

Malachi 3:1, Isaiah 40:3-5, 29:17-19

Matthew 11:2-15

Forerunner...

It is the normal position for most of us to desire to be, or at least to think that we are the star of our own lives. We make our plans, have our dreams and fulfill our responsibilities. If asked who we are or what we do, these are the things that we talk about. It is the only answer most of us can even conceive of having... But there is a deeper truth that defines who we are, and that is the question of whose we are, and that answer, although simple enough, sends shock waves throughout the rest of our lives with its many tendrilled implications.

We have been examining Christ in the OT, and we come now to a prophecy about His ministry that is not at first directly about Him. There would be one who would come before Him, who would have an important role to play, and who would then be ushered off the stage. This key supporting role is often a difficult part to play, and truthfully, it is a role that we are often ALL called to play to one degree or another. How we understand the part

and the importance of it will aid us in our day of darkness and despair.

I. THE MINISTRY OF THE MESSENGER

Malachi 3:1

- a. He was prophesied and foretold
- b. He knew his role and the person of the Christ when He appeared

John 1:19 – 34

- c. He was happy to step aside and give way to the work of Christ

John 3:22-36

- d. He continued to play his part on a smaller stage - faithfully obeying God regardless of the consequences

Matthew 14:3-4

II. THE MINISTRY OF THE MESSENGER BEGAN THE WORK

Isaiah 40:3-5

There is a flavor to the work of the messenger that is consistent with the theme of his life. “He must increase, I must decrease.” This idea came out in the entirety of his message. Everything that he did was to make more of Christ and to destroy the work of men’s effort to exalt themselves. This is also consistent with what we know of the character of our God.

Isaiah 42:8 (NKJV)

*I am the LORD, that is My name;
And My glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.*

So the work of the forerunner blasts into the status quo, he lifts up the despised by the power of God and crushes the lofty...

a. Valleys exalted

b. Mountains and Hills brought low

c. Crooked places made straight

d. Rough places smooth

e. Glory of the Lord Revealed

III. THE DOUBTS OF THE MESSENGER

Matthew 11:2-15

a. When the work did not go the way that he expected, even he doubted, waivered.

b. The answer given was that he was to look at what was done, what was promised and to trust in the Lord

c. After the answer was given Jesus gave the rest of the story to those who were around Him, (although not to John himself.)

- d. His role and person were praised by the Son
- e. His work surpassed what anyone else saw, and what anyone before had done...
- f. Our works will be greater than his –
 - i. He did not know the Son before, only OF Him
 - ii. He was not filled with the indwelling of the Spirit
 - iii. He was the last of the pre-Kingdom servants - we are Kingdom children.

IV. GOD IS WORKING ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PLANS

Isaiah 29:17-19

V. THE CURRENT TRIALS PREPARE THE GROUND FOR THE FUTURE HARVEST

Our pain today is important for the process and work that God is about. Tomorrow is always in the offing, always about the plan. The lesson to be

learned here is that this day is to be spent, enjoyed and even treasured as it is, knowing that God will bring it to full fruition in a manner that exceeds our wildest imaginations.

Ephesians 3:20–21 (NKJV)

20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

VI. THE MINISTRY OF MESSIAH IS ULTIMATELY TRANSFORMATIVE

- a. Deaf hear
- b. Blind see
- c. Humble increase joy
- d. Poor rejoice

