

# Matthew 11:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

## Analysis

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Jesus quotes Scripture to identify John: 'For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.' This combines Malachi 3:1 with Exodus 23:20, applied directly to John the Baptist. The phrase 'before thy face' (πρὸ προσώπου σου/pro prosōpou sou) indicates John went immediately before Jesus, the final herald announcing the King's arrival. The verb 'prepare' (κατασκευάσει/kataskeuasei) means to make ready, to construct or repair—like preparing a road for royal procession. John's ministry prepared hearts through preaching repentance, exposing self-righteousness, and pointing to Christ. Reformed theology emphasizes this preparatory work of the law and conviction of sin precedes gospel reception. John represents this pattern: he proclaimed God's holiness, human sinfulness, coming judgment, and the need for a Savior. His baptism symbolized cleansing from sin, creating longing for the One who would baptize 'with the Holy Ghost, and with fire' (Matthew 3:11). That 'thy way' refers to Jesus demonstrates His deity—John prepared the way for Yahweh Himself.

## Historical Context

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Malachi 3:1, written approximately 450 BC, was the last prophetic book of the Old Testament. It predicted a messenger who would 'prepare the way before me,' looking forward to God's coming to His temple in judgment and purification. Jewish interpreters debated whether this messenger was Elijah returned (Malachi

4:5-6), an angelic being, or another prophet. Jesus identifies John as this prophesied forerunner, and elsewhere confirms John came 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' (Luke 1:17, Matthew 11:14). The dual citation—merging Malachi 3:1 with language from Exodus 23:20 (where God promised an angel to lead Israel)—emphasizes John's divine commission. By applying Malachi's 'prepare the way before me' (Yahweh speaking) to preparation for Jesus, the text implicitly affirms Jesus's deity. Early Christians used this verse extensively in evangelism to Jews, demonstrating Jesus's messianic credentials from Scripture.

## **Related Passages**

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## **Study Questions**

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1. How does the 'preparing the way' pattern in John's ministry apply to evangelism today—what prepares hearts to receive the gospel?
2. What does Jesus's identification as the One for whom Malachi predicted a forerunner reveal about His divine identity?
3. In what ways does John's ministry demonstrate that genuine Christianity begins with conviction of sin rather than positive-thinking?

## Interlinear Text

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οὗτός	γὰρ	ἐστιν	περὶ	ὃς	γέγραπται,	Ἴδού,	ἐγὼ
this	For	is	he of	which	it is written	Behold	I
G3778	G1063	G2076	G4012	G3739	G1125	G2400	G1473
ἀποστέλλω	τὸν	ἄγγελόν	μου	πρὸ	προσώπου	σου	ὃς
send	G3588	messenger	my	before	face	thee	which
G649		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

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**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.

**Isaiah 40:3** (Parallel theme): 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.

**Mark 1:2** (Parallel theme): As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

**Malachi 4:5** (Parallel theme): Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

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

**Matthew 3:3** (Parallel theme): 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.

