baptized anyone with water, which we read in the beginning of chapter four.

✠ **John 4:2** *(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),*

Also notice that even though Jesus' ministry had started, John the Baptist hadn't stopped preaching and baptizing.

John the Baptist had seen his Savior, Jesus, and even baptized Jesus. But that was no reason to stop doing the work God had called him to do.

Maybe God has done something fantastic in your life. That doesn't mean you should stop doing the work he has called you to do.

God is not through with you, or me, just as God was still using John the Baptist, even though Jesus was preaching and baptizing.

✠ **For John had not yet been thrown into prison.**

The book of Matthew and Mark tell of what happened and why John the Baptist was thrown into prison.

Let's look at the account in Mark.

✠ **Mark 6:16-29** *But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" For Herod himself had sent and*

laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you." He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Simply put, Herod did it all for a woman who he had stolen from his brother Philip. John the Baptist knew about this and confronted Herod and his new wife about the sin they were committing.

I think if Herod had his way he would have never put John the Baptist into prison because he feared him.

† *for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.*

He may have even been on the verge of salvation, until his birthday came around and he was forced to, to have John the Baptist beheaded because of his oath. Makes you think twice about what you may say to someone or what promises you make, doesn't it?

There are people on the verge of accepting Jesus Christ as they are heading in the right direction, but then satan comes along and dangles a carrot in front of them and they follow the carrot rather than the path to Jesus Christ. The end results, sadly to say is death, all for the short pleasure of satisfying their flesh.

Maybe you are on that path to Jesus Christ, but all of a sudden, things that you desire in this world are causing you to turn your head and look to them and stop seeking what you really need, and that's Jesus.

Because of Herod's weakness, it caused the death of John the Baptist, and even his family.

Sure it doesn't mention his family after this, but if Herod would have been saved, it's possible that his wife and her daughter could have been saved also. But his flesh and lust were more important than his family.

Are the things you're seeking more important than your family and their salvation and their spiritual upbringing?

Men say they love their wife and kids, but they are willing to let them die and spend eternity in hell. How much do you really love them if you care this little about them?

Is that really where you want your children to be for all eternity?

Is that really where you want your wife to be for all eternity?

No you can't make the choice for them, but then maybe you are helping them to make that choice by the way you live and your rejection of Jesus!

Wives, you are also accountable to God for how your children are brought up. Sure your husband is accountable to God for you and your children, but that's no excuse not to follow God, or teach your children how to live like the world.

Wives you are to listen and obey your husbands.

† **1 Peter 3:1** *Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,*

But not if they tell you to do something that God says is a sin.

† **Acts 4:19** *But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.*

Tough words, but your family is at stake here, as well as your own salvation and eternity!

So now we know what happened to John the Baptist, and why he was thrown into prison, and how he died. Also the rest of chapter three is the last time we hear from John the Baptist in the book of John, although he still is made reference to few times after this.

But the last recorded words of John the Baptist are in the book of Matthew.

† **Matt 11:1-6** *Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."*

But then this is for another study when we study the book of Matthew.

Back to the book of John.

✚ **John 3:25-26** *Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified--behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"*

I remember reading through these passages many times and thinking that John the Baptist disciples and Jesus' disciples were arguing, also that John the Baptist disciples were the one questioning him.

But as I read it more closely I find how wrong I was. You see as you read it, it wasn't Jesus' disciple arguing with John the Baptist disciples, but the religious leaders, and possible the same ones who were questioning Jesus back in chapter two.

So what was this arguing of purification all about?

Remember when we studied about the wedding in Cana in chapter two and we learned about the water pots for purification? Well the Jews had their rituals of purification that only cleansed the outside of themselves but never the inside.

Remember what Jesus said about that?

✚ **Luke 11:39-40** *Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also?"*

So by the Jews thinking that their purification was good and they questioned John the Baptist purification by baptism.

And we know by earlier studies that baptism does not cleanse you from your sins, but is an outward testimony of being cleansed from your sins.

✚ **1 Peter 3:21** *There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*

And as I continue to read the passages I believe that it was the Jews who came and questioned John the Baptist, not his disciples.

✚ *And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified--behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"*

This was very likely a ploy by satan to attack John the Baptist.

Think about it; there you are in the desert for all these years, eating nothing but locust and wild honey, when all of a sudden your ministry starts to take off and people are listening to you, and repenting as you teach, or preach to them God's word. Then all of a sudden this guy comes along and people are starting to follow Him instead of you. Kind of makes you want to say, "Hey God, what's going on here? I've been faithful to you all

these years, and now you lay out the red carpet for me, then this Jesus comes along and you pull it out from under my feet.”

But that was not John the Baptist response at all, the reason, because he not only preached God’s word, but he lived it also, including being humble and recognizing the Messiah as God told him.

† **John 1:32-34** *And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."*

So what was John the Baptist response to all of this?

✎ **John 3:27** *John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven."*

There is more that John the Baptist said, but I want to look at this verse for a few minutes first.

The key word here is “**receive**”, notice it doesn’t say to “take” or “steal”.

You may have a lot of things, and as a Christian, God gave a lot of them to you. But then you may have things that God didn’t give you that you stole or just took.

What do I mean?

I remember I was bidding on some software on E-bay, and I lost because I didn’t bid high enough. Then a few days later I received this e-mail telling me I could have this expensive software for only \$10 or \$20 dollars, the catch was that I could not register it. Why? Because it was an illegal copy that someone was selling, and not only this one particular software but also many at the same price. We are talking about software costing \$300.00 to \$500.00.

For me this was tempting liking all this software and stuff. But if I would have bought it, I would have been stealing it and God would not have given it to me.

This example a lot of you may not associate with. But here is another. What about your spouse? Did you lie to get him or her to marry you, telling them all these great things about yourself that weren’t even true, or even holding back information? Maybe you lied and said that you loved them to get them into bed before marriage. You took someone that was God’s and used them for your own pleasure, and it wasn’t love, but lust!

Maybe you lied on your timecard and said you worked 50 hours when you actually only worked 45, but you got your paycheck and thanked God for the extra money and even tithed off of it, but you are really thanking God that you weren’t caught for stealing from your employer, and have given God dirty money. Ouch!

There are a lot of different ways that we have all taken things that were not given to us by God. I’m sure as you read through this, different things come to mind for yourself.

But on the other hand, there are things God has blessed us all with that we didn't steal or take. The first is His Son Jesus whom God had given to us!

† **1 John 5:11** *And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*

And here are some other things that the Bible says that God has given us.

† **Psalms 118:27a** *God is the LORD, and He has given us light;*

† **2 Cor 5:18-19** *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

† **2 Thess 2:16** *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace,*

† **2 Tim 1:7** *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

† **1 John 4:13** *By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.*

† **1 Thess 4:8** *Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.*

Just read through the bible and see all the blessings from the Lord to you.

This whole website is from the Lord, if it wasn't, it wouldn't have continued on as long as it has, ministering to others around the world. I get no money for it nor do I want any money for doing it. My reward is in serving the Lord and helping others grow in His word!

These are just a few examples of the Lord and His blessings in my life, what about you? Maybe stop right now and thank the Lord for all He has given to you, and ask Him to forgive you for things you have taken.

Even as I write this I could think of things I have taken and had to stop and ask the Lord's forgiveness!

Next week we will finish off with John the Baptist and what he says.

May God bless you and keep you in all of your ways and light your path on the straight and narrow road to eternity!