

Luke 7:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Analysis

Jesus makes startling comparison: 'For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he' (Greek 'mikroteros en te basileia tou theou meizon autou estin'). John's greatness is affirmed ('not a greater prophet'), yet superseded by kingdom privilege. The 'least in the kingdom' possesses greater privilege than John—not personal virtue but positional advantage. John announced kingdom; believers participate in it. John saw Christ from distance; believers experience indwelling Spirit. The comparison demonstrates kingdom privilege, not personal merit. Reformed theology emphasizes that salvation is grace-based, not achievement-based. The thief on the cross, entering kingdom at last moment, possesses greater privilege than faithful John who preceded kingdom's full inauguration.

Historical Context

John's ministry occurred at transition—Old Covenant ending, New Covenant beginning. He witnessed Jesus's baptism and early ministry but died before crucifixion, resurrection, Pentecost. Those events inaugurated the kingdom age fully. John stood outside looking in; believers stand inside experiencing promised blessings. Old Testament saints anticipated Messiah; New Testament believers know Him personally. Hebrews 11:39-40 states Old Testament faithful 'received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us.' For early church, this teaching provided confidence—they weren't merely continuing John's or

prophets' work but participating in unprecedented reality: the age of the Spirit, church as Christ's body. Modern application includes gratitude for our privileged position—what prophets longed to see, we experience (1 Peter 1:10-12).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does understanding kingdom privilege (not personal virtue) as basis for 'greater than John' protect against pride?
2. What specific advantages do New Covenant believers possess that even John lacked?
3. How should awareness of our privileged position affect our worship, witness, and stewardship?

Interlinear Text

οὗτός ἐστιν περὶ ὃς γέγραπται Ἰδού, ἐγώ ἀποστέλλω

This **is** **he of** **which** **it is written** **Behold** **I** **send**
G3778 G2076 G4012 G3739 G1125 G2400 G1473 G649

τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου ὃς

G3588 **messenger** **my** **before** **face** **thee** **which**
G32 G3450 G4253 G4383 G4675 G3739

κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδόν σου ἐμπροσθέν σου

shall prepare **way** **thee** **before** **thee**
G2680 G3588 G3598 G4675 G1715 G4675

Additional Cross-References

Malachi 3:1 (Parallel theme): Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Luke 1:76 (Parallel theme): And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

Mark 1:2 (Parallel theme): As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Matthew 11:10 (Parallel theme): For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

John 1:23 (Parallel theme): He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

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