

John 3:25-36

Then there arose an inquiry from the disciples of John with a Jew about purification. ²⁶And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, He Who was with you across the Jordan, to Whom you have borne witness, behold, this *One* is baptizing, and all are coming to Him.”

Saint Chrysostom: “John’s disciples were ever jealously disposed towards Christ Himself and Christ’s disciples, since they saw them baptizing. They began to reason with those who were baptized, as if their baptism had more than that of Christ’s disciples. They took one of the baptized, and endeavored to persuade him of this, but they did not persuade him. Hear how the evangelist gives us to understand that they were the first to attack Him, not He Who set on foot the question. He does not say that ‘a certain Jew questioned them,’ but that ‘there arose an inquiry from the disciples of John with a Jew about purification.’”

Chrysostom: “But if anyone asks how the disciples baptism was better than John’s, we reply that it was not. Both alike were without the gift of the Spirit, both parties had one reason for baptizing, that is to lead the baptized to Christ.”

John’s Answer – I am the forerunner of the One who is from above, the Messiah

²⁷John answered and said, “A man is able to receive nothing unless it has been given to him from the heavens. ²⁸“You yourselves bear witness to me that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but that ‘I have been sent forth before that One.’

Chrysostom: “He only tries at present to alarm them that they are making war against non-other than God Himself when they attack Christ.”

Cyril of Alexandria: “He says that there is nothing good in humankind, but everything is a gift of God...I think then that we ought to be content with the measure allotted to us and to rejoice in the honors assigned to us from heaven. But by no means, should we stretch out beyond what has been given us, nor is our desire of greater things, appear to be unthankful...Whatever God shall deign to honor us with, let us value that highly.”

²⁹“The *one* who has the bride is *the* bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom’s voice. This joy then, which is mine, has been made full. ³⁰“It is needful for that One to go on increasing, but for me to go on decreasing.

“Christ is the Bridegroom; he has the bride, the Church. My work is to lead the bride to the Bridegroom. (Bp. Gerasimos of Abydos)

Ambrose: “This means that He alone is the husband of the Church, He is the expectation of the nations, and the prophets removed their sandals while offering to Him a union of nuptial grace...I rejoice because He is coming, because I hear the nuptial chant because now we hear...forgiveness of offenses, the cry of joy, the sound of cheerfulness, the rejoicing of the nuptial feast.”

Chrysostom: "...he shows how the bride is brought home, that is by 'voice' and by teaching. For this is how the Church is wedded to God... 'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.'

Theophylact: "The Bridegroom of every soul is the Lord. The Bridal Chamber is the Church, since this is where the union of baptism takes place. The betrothal gifts He bestows upon the Bride are the forgiveness of sins and the communion of the Holy Spirit. Even greater gift will He bestow in the future, when He will initiate those who are worthy into the mysteries more sublime."

³¹"The *One* Who comes from above is above all. The *one* who is out of the earth is of the earth, and speaks of the earth; the *One* Who comes out of the heavens is above all.

Saint Chrysostom: "...so here John spoke of earth, comparing his own with Christ's teaching. For the speaking of earth means nothing else than this, 'My things are little and low and poor compared with His, and are such as it was probable that an earthly nature would receive.'" [Hom. 30, P.G. 59:170 (col. 171).]

³²"And what He has seen and heard, this He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.

³³"The *one* who receives His testimony has set *his* seal to *this*, that God is true. ³⁴"For He Whom God sent forth speaks the words of God, for God gives not the Spirit by measure.

³⁵"The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.

"In Christ we have God Himself speaking to us in and through the Son (Heb 1:1)...God does not give to the Son the gifts of the Holy Spirit by measure, that is, as He gave to the Prophets and other believers. To Christ, God *has placed all things in His hands, and in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily* (Col 2:9). (Bp. Gerasimos of Abydos)."

³⁶"The *one* who believes in the Son has everlasting life;

Chrysostom: "...But we must not think that even a right belief in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is all there is to salvation...for our faith also has need of a good life and conversation."

And the *one* who is disobedient to the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Chrysostom: "Knowing then that (most) are not moved so much by the promise of good, as by the threat of punishment, he concludes, *And the one who is disobedient to the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.* And He does not say 'in him' but 'on him,' meaning that the wrath will never depart from him."

Cyril of Alexandria: "...he shall not even so much glimpse of the life of the saints, he shall not touch their blessedness, and he shall not taste of their life spent in bliss. For that is indeed life. But to exist in punishment is far more bitter than any death, holding the soul in the body only for the sensation of suffering."