

God of the Promise | Part 6 | Pastor Steve Wells | 02.13.2022
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Many times, as Christians, we start to think of church as a competition. We look at the church we attend and compare it to other churches in the same area. We start to say things like: “My church has cooler music and more people than that other church.” or “Man, why are there so many people at that church and not mine?” This type of thinking starts to make us see the Church universal as a competitive market rather than God’s kingdom on Earth! So how do we deal with this issue? Well, **John 3:22-36** contains the answer.

In this passage, we are introduced with the scene of Jesus ministering while His disciples were baptizing people across the river from John the Baptist and his disciples. Some of John’s disciples took offense when they saw this because Jesus’s disciples were baptizing more people than they were (See **John 3:22-26**). John quickly corrects his followers and explains to them that he has accomplished what he was sent to do. John the Baptist understood that his purpose was to prepare the way for Jesus the Messiah. He compares himself to a friend of the groom at a wedding who is joyful for the success of the groom (See **John 3:28-29**). John tells his companions that his job is complete and that “He (Christ) must increase, but I (John) must decrease.” (See **John 3:29-30**). John shows ultimate humility in this statement and then goes on to praise Christ by saying he is “from above and above all”. The praise for Jesus continues as John explains that “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand (**3:35**)” submitting to Christ total power and control. Then John shares the simple Gospel with a heavy implication: “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. (**3:36**)” The Gospel is simple as putting one’s faith in Jesus Christ as the one and only son of God who died to pay for sins and then rose again on the third day. When we look to Christ and trust in Him and Him alone for our salvation, we receive forgiveness of sins, and we are no longer under the wrath of God. John’s statement teaches us that there are people who are currently under the wrath of God. If these people die in their sins and trespasses without the covering of Christ on them, they will then experience the full wrath of God for eternity in Hell.

So how does this apply to us? Well first of all, any ministry or witnessing we do should be for the glory of God and not for our own ego. If we do this, then we start to look at the success and growth of other churches and ministries as successes for the kingdom of God rather than with jealousy. Second, this passage teaches us that we should be supportive of other Gospel preaching churches. The lost need to be reached and that can be accomplished if we all work together rather than against each other. Let us pray that we all embrace the humble mindset of John the Baptist as we seek to exalt Christ in our lives: **“He must increase, and I must decrease.”**

Questions:

- Have you ever played the “comparison game” with other believers or churches?
- How does the idea of “He must increase, and I must decrease” affect how you will live your life during this week?
 - How does it change your attitude at work, the watercooler, and at home?
- Have you ever truly embraced Christ as your Lord and savior? If so, share your story.
- What are you doing daily to exalt Christ in your life?