

John 3:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

Analysis

John contrasts his earthly origin with Christ's heavenly: 'He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.' Origin determines authority. Earthly prophets (including John) speak earthly perspectives; the One from heaven possesses absolute authority. This isn't self-deprecation but theological clarity. Jesus' superiority isn't comparative but categorical—He's from above.

Historical Context

This verse explains why Jesus surpasses John—not in moral quality but in ontological origin. John was the greatest born of women (Matthew 11:11), yet categorically inferior to the One from heaven. The distinction prepares for John 3:32-36's testimony about receiving or rejecting Christ.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' heavenly origin establish His authority over all earthly teachers?
2. What implications does 'from above' have for how we receive Jesus' teaching?

Interlinear Text

Ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν· ὁ ὢν
G3588 **from above** G509 **He that cometh** G2064 **above** G1883 **all** G3956 **is** G2076 G3588 **he that is** G5607

ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐστίν· καὶ ἐκ τῆς
earthly G1537 G3588 **the earth** G1093 **earthly** G1537 G3588 **the earth** G1093 **is** G2076 **and** G2532 **earthly** G1537 G3588

γῆς λαλεῖ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω
the earth G1093 **speakeeth** G2980 G3588 **earthly** G1537 G3588 **heaven** G3772 **He that cometh** G2064 **above** G1883

πάντων ἐστίν·
all G3956 **is** G2076

Additional Cross-References

John 8:23 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

Matthew 28:18 (Parallel theme): And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Romans 9:5 (Parallel theme): Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

John 6:33 (Parallel theme): For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

1 John 4:5 (Parallel theme): They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

John 6:51 (Parallel theme): I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Revelation 19:16 (Parallel theme): And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

John 1:27 (Parallel theme): He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

1 Peter 3:22 (Parallel theme): Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

Hebrews 9:1 (Parallel theme): Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.