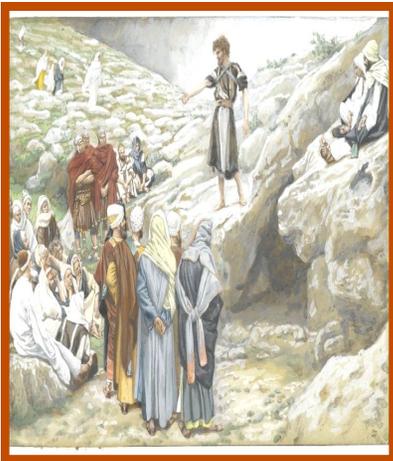


separate being. But the Lord Judge is One, whether this Herald or that shall go before Him.

Art thou a prophet? They said to him. And he answered: *no*. They said to him: *who art thou that we may give an answer to them that sent us?...* He said: *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.* A Herald sweeps men from before the path of the Judge and his words are prophecy itself. When asked why he baptized if he was not the Christ, Christ answered *that those who went out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?...* Not someone clothed in soft garments, but someone more than even a prophet, someone who proclaimed the Christ as being present and in their midst...

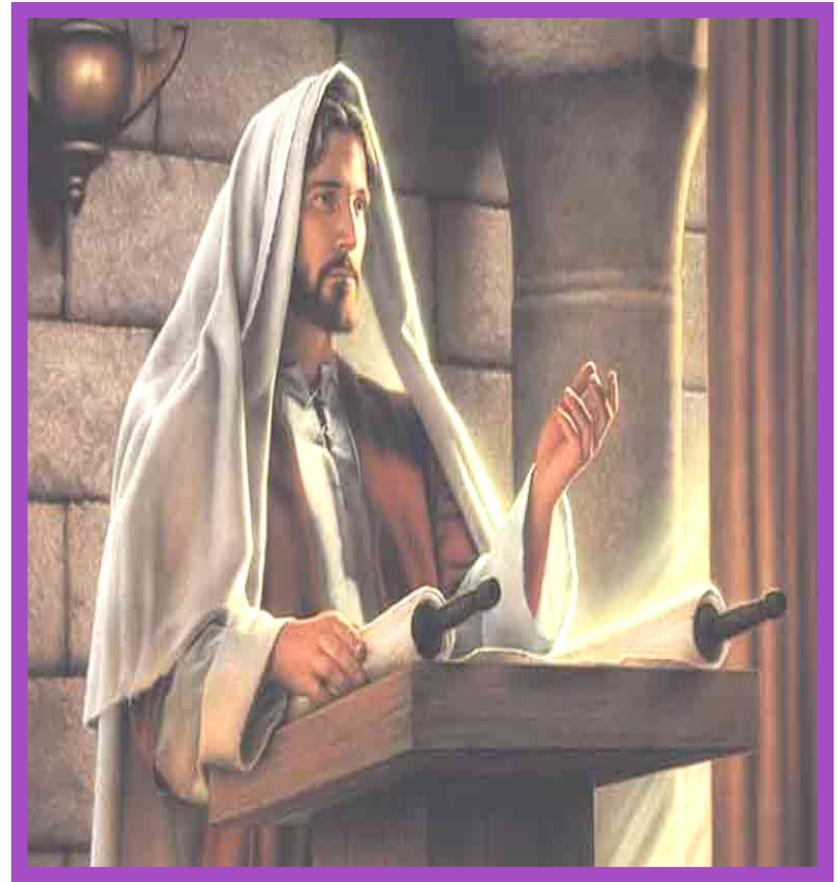


...John answers that he baptizes with water and declaring that there is someone in their midst who they do not recognize, the Humble One, the shining light, that he must stand aside for whom John has been taken for the Other. *The same is He that shall come after me. The latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose.* See how by this act of humility John is more exalted, since *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted* (Lk. xiv. 11)...



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**SERMON ON
JOHN CONFESSING CHRIST'S ARRIVAL
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
126 - 1**



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

Volume 1 - Pages 1099 (1962 edition)

Commentary on the Gospel of John 1: 19-28

by: Saint Augustine, Bishop and Doctor

...But He Who first came hidden, because He came in lowliness, shall He not in due time come manifestly, because He shall come in glory (Ps xlix. 3)?... How shall He be manifest?... *A fire shall burn before Him: and a mighty tempest shall be round about him* (Ps. xlix. 3)... And because He appeared as it were in the night, in this mortal body, He lit for Himself a *shining light*, that He might be seen, This light was John (Jn. v. 35), of whom you have already heard many things...

This is the testimony of John (the Baptist), when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him, to ask him: who art thou?... And he confessed and did not deny that: I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then? Art thou Elias! For they knew that Elias was to precede Christ. To no one among the Jews was the name of Christ unknown... They stumbled upon Him, present among them; they stumbled as upon an unnoticed stone... as the prophet Daniel says that he is a stone *cut out of the mountain without hands. And it grew and became a great mountain and filled the whole earth* (Dan. ii. 35)... Christ is the stone and the kingdom of the Jews is the mountain but it did not fill the whole earth... it was present before the eyes of the Jews, but it was unnoticed... The stone had not yet grown and filled the whole earth; as He made clear in His Kingdom, which is the Church, by which He has filled the whole earth. Also as it is written, *Whosoever shall fall upon that stone, shall be bruised and upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder* (Lk. xx. 18). They stumbled on the Lowly One; He being raised on high will come down upon them; but that He Who is to come in glory may crush them, first as a humble stone He bruised them, they stumbled at Him (Rom. ix. 32), and they were bruised; coming in glory, He will crush them. They saw the Lowly One, and they did not know Him. He was revealed to them by a *shining light*... who declared *I am not the Christ*... When asked if he was Elias? John answered: *I am not*... This presented a difficulty for the Jews for Christ was to send Elias to prepare the way before Him...

This is not contrary to what John said as Christ states in a certain place in the gospel concerning Himself when asked by His Disciples: *why then do the scribes, those skilled in the Law, say that Elias must come first?* Jesus answered: *Elias is already come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they had a mind; and if you will receive it, he is John the Baptist* (Mt. xvii. 10-13; x. 11-14).

The Lord Jesus Christ said: *Elias is come and he is John the Baptist*. But John declared that he was not Elias, as he was not the Christ... How then reconcile the words of the Herald with the words of the Judge?... On this occasion the Lord Jesus Christ desired to prefigure His own second coming, and to affirm this: namely that John came in the spirit of Elias. For what John was in relation to the first coming, Elias will be to the second. Since there are two Advents of the Judge so are there two Heralds of His Coming. He Himself is the Judge; the Heralds are two, but there are not two Judges. For the Judge must first come, that He may receive judgment. He sends before Him the first Herald, and He calls him Elias; because what John is in the first coming, Elias will be in the second.

... When John was born, the Holy Spirit foretold that which was to be fulfilled concerning this man: *and he shall go before Him in the Spirit and power of Elias* (Lk. i. 17). Not Elias, but in the spirit and power of Elias... What Elias will be to the second coming, this same John was to the first coming. John spoke literally that he was not Elias while the Lord said in figure that John is Elias. The allegorical meaning of the office of precursor, John is Elias; for what the one is to the first coming, the other is to the second...

If John had said that he was Elias, then Christ has already appeared in His second coming and would have given judgment; nor would he, even now, in His first coming be judged. John answering that he was not Elias is saying that Elias has not yet come... The Lord ended His words: he is John the Baptist that will come. Here Elias came in figure; in his own person he is yet to come. Then Elias will be Elias in person, whom John is now in figure. Now John is John in his true person, who is Elias in figure. Both Heralds portray each other in figure, yet each retains his