

## Four Points of Prophecy – Malachi 3:1-6

### I. Introduction:

- A. I'd like to take Brother Fulton's message from Sunday and preach again it in my own words.
1. It had the catchy title *"This is That,"* using Peter's words in **Acts 2**, where he said to the Jews: *"What you are seeing is that which was prophesied eight hundred years ago in the Old Testament book of Joel."*
  2. Austin's message was so good that it needs to be highlighted and reiterated.
- B. Four hundred years **after** the prophet **Joel**, and four hundred years **before** the birth of Christ, **Malachi** was given a prophecy about the **coming of Jesus** and the introductory ministry of **John the Baptist**.
1. That is what we read here in **Malachi** a few seconds ago.
  2. Moving into the New Testament, the first verses of the **Gospel of Mark** could have contained the words *"THIS is THAT which was spoken four hundred years ago by Malachi,"* but it didn't.
  3. Rather, it says, *"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;*
    - a. *As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*
    - b. *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."*
- C. There are several New Testament scriptures which point to **Malachi 3**, saying, *"This is that."*
1. For example, John's father, Zachariah was *"filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied, saying (to his new born son),*
  2. *"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, to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins."*
- D. Similarly, in **Matthew 1** we find the famous words of the angel as he spoke to the husband of Mary.
1. *"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*
    - a. *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*
    - b. *Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,*
    - c. *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."*
  2. The angel that day might have said, *"This is that"* which was spoken by **Isaiah** seven hundred years ago.
- E. In the days of the prophet **Isaiah**, Ahaz, the king of Judah was given an opportunity to look into the heart of the Lord, but he refused, pretending to be too humble or too polite to ask difficult questions of the infinite God.
1. So the Lord himself gave to the man a promise and prophecy.
  2. *"The LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,*
    - a. *Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.*
    - b. *But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.*
    - c. *And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?*
    - d. *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."*
  3. **Matthew 1:22** says, *"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet..."*
  4. *"This is that"* which was spoken by **Isaiah**.
- F. It is not so much the prophecy of **Isaiah** or even **Malachi** that I'm interested in this evening, but four points about nature of prophecy itself.

## II. God has often described events which were, at the time, still in the future.

- A. The Bible was written over a period of many hundreds of years.
1. This means that what is recorded in **Genesis** or **Exodus** was written centuries before the days of David.
    - a. And David's **Psalms** and history were recorded centuries before the days of **Isaiah** and **Malachi**.
    - b. And those prophet's words were inspired centuries before the days of the Lord Jesus and the Apostles.
  2. So when **Malachi**, prophesied about John and Christ, hundreds of years before they were born, he was being given divine revelation – supernatural knowledge.
- B. The Bible is not like a modern novel where the author knows how the book is going to end before he types the first word.
1. As far as the human penmen of the Bible were concerned, they were often writing about things which they didn't understand.
  2. Nevertheless they wrote as they were moved by the overseeing Holy Spirit of God.
  3. Specifically, what **Isaiah** wrote about a virgin conceiving and giving birth to Immanuel was written about seven centuries before the birth of the Lord Jesus.
  4. And what **Malachi** recorded was set in stone four centuries before its fulfilment in John and Jesus.
  5. But of course, the Lord knew both the beginning and the ending, while His prophets didn't.
- C. One important point needs to be emphasized: neither **Isaiah 7** nor **Malachi 3** were **deserved** by the hearers.
1. **The Lord was not obligated** to give Ahaz that prophesy about the virgin birth.
    - a. And that is true in regard to any and all the prophesies which are found in the Word of God.
    - b. The Lord doesn't owe anyone anything, and He wasn't enriched by these acts of His own grace.
  2. Every prophesy has been a **great** gift.
  3. That is something for which we should be **extremely thankful** this Thanksgiving.
  4. Multitudes of people have ignored that gift without ever seeing its value.
  5. But the wise invest it, banking it in their hearts by faith, & ultimately they will be enriched when it matures.
  6. At that time, they will be able to say, "**Hey, THIS is THAT which was prophesied.**"
- D. I am tempted to share another dozen prophesies and their fulfillments, but I'll limit myself this evening.

## III. Point number two – God **GUARANTEES** that what He foretells.

- A. There are hundreds of prophesies recorded in the Bible, beginning back in the early chapters of **Genesis**.
1. And while it is true that not all of those prophesies have yet been completely fulfilled as yet, it is also true that not one of them has failed.
  2. There are a great many prophesies which still apply to our future.
  3. But the fact remains that there isn't a shred of evidence that a single prophecy has ever failed.
- B. An in-depth study of all God's prophesies could really be a wonderful and beneficial thing.
1. Everyone of them which have been completed should be like another belt around the belly of our faith.
    - a. Another nail binding one plank of our faith to another.
    - b. Each prophecy is just one more rubber band around the all the documents of our faith and religion.
  2. But there could be an added blessing in such a study....
  3. We should be more acutely aware of what to expect and what it is that we are currently experiencing.
- C. Consider Jesus' so-called "**triumphal entry**" into Jerusalem just a few days before the crucifixion.
1. **John 12** – "**On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,**
    - a. **Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.**
    - b. **And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon.**"

2. **Matthew 21** adds another thought: *“And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.”*
3. This prophecy about the ass’s colt was given to **Zechariah** about 500 years before the birth of Christ.
  - a. *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”*
4. I will not deny that Christ Jesus went out of His way to make sure that the prophecy was fulfilled, but I don’t have a problem with that.
5. It illustrates my second point: God guarantees and orchestrates the fulfilment of His word.

#### IV. Point number three is that – Every **PROPHECY** of God is actually a **PROMISE** of God.

- A. Let’s say that I promise to give everyone who attends our evening service next Sunday \$100.00.
  1. There is only one way that is going to happen. I have to make it happen.
    - a. I doubt that hundred of dollars are going to fall from heaven at the close of that service.
    - b. A hundred dollars is not going to miraculously appear in people’s wallets or purses.
  2. The only way my promise will be fulfilled is if I go to the bank and draw a bunch of \$20.00 bills from my account.
  3. I will then have to bring them here with me in order to give them away.
  4. I have no control over whether or not the Lord will let me live that long, or if someone robs me, but I must do my best to bring to pass my promise.
- B. Every Biblical prophecy is a promise from God.
  1. Just like my promise, the Lord must take the steps necessary to bring that promise to pass.
  2. And thankfully, Jehovah has a lot more power and control over things than I have.
  3. He is **omnipotent**, meaning that there is nothing which He cannot do.
- C. This takes us back to that potentially insignificant prophecy about the ass’s colt.
  1. Some don’t like the fact that the Lord Jesus **asked** for this colt in order to specifically fulfil the prophecy.
  2. He did the same thing while hanging on the cross, forcing events in order to fulfil specific prognostications.
  3. But actually every prophecy is fulfilled in exactly the same way – the complete control & command of God.
  4. Some of the hundreds of Biblical predictions require miracles in order to be satisfied, while others only need the control of simple circumstances.
- D. Think, now, about the centuries-old statement which touched upon **the Lord Jesus’ miraculous conception**.
  1. It was prophesied that His mother would give birth even though she was a virgin – and she was.
    - a. It was also prophesied that Christ would be of the tribe of Judah.
    - b. And it was declared that He specifically would be one the descendants of King David.
  2. And here is another. One of my favorite prophecies in regard to the Lord is found in **Micah 5:2**.
    - a. Micah served the Lord about 700 years before Christ.
    - b. There is absolutely no way for the most ardent Bible-hater to prove that the **fulfilment** of the prophecy took place **before** the prophecy was written. This wasn’t a **post-dated check** from God.
    - c. **Micah** said, *“Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”*
  3. I love this verse for a half-dozen reasons.
    - a. One is that it teaches that the baby born in Bethlehem will be the **Messiah** – *“ruler in Israel.”*
    - b. A second is the way that it indirectly teaches the **deity of that Messiah** – *“whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”*
    - c. And then there is the reference to the somewhat **insignificant town of Bethlehem**.

- E. Remember that later some will reject Jesus, denying that He is the Messiah, **because** they **thought** that he was from **Nazareth**, way up by the Sea of Galilee.
1. Those Jews knew from **Micah 5:2** and other scriptures, that the Messiah had to be a son of David, and that he would be born in Bethlehem.
  2. Now, think back upon the way that Mary and Joseph were brought from Galilee to Bethlehem.
    - a. Was it miraculous that the Romans had demanded that everyone had to travel to the city of his fathers to be taxed? Or was the timing miraculous?
    - b. The unbeliever will talk about coincidences, but based upon the prophecies – the **promises** of God – there was **nothing accidental, coincidental** or **serendipitous** about it.
    - c. Yes, the birth in Bethlehem was miraculous, and wonderful, and God-honoring, and faith-building.

**V. Point number four – let's extend this thought into MYSTERIES MORE WONDERFUL than even prophesy.**

- A. God raised up a servant – a prophet to minister on His behalf during the days after the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity.
1. They were not serving the Lord very well, and yet they shouted at Malachi asking, ***“Where is the God of judgment.”***
  2. To that the Lord gave them a prophesy about the coming Christ and his forerunner, John the Baptist.
  3. The prophesy was given four hundred years before the fulfilment.
  4. We might call the power through which God could do these things is called His ***“sovereignty.”***
- B. And I'd like to impress upon you that this sovereignty is not confined to control over a few hundred special prophesies.
1. And here is the point to my fourth point.....
  2. Beyond the hundreds of prophesies, there have been a million quintillion other things in the last 6,000 years over which God has been in complete control.
  3. There is no such thing as **accident**, at least as far as Jehovah is concerned.
  4. There has **never** been the mutation of a tiny germ, which caused a major disease without the Lord being in complete control.
  5. And you are listening to this message, because the sovereign God ordained it.
  6. You may have been bored throughout this lesson, but I am convinced that a sentence or two pierced through the fog and entered your heart.
  7. And one day you will have to stand before the sovereign God to give an explanation for your reaction to those things which God ordained for you to hear.
- C. For example, God has given to every one of us evidence that Jesus is the Christ – the Son of God.
1. Among other Biblical statements, there are dozens and dozens of prophesies to that effect.
  2. Then extending our thoughts from the ***“messenger of the messenger,”*** John the Baptist, to Christ and on down to the crucifixion, our admiration, respect and faith should follow and be strengthened every step of the way.
  3. This One who so miraculously came into the world, came ***“to save his people from their sins.”***
  4. The sovereign God told us in regard to this salvation that we must repent before Him and to love and trust the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - a. We must, with broken hearts for our sin, bow in humble sorrow and repentance before His holiness.
    - b. And we must look to Christ Jesus and His death on the cross as the only way that our sins can be forgiven and covered.
    - c. The Bible, which has proved itself through hundreds and hundreds of prophesies, commands us all to ***“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”***