

Luke 7:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

Analysis

Jesus identifies John as prophesied forerunner: 'This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee' (quoting Malachi 3:1). The fulfillment of prophecy authenticates both John and Jesus. Malachi's prophecy, given 400 years earlier, found precise fulfillment in John. The phrase 'before thy face' (Greek 'pro prosopou sou') indicates immediate preceding—John directly heralded Jesus's ministry. 'Prepare thy way' (Greek 'kataskeuasei ten hodon sou') uses construction metaphor—making roads passable by removing obstacles. John's preaching about repentance removed obstacles (self-righteousness, complacency) preventing people from receiving Messiah. Reformed theology emphasizes Scripture's fulfillment in Christ—Old Testament anticipates, New Testament realizes. The pattern continues—Holy Spirit prepares hearts to receive gospel.

Historical Context

Malachi was final Old Testament prophet. After him came 400 years of prophetic silence (intertestamental period) until John. This silence made John's appearance significant—prophetic word resumed. Malachi's prophecy was well-known; Jewish audiences awaited its fulfillment. Jesus's identification of John as the prophesied messenger validated both men's ministries. Early church used fulfilled prophecy as apologetic—Jesus wasn't random religious teacher but predicted Messiah. Matthew's Gospel particularly emphasizes fulfillment formulas ('that it might be fulfilled...'). For Luke's readers, prophetic fulfillment demonstrated Christianity's

continuity with Judaism—not novel religion but completion of God's redemptive plan. Modern application includes confidence in Scripture's reliability and unity—God's plan spans millennia, executing perfectly.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does fulfilled prophecy strengthen faith in Scripture's divine inspiration and reliability?
2. What does John's role 'preparing the way' teach about Holy Spirit's work preparing hearts for gospel?
3. How should Old Testament prophecy shape our understanding of Jesus's identity and mission?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλὰ	τί	ἐξεληλύθατε	ἰδεῖν	προφήτου	ναί	λέγω
But	what	went ye out	for to see	A prophet	Yea	I say
G235	G5101	G1831	G1492	G4396	G3483	G3004

ὕμῃν	καὶ	περισσότερον	προφήτου
unto you	and		A prophet
G5213	G2532	G4054	G4396

Additional Cross-References

Luke 20:6 (Prophecy): But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

Luke 1:76 (Prophecy): 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;

