

PROPHECIES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

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In Matthew 11:7-11, Jesus Christ the Son of God said this about John the Baptist to the multitudes who followed him: “What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and *more than a prophet*. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. *Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.*”

Christ’s own testimony about John the Baptist certifies him as one of the greatest men who ever lived. He had the great task of preparing the people of Isreal for the ministry and work of Jesus Christ. The coming of such a great prophet and the important work he would do was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament.

Malachi’s prophecies of John the Baptist

The prophet Malachi, as recorded in the last book of the Old Testament, prophesied of the first prophet we read about in the New Testament, John the Baptist: “*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*” (Mal 3:1). Mark 1:1-2 says, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.” This is a quotation of Malachi 3:1, applied to John the Baptist (Mark 1:4), which is noted to be *the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God*. Malachi prophesied that John would be the messenger of the New Covenant. Jesus himself also quoted from Malachi 3:1 and said John was that messenger of God who prepared Christ’s road (Matt 11:10; Luke 7:27). Malachi also prophesied, “*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse*” (Mal 4:5-6). This is the second prophecy in Malachi of the coming of John the Baptist. God’s angel Gabriel appeared to Zachariah, and informed him that his wife Elisabeth would give birth to the one foretold in Malachi 4:5-6. In Luke 1:13-17, Gabriel said, “Fear not, Zachariah: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall

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(continued)

go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” John would “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children” (Luke 1:17; Mal 4:6). The main job of a father is to train up his children in the ways of the Lord (Deut 6:7; Psa 78:1-8; Prov 22:6; Eph 6:4), though many fathers are concerned with other matters. John would turn the hearts of the fathers to their children again. After hearing the preaching of John, many fathers would focus their attention to loving their children by teaching and training them in God’s truth (Isa 38:19). Along with this, John would “turn the heart of the children to their fathers” (Mal 4:6). The first commandment with a promise is for children to obey their parents in the Lord (Eph 6:1-3; Col 3:20), though many children are willful and disobedient and dishonor their parents. After hearing the preaching of John, many children would turn from rebelliousness and honor and obey their parents for the Lord’s sake.

Isaiah’s prophecy of John the Baptist

Isaiah 40:3-5 says, “*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*” The New Testament declares that Isaiah 40:3-5 is a prophecy about the coming of John the Baptist (Matt 3:3; Mark 1:1-3; Luke 3:3-6; John 1:19-23). This passage foretells the work of John the Baptist. John’s was “the voice of him that cries in the wilderness” (Isa 40:3). John lived out in the wilderness until he became a prophet (Luke 1:80; 3:2; Matt 3:4; Mark 1:6). And John preached and baptized the people of Israel out in the wilderness (Matt 3:1-6; 11:7; Mark 1:4-8; Luke 3:2-3; 7:24). John’s major purpose was to “prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isa 40:3). This preparatory work would make everything straight and level. “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it” (Isa 40:4-5). John preached the coming of Christ (Matt 3:11-12; Mark 1:6-8; Luke 3:16-17; John 1:6-8,19-27; 5:32-33), and pointed him out as the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29-37). His life and work was truly worthy of Christ’s testimony that *among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.*