There He Is

"The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" John 1:29

For centuries, the prophets had been saying essentially the same thing: He is coming.

Moses spoke of a prophet whom God would raise up from among His people. David wrote of a King whose throne would endure forever. Isaiah described the Servant who would be pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. Micah identified Bethlehem as the place from which the ruler of Israel would come. Malachi announced that a messenger would prepare His way.

Generation after generation received the promises. Prophets spoke. Scribes copied their words. Parents taught them to their children. Faithful Israelites waited.

But none of those prophets could do what John the Baptist did.

John could point.

There, walking toward him, was the One about whom the prophets had spoken.

"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

There He is.

Jesus said something extraordinary about John:

"Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist." Matthew 11:11

Why John? Why not Moses, through whom God gave the law? Why not Elijah, who called down fire from heaven? Why not Isaiah, whose prophecies of Christ are so magnificent that they sometimes read as though he stood at the cross himself?

John occupied a place in redemptive history that none of them occupied.

They looked forward.

John looked across the Jordan.

The promises were no longer only words written on scrolls. The promised One had entered history. John had been sent to prepare His way, and when Jesus appeared, John's ministry reached its purpose.

"He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30

There is something beautiful about that statement. John's greatness was never about John. The greatest of the prophets did not build a ministry around himself. He did not attempt to preserve his influence when Jesus appeared. He understood that his entire calling had been to direct attention somewhere else.

To Someone else.

Then Jesus completed His remarkable statement about John:

"Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Matthew 11:11

John stood at the threshold. He announced the arrival of the King, but he would not live to see the cross, the empty tomb, Pentecost, or the gospel carried to the nations. The least believer living on this side of those accomplished events possesses a redemptive-historical privilege that even John did not enjoy.

We do not stand beside the Jordan watching Jesus approach. We stand on the other side of Calvary and the resurrection. We know not merely that the Lamb has come, but what the Lamb accomplished.

The prophets said, "He is coming."

John said, "There He is."

And the church now declares, "He came. He died. He is risen. He reigns. And He is coming again."

The long-awaited One has been revealed.

There He is.

Just a thought.

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