

Gospel of John 3:27 - 4:4

New American Standard Version

1 John answered and said, A man can
2 receive nothing unless it has been given
3 him from heaven. You yourselves are my
4 witnesses that I said, I am not the Christ,
5 but, I have been sent ahead of Him. He
6 who has the bride is the bridegroom; but
7 the friend of the bridegroom, who stands
8 and hears him, rejoices greatly because of
9 the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine
10 has been made full. He must increase, but
11 I must decrease. He who comes from
12 above is above all, he who is of the earth
13 is from the earth and speaks of the earth.
14 He who comes from heaven is above all.
15 What He has seen and heard, of that He
16 testifies; and no one receives His
17 testimony. He who has received His
18 testimony has set his seal to *this*, that God
19 is true. For He whom God has sent speaks
20 the words of God; for He gives the Spirit
21 without measure. The Father loves the
22 Son and has given all things into His hand.
23 He who believes in the Son has eternal
24 life; but he who does not obey the Son will
25 not see life, but the wrath of God abides
26 on him. Therefore when the Lord knew
27 that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus
28 was making and baptizing more disciples
29 than John (although Jesus Himself was not
30 baptizing, but His disciples were), He left
31 Judea and went away again into Galilee.
32 And He had to pass through Samaria.

Observation – *What does it say?*

Interpretation – *What does it mean?*

Application – *What does it mean for me?*

Questions for further thinking:

- *How does this passage compare with other things John the Baptist has said earlier in this Gospel? What is similar? What is different? Did he add anything? Did he leave anything out this time? How does the audience he was addressing (his own worried disciples) affect what he says here compared with other people he addressed in earlier conversations?*
- *What hints (or more than hints) do we see here about the Trinity? Trying to read the passage without imposing our theological or doctrinal ideas, what do we learn about Father, Son, and Spirit from this passage by itself?*
- *With the quotation marks removed how does this passage read?¹ Where might the direct quotation of John the Baptist end and the narration by John the Apostle and Evangelist begin? Does that matter? Does it affect the meaning of what is being said?*
- *Who is the “He” in line 20? Is it the Father giving the Spirit to the Son? Or is it the Son giving the Spirit to those hearing His words? OR (since the upper case for divine pronouns is a translator’s opinion) could it be God giving His Spirit to John the Baptist? Other than personal opinion or speculation, is there anything in the text of the passage that would help answer this question?*
- *What do we do with line 29-30, “Jesus Himself was not baptizing,” and John 3:22 from last week, “He was spending time with them and baptizing”? “Baptizing” in the earlier verse is the form for third-person, singular: “he” – so grammar doesn’t get us out of this puzzle. If someone challenged your trust in Scripture because of this apparent problem, how would you respond?*

¹ Remember from our discussion last week, the quotation marks were not part of the original text. They are added by translators to help us reading in English. Sometimes there can be some debate about what parts of a narrative account are direct quotations and which parts are narration by the writer.