

Luke 1:76

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

Analysis

Zacharias addresses his infant son John: 'And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest' (καὶ σὺ δέ, παιδίον, προφήτης ὑψίστου κληθήσῃ). The title 'prophet of the Highest' places John in the line of Old Testament prophets while emphasizing his unique role. The phrase 'thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways' (προπορεύσῃ γὰρ ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἐτοιμάσαι ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ) directly applies Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 to John. The pronoun 'his' (αὐτοῦ) refers to 'the Lord' (κυρίου)—when John prepared the way for Jesus, he prepared the way for Yahweh Himself, implying Jesus' deity. John's ministry would 'give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins' (v.77), defining salvation not as political freedom but as forgiveness.

Historical Context

Prophetic voices had been silent for 400 years since Malachi. John would break this silence as the last and greatest Old Testament prophet (Luke 7:28), serving as transition between old and new covenants. His message of repentance and baptism prepared hearts to receive the Messiah by creating spiritual hunger and conviction of sin. The emphasis on 'remission of sins' anticipates the new covenant promised in Jeremiah 31:34.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does John's role as forerunner demonstrate the necessity of conviction of sin before receiving grace?
2. What does the identification of Jesus with the Lord (Yahweh) in this prophecy teach about Christ's deity?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ σὺ παιδίον προφήτης ὑψίστου κληθήσῃ·
And thou child the prophet of the Highest shalt be called
G2532 G4771 G3813 G4396 G5310 G2564

προπορεύσῃ γὰρ πρὸ προσώπου κυρίου ἐτοιμάσαι
thou shalt go for before the face of the Lord to prepare
G4313 G1063 G4253 G4383 G2962 G2090

ὁδοῦς αὐτοῦ
ways his
G3598 G846

Additional Cross-References

Malachi 3:1 (References Lord): 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.

Matthew 3:3 (Prophecy): For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Matthew 14:5 (Prophecy): And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

John 1:23 (Prophecy): He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

Acts 16:17 (Parallel theme): The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

Mark 11:32 (Prophecy): But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

Luke 1:32 (References Lord): He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luke 1:35 (Parallel theme): And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.