

Matthew 24 Series - Malachi 3:1

Part 5 in the Series - John the Baptist was the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy

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This will be our 5th in a series on Matthew 24. It is heartening to know that people are listening to the messages and beginning to send in questions concerning this most important subject. It seems, as guess, that just about every preacher has his "hot button" or opinion on what America needs most right now - and as you have become well aware - I'm no exception.

I'd like to take a large portion of our hour today or this evening if you are listening later, to kind of recap what we've discussed so far. I've held this belief for so long that it's like looking at the back of my hand to me. It's so much a part of me that you might even so I'm consumed with it - I see it on nearly every page of the Scripture as I read and study.

I believe the entire theme of Scripture is based on the fact that God has always wanted a people for Himself. He's always wanted someone to fly His flag. He's always wanted people to stand and put their hand on their heart when His music is played. He's always been looking for Onward Christian soldiers, if you will, who will fight for His Laws, judgements and commandments.

He's never changed His Will. Though mankind has rejected nearly every offer that God has provided to be man's provider and protector, He's never rescinded His offer to be man's King.

Once again I'm reminded of when the state troopers invaded our home and as I was sitting around the table telling them how that I have always tried to implement the Laws of God into my life - one of them responded - just as sincerely as can be - "Charlie, you really believe that God's Laws are better than our laws?"

As I said, he was actually being sincere. Believe me, most have mocked me through the whole process, but this one was sincere. He simply could not believe that someone would think that God's Laws were better than man's laws.

What does this mean? What does that say? It says that somehow, someway, men have been convinced that God's Laws are somehow bad. In fact, they are so bad, that men have been able to do something better than God Himself.

Can we not plainly see the enormous error in this type of thinking? Of course. Yahweh did away with the sacrifices - absolutely - no question. Christ died - when? "In the end of the world" to put away sin, by the sacrifice of Himself - and His sacrifice ended that system.

But the great majority of God's Laws are still in place. Just sitting there - in most cases being trampled on by preachers and their followers as if God had no idea what He was doing when He established His Law.

How did we get from king David saying,

"Great peace have they which love thy law: "

and

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, **thy law** is within my heart. "

and

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of **thy law**. "

Unless **thy law** had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

- 1.[97] O how love I **thy law**! it is my meditation all the day.
- 2.[109] My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget **thy law**.
- 3.[113] I hate vain thoughts: but **thy law** do I love.
- 4.[126] It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void **thy law**.

The struggle to keep God's Laws on the minds of hearts of people has been waging since the beginning of man.

When the deceiver spoke with Eve in the garden, the conversation began with the deceiver saying, "Yea, hath God said?"

This is what happens, God has said, then deceivers come along and begin to question this until finally - men fall from the state in which God intends for them to dwell.

The concern all the way back in the garden revolved around men doubting what God has said, then that doubt ends in being man - taking it upon himself to determine what is good and what is evil.

When John the Baptist preached, "Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" what he was doing was trying to get men once again, to stop trying to legislate their version of good and evil - and realize that God was getting very close to destroying their attempts and once again establish that He alone has the authority to determine what is good and what is evil.

Christ preached the same message.

Peter, James and John preached the same message.

Paul preached the same message.

God has said, "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." And that was 2,000 years ago.

Now, the Scriptures clearly show - if we just take them for what they say, you cannot separate His coming in the clouds - whatever that meant - with the coming of His Kingdom.

Why would all the prophecies concerning the Messiah point to the generation in which Jesus was born into - then the every single message include language that plainly talks about His soon coming Kingdom - if it was meant to be thousands of years yet in the future?

It doesn't make sense.

Open your Bibles with me to the book of Malachi and let's examine the prophecy concerning John the Baptist. Malachi chapter 3 verse 1.

As we begin reading, one of the things that I notice is that the prophecy does not seem impending to me. There are no phrases like, "the time is at hand" or "these are the days in which the prophets are fulfilled" there's none of that.

((((Read through the end of Malachi 3))))))

Let's keep going to chapter 4. Again, the language does not tend toward these events happening immediately.

Let's stop here after verse 1 and I want you to look at something.

He says the day cometh in that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Keep your finger in Malachi 4 and turn with me to Luke 3 and let's begin in verse 1:

[1] Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, [2] Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Here is John the Baptist coming to preach. Keep in mind what Malachi 3 said about "preparing the way..."

[3] And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

[4] As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

[5] Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

[6] And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

[7] Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

[8] Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

[9] And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Now look at this. What did he say?

And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down,

Why do you suppose John the Baptist used this language? Why would he use the nearly the exact language from Malachi?

These are not mistakes. They aren't coincidences. These are prophecies being fulfilled and being fulfilled exactly in the time frame in which God intended them to be fulfilled.

Go back to Malachi 4

[1] For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

So why would John the Baptist use language? Because he knew the Scriptures and knew that he was the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Do you know how many times the people asked him if he was the fulfillment of the prophecy? It's mentioned at least 6 times in the gospels.

I had a Baptist preacher tell me once that John the Baptist was not the fulfillment of the prophecy so that's how he knew those days were not the "end times."

So I asked him about Matthew 11:

- [1] And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.
- [2] Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,
- [3] And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?
- [4] Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:
- [5] The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.
- [6] And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.
- [7] And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?
- [8] But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.
- [9] But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.
- [10] For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.
- [11] Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.
- [12] And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.
- [13] For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.
- [14] And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.
- [15] He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.
- [16] But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

After this, the preacher said, see, it says "If ye will receive it, this is Elias...and since they didn't receive it, he wasn't the fulfillment concerning the prophet Elijah in the last days.

Amazing. My wife tells me that sometimes when I preach this series that I sound mad. Well, after almost 30 years of marriage, she knows me pretty well. I get mad when I think about the lies and the deception. I get passionate when trying to persuade men and women boys and girls that the deception is for the purpose of getting people to believe that the Kingdom of God is in the future and not for today.

The Kingdom of God is our only hope. Look at Acts 28. Here's Paul talking about hope.

[20] For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

What was the hope of Israel?

[27] For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

[28] Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

[29] And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

[30] And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

[31] Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

What was the hope of Israel? The Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God was the hope of Israel 2,000 years ago - and it's the hope for America today. It is the only hope this world has and multitudes of preachers have done everything within their power to say, "Hath God really said?" Did those men really say the Kingdom of God was at hand? Is that really what they meant?

In CI Scofield's notes on Revelation 14, he said that the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom is NOT FOR TODAY. When the gospel of the kingdom is the only hope for mankind and false teachers and preachers tell people that their lifeline - their only hope is not for today - it is something to be angry about. It is something to be passionate about.

I've compared my preaching to my wife like this. If one of our babies had been playing in the middle of the road and I saw a freight liner coming, would I just sweetly and kindly call to her and ask her to come out of the road? Of course, I'd yell and scream and get the attention of everyone to rescue my baby from a certain death.

Futurism is the freight liner barreling down the highway to destruction. When the only lifeline for the people of the Titanic was a ship that wasn't even built yet - all hope is lost. And that's what futurism does.

In past messages, I put it this way and it is the absolute truth. If what we are seeing today is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy - as in the wars, the increase of lawlessness, a move toward a one world government etc., if all that is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy - then whether you believe it or not - the result is not only is there nothing you can do about it - but there is nothing you should do about it.

Now let's talk about this move toward a one-world government. Everywhere you look, you see and hear people warning about The New World Order and a one world government and big brother and Orwell- etc. Well, if this is the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, why would anyone stand in the way. Wouldn't you want all this bad stuff to happen in order to get Jesus to come back sooner?

Think about this. What if what I'm saying is right? What if there are some very evil men who have been plotting a one-world government for evil purposes? For enslaving the world - for monopolizing the world's economy - for destroying your life and your children's lives for the sake of their own. What if someone like Bill Gates who believes in depopulation has targeted YOU for his plan of depopulation? Is that ok if it's done in the name of Bible prophecy?

What if there are men so evil and devious that they devised a false religion with a false hope for the sole purpose of rendering whatever opposition they might have - powerless? What if such a cabal exists? What if we are like sheep being led to the slaughter with a false hope of deliverance and the slaughterhouse is absolutely a real threat?

Well, I sure hate to be the bearer of bad news on that front - but that's what has happened. The promise of the rapture. The promise of Jesus coming back to earth to beat up on all our enemies is a false hope. It was devised by men far more evil in their thoughts and minds than you and I could ever be.

With this warning of impending doom that I am speaking about - do you realize there is hope? Do you realize it could all be turned around in a very very short amount of time?

Look with me to Acts 1. Let's begin in verse 1.

(((Read Acts 1:1-8)))

So they received power to be a witness for Christ to where? Even unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Now go on to verse 11. Look at what the angel said. You saw Him go. You are going to see Him return. Remember: Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom.

Go on to Acts chapter 2.

Beginning in verse 1.

As a result of their preaching that Christ is King - 3,000 souls were converted in one day.

In Acts 17 when it says, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither, whom Jason hath received, and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another King, one Jesus.

How long did it take them to turn the world upside down? They turned multitudes to Christ and His Kingdom and did so in a short period of time. And we could do the same.

Hopefully, some of you will be thinking, then what happened from these times to the destruction of Jerusalem at AD 70 where there was tribulation such as was since the beginning of the world to that time, nor would there ever be such again?

Because, even when faced with the clear truth of the present-day reality of the Kingdom of Christ, there will always be those who oppose it and fight against it. Who

will you be? I for one, do not want to be counted with those who oppose the Kingdom of Christ.

I am going to make the following statement and if you don't take it the way I'm saying it, it could be used against me. I am saying this in all humility. I am not wrong about the fact that Christ already returned. I am not wrong about teaching that Christ is not coming back to this earth. If I am guilty of anything, it is of preaching too much honor and glory to Christ the King.

If you are "on the fence" say to speak. Your mind isn't made up. Do you want to be on the side that says, "Jesus isn't King now and so all the governments around the world who oppose righteousness are to be obeyed in the place of Christ - which is what you have to do if He's not King now - or would you want to be on the "safe side" so to speak and follow Christ exclusively as King of kings and Lord of lords - right now.

I have made that decision. What is yours?

How does someone come to the conclusions I have come to?

1) I realized years ago, that not one word of the Bible was written to me. The book was written over a period of many hundreds of years and was finished before the year AD70. I wasn't alive. This understanding has made me realize that when Christ told His disciples, 2,000 years, "This generation, shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled." ALL ALL ALL had to happen in their generation or Christ lied.

As Luke put it in Luke 21:

And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

[30] When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

[31] So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

[32] Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

The second coming of Christ, if you will, cannot separated from the establishment of His Kingdom. To believe and preach such a thing requires the distortion of the Scriptures and twisting them into things they simply do not say.

It requires that we face the reality that either those things He spoke of DID happen to the people He told would be witnesses to those events - or He deceived them.

2) I have to believe that the end of the world spoken of in Matthew 24:3 has already occurred because Hebrews 9:26 says it as plainly as it can be said, For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Jesus Christ the Messiah often Himself a sacrifice in the end of the world.

And since I believe that Christ was the Messiah sent to this earth 2,000 years ago at the exact time prophesied by Daniel, spoken of by Moses, and presented by John the Baptist who was prophesied by Malachi, I have to believe that THOSE were the days of vengeance that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

And since all these things cannot be separated from the coming of Christ in glory with His angels - I must believe that He is King of kings and Lord of lords - and my beliefs are manifested in my life. I have no choice in the matter.

The destruction of Jerusalem and of those who stoned Stephen is proof positive that our God will avenge those who harm His sons and daughters. Those men and women boys and girls who suffered persecution because they chose to follow the King of kings and Lord of lords reaped rewards beyond the description of human words. They had their tears wiped away and their death sorrow and crying was taken away and they were caught in the clouds to meet their Lord in the air and partook in the greatest feast in the history of man at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

I have to believe these things because "Hath God said?" Absolutely, God hath said.