



River Church Men's Breakfast Bible Study Guide

[How to be Great - More of Him, Less of Me](#)

[John 3:22-36, Ezekiel 18:32](#)

One Couldn't Help But Ask...

1. Most modern translations of the Bible do not seem to agree with the MOUNCE reverse interlinear version (original Greek) regarding Jesus' statement in John's gospel in 3:16 & 36. Verse 16 says believe and be saved but, verse 36 says believe & obey and be saved. How do we justify this with the story of the repentant criminal in Luke 23: 39-43? Can a criminal repenting at his time of death have any chance to obey? Jesus says, "Today you will be with me in paradise." Is this a contradiction?
2. Sharing the Gospel is a Christian's primary job or mission, and we need to have it right. Does the gospel offer any assurance to a new or uncertain listener that belief alone in Jesus all that is needed for salvation?

Takeaways

1. Humility not Self Esteem is the appropriate Christian value in everything we do or say. Without Jesus, we are nothing. With Him, all things are possible.
2. There are two ways to live:
 1. **Culture up** - We apply our cultural folkways & mores to God's commands, editing as necessary, to develop an & plan for our life and salvation that suits us.
 2. **Kingdom down** - We apply God's word to our current life deleting our folkways and mores as necessary to conform too God's plan for our life and salvation.
3. Our choice regarding which way we will live can have one of two effects in our current life:
 1. **For those who trust God** - Their earthly life is as close to hell as we will ever be.
 2. **For those who choose their culture** - Their earthly life is as close to heaven as we will ever be.
4. God wants every man & woman in his creation to have the chance to be saved and share in an everlasting life of joy with Him. In His final judgement of mankind there will be two distinct groups.

1. **Those who chose to believe in Him** will be declared righteous by grace, through faith in Jesus.
2. **Those who chose not to believe in Him** will be condemned and there will be no second chance as all have had ample time & warning.

Notes & thoughts leading to the above

- Jesus, together with His disciples, did a work of baptizing apparently similar to the work of John the Baptist. This was Jesus' humble way of recognizing the goodness and importance of John's work.
- "‘Tarrying’ [**remained**] is another word that is not very specific, but we get the impression of an unhurried period during which Jesus and His followers got to know each other better." (Morris)
- John's disciples seemed alarmed, but it didn't bother John one bit. John would not allow envy or the fickle crowds make him forget his mission: to announce that the Messiah had come, and then to step back and let the attention be focused upon the Messiah.
- In the Jewish wedding customs of that day, the **friend of the bridegroom** arranged many of the details of the wedding and brought the bride to the groom. Nevertheless, the **friend of the bridegroom** was never the focus of attention, and wanted it that way.
- John the Baptist understood it was good for him to become less visible and known, for Jesus to become more visible and known. In even larger aspects, this should be the motto of every Christian, especially leaders among God's people. Jesus should become greater and more visible, and the servant should become less and less visible.
- John the Baptist shows us that we may be very popular and outwardly successful, and still be humble. John the Baptist had fame and crowds that modern celebrity pastors could only dream of, yet he was an example of genuine humility.
- "When you believe in Jesus, you have set your seal to the testimony of Jesus, which is the revelation of the Lord. You have certified that you believe in God as true." (Spurgeon)
- A point of confusion unresolved. The various translations provide different wordings for John 3:36 that might imply different requirements for salvation:

ESV - **36** 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.

NIV - **36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

KJV - **36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Mounce Reverse Interlinear

The one who believes in the Son has eternal life; but the one who disobeys the Son will

not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

In the original Greek they seem to be different roots:

- Believes = pisteuō

- He who does not obey = **apeitheō**
- This topic was further researched using Strong's Concordance with the following result. The Greek term used in v36 for obedience was specifically citing voluntary obedience, Ed.- or in this case voluntary disobedience. That is, it's not that I didn't understand but rather, I chose not to obey because I don't believe.

This study guide is provided in the hope that you will be moved to consider the sermon, let your mind wander to questions it might raise and thoughts you might wish to remember and apply to your personal life. If you would care to ask a question or share your thoughts regarding the subject, please e-mail the authors at mensbreakfast@therivercolorado.org . We will try to respond to all if possible

If you would like to participate in the building of the study guide, please let us know via that same e-mail and we'll contact you about joining us via phone and/or Zoom if possible.