

Mark 1:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

John's proclamation points beyond himself to the Coming One: 'There cometh one mightier than I after me' (Ἐρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου). The comparative 'mightier' (ischyroteros) acknowledges Jesus' superior authority and power. 'The latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose' (οὐδ' οὐκ εἰμι ἱκανὸς κύψας λύσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ) expresses profound humility—removing sandals was a slave's task, yet John declares himself unworthy even for that. This statement demonstrates John's understanding of his role: forerunner, not the Messiah. Unlike false prophets who drew attention to themselves, John deflected attention to Christ. Reformed theology emphasizes that true ministers point to Christ, not themselves, decreasing so Christ increases (John 3:30). John's humility models proper response to Christ's supremacy.

Historical Context

Removing and carrying someone's sandals was considered the most menial task, typically performed by the lowest servant or slave. Jewish law stated that disciples must serve their rabbis in all things except removing sandals—that was too degrading even for disciples. Yet John declares himself unworthy of even this task before Jesus. This statement would have shocked John's followers who regarded him highly. The phrase 'there cometh' (erchetai) was loaded with messianic expectation—Jews anticipated 'the Coming One' (ho erchomenos) as a messianic

title. John's consistent self-effacement and Christ-exaltation authenticated his ministry and prepared his disciples to follow Jesus when He appeared.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does John's radical humility before Christ challenge pride and self-promotion in Christian ministry today?
2. What does John's role as forerunner teach about the proper function of preachers and teachers—to point to Christ, not themselves?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐκήρυσσεν	λέγων,	Ἔρχεται	ὁ	ἰσχυρότερός	μου	
And	preached	saying	There cometh	G3588	one mightier than	I	
G2532	G2784	G3004	G2064		G2478	G3450	
ὀπίσω	μου	οὗ	οὐκ	εἰμὶ	ἱκανὸς	κύψας	λῦσαι
after	I	of whose	not	I am	worthy	to stoop down	and unloose
G3694	G3450	G3739	G3756	G1510	G2425	G2955	G3089
τὸν	ἱμάντα	τῶν	ὑποδημάτων	αὐτοῦ			
G3588	the latchet	G3588	G5266	shoes			
	G2438			G846			

Additional Cross-References

Acts 13:25 (Parallel theme): And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.

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.

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:

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:

Matthew 3:14 (Parallel theme): But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

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