

### Why Jesus Must Increase, and We Must Decrease

John 3.31-36

John the Baptist's blunt conclusion in John 3.30 sets the stage for the rest of this chapter. *Why* must Jesus increase, and John the Baptist (and all of us) decrease? It flies in the face of our narcissistic culture, but it is vital to our eternal future. Recognizing who Jesus is leads to faith in Him.

- Jesus' is from heaven: He is not limited to earth (31)

*How do we know this is true?*

- Jesus' testimony is the very words of God (32-34)

*Is God a liar, or is He true?*

- Jesus' authority is God's authority: He is over all (35)

*There is no limit to Jesus' power.*

**Because all that is true... What you do with Jesus determines where you will spend eternity. (36)**



1. Let's begin by revisiting John the Baptist's words in John 3.30. His statement is simple and blunt, yet profound and deep. Its application can impact on our lives in a variety of ways. What does it mean for Jesus to 'increase' in your life? What kinds of changes would that involve? What does it mean for you to "decrease"?
2. Verse 31 declares that *Jesus is from above – from heaven, and He is above all*. What evidence is there for this statement? Let's start with John 1-3: Any evidence there? What about in the birth narratives in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2? What about in Old Testament prophetic references to the coming Messiah (e.g., Isa. 7.14; 9.6-7; Micah 5.2)? What about all the way back in the creation narrative (Gen. 3.15)?
3. Verses 32 and 33 seem contradictory, but v32 is not categorical – it makes a general observation: The arrival of an actual heavenly being might be expected to cause 'earthlings' to sit up and take notice, but in the case of Jesus, it aroused hostility. While many were flocking to Jesus at this time (v26), this doesn't mean they all *received His testimony*. What does it mean to 'receive Jesus' testimony'?
4. In Jewish Midrash, rabbis wrote that "the Holy Spirit rested on the prophets *by measure*" – the Holy Spirit gave prophets guidance they needed to speak for God. In contrast, God the Father has given Jesus the Spirit *without measure* (v34), and has also given all things into His hand (35)! Compare Hebrews 1.1-3. Can you see why we should focus on Jesus, and that 'He must increase, and we must decrease'?
5. At the outset of our series on the Gospel of John, we noted that John gives his purpose for writing in John 20.30-31: He wrote so that his readers would believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing they would have life in His name. How many times in the first three chapters of John can you find a reference to Jesus being divine (God in flesh)? How many times can you find a reference to believing in Him?