

# “HE IS ONE OF A KIND”

John 3:31-36

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages, there have been many great teachers, preachers, prophets, priests, and spiritual leaders. They have all had their followers.

At times, it seems as though people are desperate to follow someone, as is evidenced by such false yet popular religious leaders as Joseph Smith, Jim Jones and David Koresh. Strong leaders are rare; strong leaders who are good are even rarer; strong, good leaders who are also according to truth are extremely rare; strong, good, according to truth leaders who are sent by God and empowered by God are very unique. But, none of these earthly leaders have ever “come from above.”

In fact, all of the leaders who have ever existed have been “of the earth.” In all of earth’s history, there has only been one leader-teacher who originated in heaven, and who came prepared to teach with absolute divine authority—Jesus Christ, the Son.

Such an amazing fact requires a response of total submission and trust. Thus, one who **believes in the Son, has eternal life.**” But, one who stubbornly and rebelliously refuses belief in the Son, one who “disobeys the Son,” **will not see life, but the wrath of God abides** permanently on him.

## YOU CAN ONLY ESCAPE THE WRATH OF GOD BY ENTRUSTING YOUR LIFE TO JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.

### I. EARTHLY TEACHERS VERSUS HEAVENLY TEACHER (31-32)

#### A. Origin

1. Of earth—True of John the Baptist and *all other teachers*. John’s teaching is important, but it is of earthly origin.

The expression with the preposition  $\epsilon\kappa$  shows origin; used often in John with such expressions as “the world”, “the truth,” “God,” “your father the devil,” “below,” “above,” etc. (15:19; 8:23; 18:37; 8:47; 8:44; 8:23; **Three times used for emphasis!** Used of *derivation dependence, and therefore, moral correspondence.*

Used other places in the NT also—e.g. Mt. 21:25-26 (John’s teaching), Mt. 1:20 (Mary’s conception), Acts 5:38-39 (Christian movement’s origins), Rom. 9:5 (Christ’s origins), I Cor. 1:30 (origin of Christian virtues), etc.

2. From above—cf. John 3:3

Note, “the coming one” is a Messianic title; note “comes”—ever present. Jesus is not from this earth! He is the Christ (20:31)

#### B. Being

1. Of earth

2. Above all (Superior to all others—esp. teachers, and all created beings).

C. Teaching

1. Of earth—not that John was “of the world”—that would be different and have a negative connotation. Even his divinely given prophetic teaching was given to him on earth, and is filtered through his earthly experience. Neither John nor any other teacher had an immediate experience in heaven of receiving divine truth.
2. From heaven
  - a. Bearing witness—Continuing witness through His followers
  - b. What He has seen and heard—immediate knowledge of divine truth.  
(cf. 3:11) *Jesus teaches what He knows!*

II. RESPONSES TO THE HEAVENLY TEACHER (33-35)

A. UNBELIEVERS--The Majority Respond Negatively (32)

Compare v. 26—Verse 31 shows the “mature reflection” of the Evangelist after years of ministry.

B. BELIEVERS—Many Respond in Faith (33)

1. A Decisive Act

This Reception of Jesus is a “decisive act whereby a man decided to accept Jesus and Jesus’ witness” (Morris, 245) (“**Being saved..**”)

**This verse applies to any who “receive Christ” and His testimony.**

2. A Clear Confession

The Biblical concept of “seal”

The ancient seal indicated *ownership, authenticity, and provided a personal guarantee. Here the idea is that the believer CERTIFIES the truth of God. To believe Christ is to believe God the Father.*

In the NT the concept is usually of God *marking out His people* (e.g. *Jn. 6:27; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; II Cor. 1:22*)

- a. He verifies that all of God’s promises are accurate and have found their fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus. All of His promises are fully satisfied through the Son of God.
- b. He accepts what God has said—Because Jesus was God’s spokesman. Jesus’ origin was heavenly, and His words are true; therefore, God Himself is “true” (in His person—truth is rooted in His nature.) and all He has spoken is true.

*God has not misled men in Jesus.*

Compare the opposite response and statement in I John 5:10: “He who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning his Son.” (Hendrickson)

C. THE SPIRIT—The Spirit Manifests the Perfect Teacher (v. 34)

1. The Father Himself **SENT** (cf. v. 17) the Teacher

Compare “He who comes from above—v. 31)

Jesus was on a divine mission; He was officially commissioned.

2. Jesus speaks God’s words—the exact words He was commissioned to speak.

Thus, when believers accept Him, they confess that God is true (v. 33).

Note again that Jesus continues to speak as the Gospel goes forth.

3. The Father Gives the Spirit to the Son Without Measure.

*The text simply says: “Without measure He gives the Spirit”* There are **three** possible interpretations:

a. Some believe that the Spirit is the subject: “The Spirit doesn’t give [to believers] with measure”—i.e. He gives generously and liberally.

b. Some believe that the Son is the subject—“He [the Son] does not give the Spirit by measure” [to believers in His Church]. Note that the Son was the subject in v. 34a. Later in John, Jesus promises to send the Spirit to His followers (15:26; 16:7). Believers have received the generous gift of the Spirit and have spoken boldly for Him; the Spirit took of Christ’s and gave it unto them (16:14).

c. The Father gives the Spirit to the Son.

This view is really the Best—for Christ is the only One of whom it can be said that He has received the Spirit in a “measureless” way. No believer can be said to have the Spirit in a way comparable to Jesus! Paul said in Ephesians 4:7 that to each of us was “grace given **according to the measure of the gift of Christ**. This implies a limitation upon the gift of the Spirit to each believer.

The Son has a “complete endowment” of the Spirit; therefore He speaks the complete truth. The Father put no limit upon His gift of the Spirit.

This statement may imply a hint at the gift that Jesus gave to His followers, mentioned later in 14:26 & 15:26—for He did guarantee his apostles that they would teach with special accuracy and power.

Also, the second line doesn’t follow from the first line unless it also refers to Jesus, the One sent by the Father.

Moreover, v. 35 clearly agrees with the application to the Son—it is the Son who receives from the Father in this passage.

D. THE FATHER (35)—The Father gives Jesus Supreme Authority

1. The Father has Magnificent Love For His Son (cf. 3:16—love for the world)

The generosity of v. 34 has its explanation. John's gospel abundantly stresses the **mutual love** of the Father and the Son.

Compare the echo here of the statement at Jesus' baptism by John: "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Mt. 3:17). Notice, that this statement immediately follows the reference to the **descent of the Spirit upon Christ**.

2. As Man, the Son has accepted a dependent relationship with the Father. Such lowliness is an example to us. In John we see numerous gifts of the Father to the Son:

His **work** (17:4), His **works** (5:36; cf. 14:31); His **message** (12:49; 17:8); His **authority** (17:2); His **name** (17:11); His **glory** (17:22-24); His **disciples** (6:37-39; 10:29; 17:6, 9, 12, 24; 18:19); His **cup** to drink (18:11); His power to **judge** (5:22); His **power over all flesh** (17:2); His power of **life in Himself** (5:26).

3. The Father has given Complete Sovereignty to the Son
  - a. He is thus "Lord over All" (Acts 10:36) and "Head over all things" (Eph. 1:22). Compare John 13:3—all things given into His hands, and His coming forth from God and returning there again. See also Lk. 10:22 & Mt. 11:27. And, Mt. 28:18—all authority.
  - b. This power and authority is a *permanent* gift to Him—"has given."
  - c. He has the power to dispose "all things" to His people.—"*Into His hand*".  
This refers especially to the Son's **GIFT OF LIFE through the Spirit**. The Son, having come from the Father, can be trusted, and must be believed!

***CHRIST, WITH THE FATHER'S FULL AUTHORITY, GIVES THE SPIRIT BOUNTIFULLY, AND THUS HE GIVES THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE (V. 36)***

John has shown us that Jesus is the authoritative Teacher—greater than all who have come before Him. He authoritatively speaks for God the Father; He has the unlimited gift of the Spirit; He is able to speak and work with absolute authority. He offers the Truth to men; some receive His witness; the majority reject His witness. **Those who hear the Gospel have a choice: to believe on the Son or to reject Him and His message.**

### III. THE ISSUE OF LIFE VERSUS DEATH (WRATH) (v. 36)

#### A. Abiding Faith Results in Eternal Life

**Salvation in Christ is not for "thrill seekers"** such as those who believe because of the miracles that they see (See 2:23). Salvation is for "**trusters**"—

**for those who continue in faith once they trust Christ for forgiveness of sins.**

1. The Object of Faith—The Son—the unique (only-begotten) Son of God who is equal with the Father in every attribute (See chapter 1). Believers may become “children of God (1:12), but Christ is **THE SON**. John never uses the Greek work for “son” (υιοϛ) for men; he uses the word for “child” or “children”.
2. The Result of Faith—Eternal Life  
As Jesus told Nicodemus in vv. 1-15, faith results in *new birth* which results in new life—in this case **eternal life, life that never comes to an end**. The believer may die physically, but his life will still abide.
3. The Time When Life is experienced—**NOW**. Note that the believer **HAS** life.

B. Unbelief Results in Death (cf. 3:18)

1. “Unbelief” is here called **disobedience**.
  - a. The meaning of “Unbelief” The verb John uses here has the primary meaning of “disobey.” *The idea here is to refuse obedience through disbelief—that is disobey, disbelieve*. Men choose darkness, avoid the light, and hate the light (vv. 19-21).
  - b. The persistence of the disobedience—“He who continues to refuse obedience.” This is a settled rebellion; a continued unbelief.
  - c. The Object of the disobedience is The Son. **Disobedience is to refuse to accept Christ by a true and abiding faith**. Notice that “disobedience” and unbelief *is not merely due to ignorance!* See Rom. 1:18-22; and here in John 1:9-12.
  - d. The ultimate consequence of the disobedience—“Shall not see life.” Compare 3:3,5 where “seeing” and “entering” the kingdom are one and the same. Not to “see” life means not to experience life, nor ever to enter into its future manifestation.
2. Death is here called “The **Wrath of God**.” God’s “wrath” is His settled indignation” at the sin and rebellion of man that is a violation of His holy and righteous standards. His holiness demands punishment for sin, and the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). John’s one use of this term.

**Although the Wrath of God is an unpopular topic in current religious teaching, the Scriptures are replete with its teaching.**

Compare such passages as Lk. 21:23; Rom. 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; 13:4-5; Eph. 2:3; 5:6; Col. 3:6; I Thes. 1:10; 2:16; 5:9; Heb. 3:11; 4:3; Rev. 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15; and even “the wrath of the Lamb” in Rev. 6:16-17. **Even those who have not heard the gospel still experience His wrath (Rom. 1:18; Eph. 2:3).**

God's wrath, however, often occurs in passages like this one "where man's impenitent heart, his obduracy and sinister unwillingness to embrace Christ by a living faith" are in view (Hendrickson).

Note that the Wrath of God "abides on him." One does not need to wait for the future judgment in order to experience God's wrath—he currently lives under such divine wrath if he refuses faith in Christ.

**His only hope is to be freed from such wrath through Christ.**

#### CONCLUSION

John 3:36 is as basic as John 3:16! There is no neutral ground.

**EITHER YOU ARE BELIEVING ON THE SON AND ARE EXPERIENCING HIS LIFE, OR YOU ARE DISOBEYING HIS SON AND ARE ABIDING UNDER HIS WRATH.**

**Which is it for you? Will you do something about it?**