

John 3:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He must increase, but I must decrease.

Analysis

John the Baptist's famous declaration 'He must increase, but I must decrease' epitomizes humble ministry. The divine necessity 'must' indicates God's sovereign plan; the present tense suggests ongoing process. This is true discipleship—Christ exalted, self diminished. John models what every believer should pursue: making much of Jesus, little of ourselves. The contrasting verbs (increase/decrease) show the inverse relationship between Christ's glory and our pride.

Historical Context

John's disciples were concerned about Jesus gaining more followers (v. 26), but John rejoices. His response demonstrates secure identity in God's calling. Within months, Herod would imprison and execute John, literally fulfilling his 'decrease.' Yet John's faithful witness continues through Scripture.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. In what areas of your life does self need to decrease so Christ can increase?

2. How can you cultivate John's contentment with God's sovereign purposes for your life?

Interlinear Text

ἐκεῖνον	δεῖ	αὐξάνειν	ἐμὲ	δὲ	ἐλαττοῦσθαι
He	must	increase	I	but	must decrease
G1565	G1163	G837	G1691	G1161	G1642

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 1:18 (Parallel theme): And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Isaiah 9:7 (Parallel theme): Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

1 Corinthians 3:5 (Parallel theme): Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

Revelation 11:15 (Parallel theme): And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org