

Mark 1:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Analysis

Mark begins his Gospel not with Jesus' birth but with Old Testament prophecy, establishing that Jesus' ministry fulfills God's eternal redemptive plan. The phrase 'As it is written in the prophets' (καθὼς γέγραπται) appeals to scriptural authority—Mark combines Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3, showing their unified fulfillment in Christ. The messenger 'before thy face' identifies John the Baptist as the forerunner preparing Christ's way. The Hebrew mal'ak (מַלְאָךְ) means both human messenger and angel—John functions as God's divinely appointed herald. John's ministry of repentance prepared hearts to receive the Messiah. Reformed theology emphasizes that God's redemptive plan spans history—Old Testament prophecy finds fulfillment in New Testament reality, demonstrating divine sovereignty over all events.

Historical Context

Mark wrote for a primarily Gentile audience, likely in Rome around AD 65-70, yet begins by citing Jewish Scripture, demonstrating Christianity's rootedness in God's Old Testament promises. The combination of Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 was common in ancient Jewish exegesis (gezera shawa). First-century Jews eagerly anticipated messianic deliverance and scrutinized prophets for signs. John's ministry (AD 27-29) fulfilled these prophecies, preparing Israel for Jesus' public ministry.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Mark's opening with Old Testament prophecy demonstrate that the Gospel fulfills God's ancient promises rather than inventing a new religion?
2. What does John the Baptist's role as forerunner teach about God's orderly preparation for major redemptive events?

Interlinear Text

Ὡς	γέγραπται	ἐν	τοῖς	προφήταις,	Ἰδοὺ,	ἐγὼ	ἀποστέλλω
As	it is written	in	G3588	the prophets	Behold	I	send
G5613	G1125	G1722		G4396	G2400	G1473	G649
τὸν	ἄγγελόν	μου	πρὸ	προσώπου	σου,	ὃς	
G3588	messenger	my	before	face	thee	which	
	G32	G3450	G4253	G4383	G4675	G3739	
κατασκευάσει	τὴν	ὁδόν	σου,	ἔμπροσθέν	σου,		
shall prepare	G3588	way	thee	before	thee		
G2680		G3598	G4675	G1715	G4675		

Additional Cross-References

Malachi 3:1 (Parallel theme): 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 11:10 (Parallel theme): For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

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;

Psalms 40:7 (Parallel theme): Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,

Matthew 26:31 (Parallel theme): Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

Luke 1:70 (Prophecy): As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: