

John 1:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

Analysis

John declares himself unworthy of the most menial service for Christ: 'whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.' Untying sandals was a slave's task, beneath even a disciple's duties. John, the greatest prophet born of women (Matthew 11:11), considers himself unworthy of the lowest servant role to Christ. This expresses the infinite qualitative difference between the greatest human and the Son of God. True understanding of Christ's glory produces genuine humility.

Historical Context

Disciples performed many services for their rabbis, but handling footwear was considered too demeaning. John's self-assessment shocks in light of his prophetic stature—even the greatest prophet is infinitely below Christ. This establishes proper Christology: Jesus is not merely a superior teacher but the unique Son of God before whom all creation must bow.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does John's extreme humility challenge contemporary approaches to ministry and status?
2. What does it mean practically to view ourselves as unworthy servants of Christ?

Interlinear Text

αὐτοῦ	ἐστιν	ὁ	ὀπίσω	μου	ἐρχόμενος	οὗ	ἔμπροσθέν		
He	it is		after	me	coming	who	before		
G846	G2076	G3588	G3694	G3450	G2064	G3739	G1715		
μου	γέγονεν·	οὗ	ἐγὼ	οὐκ	εἰμὶ	ἄξιος	ἵνα	λύσω	αὐτοῦ
me	is preferred	who	I	not	am	worthy	to	unloose	He
G3450	G1096	G3739	G1473	G3756	G1510	G514	G2443	G3089	G846
τὸν	ἱμάντα	τοῦ	ὑποδήματος						
G3588	latchet	G3588	shoe's						
	G2438		G5266						

Additional Cross-References

John 1:30 (Parallel theme): This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

Matthew 3:11 (Parallel theme): I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

John 1:15 (Parallel theme): John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

Mark 1:7 (Parallel theme): And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

Luke 3:16 (Parallel theme): John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

Acts 19:4 (Parallel theme): Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

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