

The Eschatology of Malachi 4:1-6

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Abstract

This article exegetes the eschatology of Malachi 4:1-6. Most studies mention the subject in passing leaving the eschatology of the text opaque. The issue compounds when studies apply incomprehensive methodologies. The impact of this exegetical hole shows up in divergent views of fulfilment. A major area of interest among studies of prophetic texts. The article utilizes a multifaceted prophetic exegesis. The method incorporates various aspects of text analysis to define the eschatology within the text. It touches historical and literary aspects. It analyses issues related to typology. It's focus leads the exegete to give due attention to fulfilment of prophetic texts. It uncovers the eschatological substructure imbedded in the text. The approach demonstrates that Malachi 4:1-6 contains eschatological features in the immediate context. These features transcend the immediate context when the person of John the Baptist and Jesus enter the biblical narrative. Beyond these two biblical figures. The study considers eschatology in light of the NT. At the end, the article summarizes key findings

Keywords: eschatology, Malachi 4:1-6, prophetic exegesis

Introduction

The complexity of OT eschatology rears its head in difference of approach and the question of fulfilment of Malachi 4:1-6.¹ David Clark approaches Mal 4:4-6 using a history of tradition approach to reconstruct the origin and development of "Elijah as Eschatological High Priest."² Clark states "only once in the Old Testament does Elijah the prophet appear in an eschatological context; Mal 4:5-6."³ Blessing Boloje studies Malachi's view of temple rituals and its ethical import for the church from an exegetical-theological perspective.⁴ The approach of Boloje is both diachronic and synchronic in orientation.⁵ This type of approach is useful.⁶ Yet

¹Elmer Martins discusses major prophecies still considered unfulfilled and how scholars from different perspectives answer them. Martins notes that major questions of interpretation in relation to eschatology are answered according to main schools of thought such as dispensationalism, reformed/covenant theology, and mediating approaches. See Martins, "Eschatology," Prophets, 178.

²David G. Clark, "Elijah as Eschatological High Priest: An Examination of the Elijah Tradition in Mal 3:24-25" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1975), vii.

³Ibid., vii.

⁴Blessing O. Boloje, "Malachi's View on Temple Rituals and its Ethical Implications" (PhD diss., University of Pretoria.), xvii-xim.

⁵Ibid., 11-10.

⁶Ibid., 11.

Boloje does not utilize the approach to explore eschatology. Ellie Assis attempts a new reading on Mal 4:4-6 in his article entitled “Elijah and the Messianic Hope: a New Reading of Malachi 3:22-24.” The major thrust of the article is on establishing the unity of Mal 4:4-6 to the Malachian corpus. Assis convincingly demonstrates on literary grounds, its unity.⁷ Yet in the last section of the work, Assis discusses eschatology in relation to the “Expectation of the Coming of Elijah.”⁸

Besides lack of exhaustive studies or balanced approaches, the nature of fulfillment confronts the exegete. In general, fulfillment takes three strands.⁹ One strand of scholars argue for an immediate (historic/national) fulfillment in post-exilic times.¹⁰ A second strand of scholars contend that the fulfillment of the prophecy is in the Messianic age.¹¹ A third strand of scholars sees multiple fulfillments in various stages.¹²

Two primary problems surface in light of the discussion above. The first, approaches used to investigate Malachi are not balanced. A multifaceted approach urges the exegete to investigate the eschatology of Malachi. Hence the question naturally arises. How does a multifaceted approach help to clarify eschatology in Malachi?

The second, scholars disagree over the fulfillment of Malachi’s eschatology. Generally, one group of scholars thinks the prophecy was already fulfilled in the time of the prophet. A second group interprets the passage Messianically. They posit that fulfillment occurred during the first advent of the Messiah. A third group postulates the prophecy fulfills in different stages. Ultimately, it will be fulfilled during the Second Advent. Therefore another question foment, How should the eschatology of Malachi 4:1-6 be understood in relation to its fulfillment?

Method

In order to treat the questions posed above, the article attempts a multi-faceted prophetic exegesis. In a multifaceted prophetic exegesis¹³, the first hurdle to clear requires mining the text. Textual components like grammar, semantics, syntax, and textual criticism make their voice heard. The second hurdle involves the historical

⁷Elie Assis, “Elijah and the Messianic Hope: a New Reading of Malachi 3: 22-24,” *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 123 (2011): 209.

⁸Ibid., 214.

⁹The three views are not conclusive on scholarly consensus but rather are used generally for purposes of clear understanding of general trends of thought. Scholars vary in certain specifics. Variations will be pointed out as deemed necessary in footnotes.

¹⁰See Groenewald, “Day of Yahweh,” 59; O'Brien thinks Malachi’s eschatology is not a grand event but rather Malachi wanted to point out dangers of doubting God’s justice. See O’Brien, *Malachi*, 314. Verhoef is adamant that the day of Lord refers to exclusively to the covenant people. See Verhoef, *Book of Malachi*, 335.

¹¹Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 502.

¹²Douglas Stuart, “Malachi,” *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical & Expository Commentary*, ed. Thomas E McComiskey, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 3:1398.; see Scalise, “Book of Remembrance,” 571-581.; See also Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Nahum-Malachi, Interpretation* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1986), 194.

¹³For full discussion check Henry Tembo, “Eschatological Features of Malachi 4:1-6,” (Masters Thess., Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang ,Cavite Philippines, 2017), 59-70.

situation of the text. The third calls an exegete to clear literary analysis of the text in its book context. The fourth hurdle jumps over analysis of symbols and figures with the text. This is an important step because some figures carry a predictive direction.

Based on these four hurdles, an exegete describes the eschatology of the text. Eschatological concepts must be analyzed in strands of eschatological data within the OT.¹⁴ For instance, in what ways does Malachi connect the Day of the Lord to patriarchal promises, the Sinai covenant, the Kingship of David and other theological themes. The goal aims to understand eschatology in the mind of the original audience—Israel or Judah.

This data gives the exegete a resource to consider fulfillment. One must get a grasp on the biblical schema or patterns of fulfillment. Then one can use specific steps to analyze fulfillment.

Analysis of Fulfillment

When dealing with fulfillment, the exegete needs to give attention to schemas of fulfillment. The first schema involves the figure of Jesus plays a vital role. He saw himself as the fulfillment of the Hebrew scripture. In fact, Matthew, more than any gospel writer shows how Jesus fulfills the OT through his birth, life, death and resurrection.¹⁵ Moreover, Jesus announced, “the fulfillment of the Messianic age (Luke 4:16-21), of the arrival of the kingdom or reign of God (Matthew 12:28), and of the outpouring of the Spirit of God (Luke 24:39; Acts 1:8)”¹⁶ during the First Advent. These fulfillments were tokens of eschatological time.¹⁷

The second schema is the integral unity between Israel’s prophecy and the church.¹⁸ This schema recognizes that promises made to Israel apply to the church. The rationale for this unity is due to the covenant unfaithfulness of Israel.¹⁹ As a result, Jesus launched spiritual Israel through his church (Acts 2). The apostle Paul comments, “Neither are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: through Isaac your descendants will be named. That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants” (Rom 9: 7-8 NAS).

The third schema involves NT conceptualization for fulfillment after initial fulfillment in Christ. For example, Richard Davidson demonstrates that OT ‘gathering’ prophecies (Deut 30, Mic 4:6, etc) find literal fulfillment in Christ (the representative Israelite) “as he literally gathered the twelve disciples to Himself.”²⁰ Jesus literally gathered the twelve disciples to himself (Matt 4:18-21, Mar 1:16-20, Luk 6:13). Remarkably, the Synoptic writers use terms that connote gathering when Jesus called and selected the twelve disciples.²¹ Besides a literal fulfillment in Christ,

¹⁴See David L. Petersen, “Eschatology,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary (ABD)*, ed. David N. Freedman (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 2:575.

¹⁵See Matt 1:1-17, 1:21-22, 2:15, 3:3, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:14 for some examples.

¹⁶LaRondelle, *Israel in Prophecy*, 38.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹“The Role of Israel,” *SDABC*, 4:36-37.

²⁰Davidson, *OT Prophecies*, 200.

²¹Matthew and Mark use the προσκαλέω. The term connotes to invitation in order to secure someone’s presence. In contexts that use the root the notion is of a person coming into the presence of another. On the other hand, Luke uses the προσεφώνησεν and ἐκλεξάμενος. The latter conveys the sense similar notion like προσκαλέω (to summon, to call to oneself)

the ‘gathering’ prophecies find a spiritual fulfillment in the church.²² During the time of the church people are gathered spiritual gathered by faith to Christ (Matt 18:20).²³ The author of the Hebrews uses ‘gathering’ prophecy terms to warn his audience not to reject God’s grace. The implication of this schema is an interpreter of scripture should not be confined to a literalistic hermeneutic of Biblical prophecies.²⁴ Because the promises made to literal Israel find fulfillment in spiritual Israel.²⁵

To sum up, these schemas should not be isolated from each other but collate harmoniously. Christ is the goal of all OT Scriptures. In Him, OT prophecies find fulfillment, and He initiated OT eschatological hopes. Moreover, because of covenant unfaithfulness promises made to Israel find application in the church. The apostles helped to grow this new spiritual Israel. The NT consistently reveals that eschatology projects into the future.

Exegesis of Malachi 4:1-6

Exegesis of Malachi 4:1-6 demonstrates eschatology resides in the text.²⁶ The day of the Lord, the coming of Elijah, or the sun of righteousness portend eschatology. Concerns at this point turn to the second question of this study: the nature of it’s fulfillment.

Analysis of Fulfillment

Two correlating elements delimit Malachi as a conditional prophecy.²⁷ Malachi addresses ethical concerns such as lack of honor for God, the priesthood, rampant treachery, unfaithfulness in tithes, speaking against the Lord to cite a few. In addition, the technical collocation of *hinnē* and a participle shows the prophet had the immediate situation in mind. He envisioned and emphasized the nearness of Yahweh’s impending actions. Additionally, In 4:4 (3:22), Malachi invokes the figure of Moses to challenge the people to live by תורת משה (*tōrat mōšē*). Clearly, post-exilic Judah could fulfill these stipulations. In Jonah’s prophecy, the people fulfill the stipulations meted out by the prophecy and God averts judgment. However, Malachi’s the text does not say if the people fulfilled the challenge to remember תורת משה.

Malachi 4:1-6 employs typology in the figure of אליה הנביא (‘*ēlīyyahû hannābī*’).²⁸ The figure of אליה הנביא only occurs Malachi but the OT uses similar expressions אליה התשבי (‘*ēlīyyahû hattišbi*’) or אליהו הנביא (‘*ēlīyyahû hannābī*’). Elijah the Prophet appears for the first time in the book of 1 Kings. When he appears it is in

whereas ἐκλεξάμενος conveys the notion of choosing and can also mean the gathering of fruit. See BDAG.

²²Davidson, *OT Prophecies*, 200.

²³Davidson, *OT Prophecies*, 200.

²⁴LaRondelle, *Israel in Prophecy*, 32.

²⁵“The Role of Israel,” *SDABC*, 4:36-37.

²⁶For fuller discussion of all the eschatological features the reader may consult, Henry Tembo, “Eschatological Features in Malachi 4:1-6 (Thesis, Adventist Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines), 96.

²⁷See Ch. 2 p. 41.

²⁸Friedbert Ninow, “Indicators of Typology Within the Old Testament: The Exodus Motif,” (PhD diss., Andrews University, 1999), 109 To say convincingly that אליה הנביא is a typological figure five criteria must be met: historical aspect, divine design, prophetic control, *Steigerung* (intensification) and eschatological control

the context of delivering a message for God e.g. 1 Kgs 17:1. In fact, the name and title *נביא אליה הנביא* cogently capture this idea. The noun *נביא* means a male spokesperson for God.²⁹ In three case, 1 Kings 17:8, 16, and 24 *אליה* is connected to the collocation *דבר־יהוה* (*dēḇar-yhwh*). Remarkably, in 2 Kgs 1:3 *אליה* delivers a message to *מלך־מלאכי* (*mal'ākē meleḵ-šōmrôn*). The observation shows that *אליה* (*'ēlīyahû*) was a historical individual, he was divinely called as a spokesperson for Yahweh.

Does the OT indicate Elijah is type within its immediate context or another context? In 1 Kings 18:21, Elijah asked the people the question to decide to follow Yahweh or Baal. Israel under the leadership of Ahab had turned away from Yahweh. The people became uncommitted to Yahweh. So Elijah's ministry functioned to call the people back to God. This is the case with the Elijah of Malachi—his mission is to lead Israel back to a right relationship with God.

Steigerung (intensification) and eschatology are elements that pertain to a types antitype and NT eschatology (fulfillment).³⁰ Are the intensification and eschatology in *אליה הנביא*? The evidence suggests so. *אליה הנביא* serves a preparatory function before the great DOL and to the *sun of righteousness*. The Matthean presentation of *אליה הנביא* confirms the *steigerung* and eschatological control. Matthew 11:9-10 reads:

But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet. “This is the one about whom it is written, ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.’”³¹

Notice in v.11 the expression *more than a prophet*. What is the meaning of this phrase? Verse 10 answers by pointing to the fact that he prepared the way for *your face*. In the context of Matthew, *your face* refers to Jesus Christ. It is interesting to note in v.11 that the anti-typological Elijah is dubbed the greatest prophet. In addition in v.13, it points out that all the prophets prophesied until John. And in v.14 Jesus simply says: “And if you care to accept *it*, he himself is Elijah, who was to come.”³² With these observations, *אליה הנביא* is a prophet extraordinaire. None is like him. Interestingly though in v.11, Jesus says that the one who least in heaven is greater than typological Elijah. Thus, the greatness must be seen confined to the prophetic role and function as a precursor to the Messiah which no other prophet fulfilled but all pointed to it.

The next step here is to analyze the type of prophetic prediction. Is Mal 4:1-6 a kingdom prophecy, a Messianic prophecy, or an oracle against a foreign nation? The totality of Malachi is a prophecy concerning Israel. The expression *אלי־ישראל* (*'ēlōhē yiśrā'ēl*) in 2:16 indicates this fact. In 1:2-5 Malachi mentions *אדום/עשו* (*'ēḏôm*) but it's in the context of יהוה's love for Israel.³³ Interestingly in Obad 18, *קש* (*qaš*) refers to Edom but 4:3 it refers to “the stubble of Israel.”³⁴ In sum, the prophecy is about Israel.

Three promises are given to Israel in 4:1-6. In 4:2, the promise is that the sun of righteousness will arise with healing in her wings and the righteous will rejoice. In 4:3, the righteous are promised that they will tread upon the wicked. And last, they are promised the arrival of Elijah. Inversely, for *כל־זדים* וכל־עשה רשעה (*kol-zēḏim*

²⁹J. Jeremias, “נביא.” *TLOT*, 2:698.

³⁰Davidson, “Eschatological Hermeneutic,” 41.

³¹NAS

³²NAS.

³³See who discusses these foreign nations. Daniel C. Timmer, *The Non-Israelite Nations in the Book of the Twelve* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2015), 1999.

³⁴See Hill, *Malachi*, 347.

w^akol-^cōsê^b riš'â) God threatens with judgment. They will be totally annihilated. And also if there is not reconciliation or restoration the whole land will be totally destroyed.

The promise/threat or blessing/curses pattern is built upon the Pentateuch. Specifically in Deut 4, 28-32 and Lev 26. In all these chapters, Israel is commanded to be faithful to יהוה. Stuart particularly highlights connections between Malachi and Deuteronomy.³⁵ The basis or standard of faithfulness was החקים והמשפטים (ḥuqqim ûmišpāṭim), or מצותי (mišwōṭay). In short, Yahweh's his requirements for his people. Deut 4:10-11 reveals that it was in הרב (ḥōrēb) God revealed these requirements. It is no wonder why Malachi speaks of הרב in 4:4.³⁶ Deut 4:14 specifically states, "And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might perform them in the land where you are going over to possess it."³⁷ Analogous to 4:14, Malachi mentions statutes and judgments. Remarkably, Deut 4:10 mentions that the purpose of the requirements was to teach the people ליראה (l'yr'â). ירא (yireh) is the same root in יראי (yirehi) mentioned in 4:2. No wonder יראי שמי (yir'ē šmî) receive the promises they do. It is important to note that promises and fulfillment thereof were the direct results of meeting the requirements of God and curses vice versa.

In a similar fashion, Malachi's conceptions of the promise/threat pattern are the same. Confrontation 6 deals with two groups. The כל־יזדים וכל־עשה רשעה and יראי שמי or יראי יהוה. The characterization of the two groups is such that the כל־יזדים וכל־עשה רשעה are described as those speaking stout words against God and have deemed wickedness the right course of action. On the other hand, יראי שמי or יראי יהוה still remain faithful to God. It is reasonable that in the call to remember the תורת משה and the introduction of אליה הנביא is an opportunity for the unfaithful to become faithful. However, Malachi's eschatology shows that on the coming day of judgment the fate of the כל־יזדים וכל־עשה רשעה is disastrous. Yet for יראי שמי or יראי יהוה it is fortuitous.

4:1-6 is also a Messianic prophecy with the metaphor of rising of the of שמש צדקה (šemeš š'dāqâ) The meaning of the metaphor is debatable among scholars.³⁸ Hla's dissertation on the expression argues that the metaphor is Messianic.³⁹ Hla lays out several arguments but two are sufficient here.⁴⁰ Before a discussion of His arguments, the context in which שמש צדקה appears is salvific for the יראי שמי. As opposed to the wicked who are totally annihilated. Likewise, other Messianic contexts stress salvation e.g. Gen 3:15, Isa 60:1-2, Isa 59:20.

Hla bases the Messianic identification of שמש צדקה on two points. (1) שמש צדקה fits as a figure for the Messiah since righteousness describes his work and

³⁵Stuart, *Malachi*, 1257.

³⁶Stuart, *Malachi*, 1256.

³⁷NAS

³⁸See Connaly Hla's diss. for a detailed discussion of the issues. Hla, "Sun of Righteousness," 1-5.

³⁹Ibid., 133-143.

⁴⁰The verb זרה appears in Messianic prophecy and contexts, שמש צדקה is parallel to the Messianic figure of 3:1, the preparatory ministries of Elijah the prophet (4:5) and my messenger are parallel, the terms שמש and צדקה individually appear in connection to Yhwh, the syntactical function of שמש צדקה stresses righteousness thus figure would usher in righteousness.

person.⁴¹ Incisively, Hla shows the construct שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָה stresses righteousness.⁴² He rightly comments, the Messiah is the embodiment of righteousness.⁴³ In fact, an appellative for the Messiah is “Yhwh (is) our righteousness.”⁴⁴ (2) The preparatory work of מְלַאכֵי אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיא parallels the preparatory work of מְלַאכֵי (mal'ākī). מְלַאכֵי prepares the way for both הַאֲדֹנָי (the Lord) and מְלַאכֵי הַבְּרִית (mal'āk habb'rit). For Hla the two lexes refer to the same personage—the Messiah.⁴⁵ Hla's thinks the act of purification by מְלַאכֵי הַבְּרִית fits “the cleansing of the temple by Jesus Christ.”⁴⁶ Hla's argument is that since מְלַאכֵי prepares the way for the Lord and the Messenger of the covenant—a Messianic figure, then מְלַאכֵי אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיא preparatory work concerns שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָה. This seems correct because of the syntactical arrangement of 3:1 and 4:5 is very similar.⁴⁷ שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָה relates to ANE conceptions of divinity.⁴⁸ Yet Hla shows Malachi uses the expression to stress “forthcoming divine guidance and promised savior.”⁴⁹ In the main, these arguments are amenable.

The type of Messianic prophecy here is unique. It is not rectilinear (e.g. Micah 5:2 which tells exactly of the Messiah's birthplace) nor typological (e.g. Genesis 22 in which Isaac represents the sacrifice of the Messiah).⁵⁰ In this case שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָה is a metaphor. It is not typological because it does not meet the basic historical criteria. So besides rectilinear, typological, or NT applications as Messianic prophecies. Verse 2 reveals that Messianic prophecies might be identified by other elements i.e. metaphors.

In light of the above analysis, Mal 4:1-6 has greater significance beyond Malachi's immediate context. One indication of greater significance is the usage of the imperfect aspect which shows the text is eschatological. In addition, the elements of שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָה and מְלַאכֵי אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיא portend greater significance. Both elements are inextricably bound. The text shows that מְלַאכֵי אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיא must precede שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָה. Thus their greater significance must be in relation to the other. Isaiah 40:3 and Mal 3:1 buttress this idea. The texts read

“A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.”⁵¹

“Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me....”⁵²

⁴¹According to Hla several scholars make this argument. See Hla, “Sun of Righteousness,” 156.

⁴²See Ibid., 142.

⁴³Ibid., 143.

⁴⁴Ibid., 156.

⁴⁵Ibid., 157. Also Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 131-32 sees the correlation between the two terms. See also Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi*, 131-32. Gerard van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990), 930-31

⁴⁶Hla, “Sun of Righteousness,” 157.

⁴⁷See on page 71.

⁴⁸R. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 339.

⁴⁹Hla, “Sun of Righteousness,” 176.

⁵⁰JoAnn Davidson, “Eschatology and Genesis 22,” *JATS* (2000): 232-247.

⁵¹Isaiah 40:3 NAS.

⁵²Malachi 3:1 NAS.

The figures used to prepare the way are differently called קול (qôl) and מלאכי. קול refers to a loud noise made by people, animals, musical, thunder clouds.⁵³ Scholars debate the identity of the voice yet what's clear is the message of קול.⁵⁴ That is "prepare ye the way of the Lord." The voice is loud and clear for all to hear.⁵⁵ It is logical to deduce the Lord cannot precede the proclamation of קול. This same order is implied in Mal 3:1. However, מלאכי does utter direct speech as does קול. However by virtue of his name *my messenger* he must also deliver a similar preparatory message. Both Isaiah 40:3 and Mal 3:1 utilizes the same verbal root פנה. The root denotes to turn away, tidy up, remove, clear up, bring some attention to or prepare.⁵⁶ Holmes shows that only in Isa 40:3 and Mal 3:1 is the nuance of prepare used.⁵⁷ The two verse also utilize the noun דרך. These connections show that these two texts are similar. Since the analysis in Malachi showed that אליה הנביא and מלאכי are the same figures then קול is another name for אליה הנביא. Holmes poignantly demonstrates the connection between the three names אליה הנביא, מלאכי, and קול in relation to Matthew's gospel. He writes

John appears (a) in the wilderness, (b) preaching repentance and the nearness of the kingdom, and so he is identified as the 'voice' that (a) cries out in the wilderness, (b) 'Prepare the way of the Lord!' and announces the advent of the new exodus. This 'voice' is linked by verbal and thematic ties to Mai 3:1 and the 'messenger,' which in turn is linked to Exod 23:20 and fits with Matthew's exodus/new exodus motif. These passages together are linked to Mal 4:5 where the messenger is identified as 'Elijah.'⁵⁸

So, it is plausible to conclude that אליה הנביא, מלאכי, and קול are one in the same. Consequently, before Malachi or Matthew had conceptualized a typological figure of Elijah Isaiah had theorized it.

The task of preparation accomplished by קול is also carried by אליה הנביא and מלאכי. מלאכי prepares the way before the lord and Messenger of the covenant.⁵⁹ אליה prepares/restores Israel before the great and awesome DOL.⁶⁰ This motif of preparation will be discussed in lieu of fulfillment of the prophecy. At this juncture, it is inferred that אליה הנביא, מלאכי, and קול are one in the same personage. This portends אליה הנביא has greater significance. It is true Malachi expected the prophecy to be fulfilled in his time. However, fulfillment could not take place unless אליה הנביא and שמש צדקה appear in order. Thus, a prophecy finds fulfillment when there is evidence of fulfillment. In the case of the Isaiah 7:14 there is clear indication of historical

⁵³Koehler and Baumgartner, *HALOT*, s.v. "קול."

⁵⁴Jeremy Holmes, "Matthew's Vision: The Unity of the Formula Citations in Matt 1:1-4:16," (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2007), 95.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Koehler-Baumgartner, *HALOT*, s.v. "פנה."

⁵⁷Holmes, "Matthew's Vision," 152.

⁵⁸Ibid., 152.

⁵⁹Malachi 3:1.

⁶⁰See exegetical analysis on page 31. Burnett states, "Luke continues to accrue echoes of the Hebrew prophets in John's ministry by noting that he proclaimed a message of μετανοία (repentance). John's call to repentance is comparable to the Hebrew term *shuv* (to turn), which numerous prophets employed throughout Israel's Scriptures to encourage the people of God to set aside their sin, return to their privileged relationship with Yahweh, and live as they have been called."

fulfillment with the fall of Samaria and Damascus respectively.⁶¹ Yet, the text warrants fulfillment beyond this historical fulfillment.⁶²

Because there is a lack of evidence of fulfillment of 4:1-6, attention now turns to the NT. It must be pointed out that the analysis that follows does not look exactness in fulfillment since there is a paradigm shift in consideration of the schema of fulfillment established in Ch. 2. A prophecy must find fulfillment Christologically primarily. But it also considers ecclesiological element since the nature of Israel has changed from a literal Israel to a spiritual one and not all elements find fulfillment at once. Also, the NT allows for future projection of a prophecy beyond the initial/primary Christological fulfillment.

The analysis that follows here concentrates primarily on Matthew. This is because Matthew's gospel employs πληρω (plērō). The term means to fill, complete, finish something already begun.⁶³ Holmes posits that πληρω's usage in the narrative refers to the most fulfillment of prophecy.⁶⁴ This is not saying the two Synoptics or John do not use πληρω for they do and will be used when necessary. However, in relation to OT quotations, Matthew quotes forty-two times in comparison to nineteen of Mark and Luke, and fourteen of John.⁶⁵

Three texts (Matt 3:3, 11:10, and 11:14) mention three different names of the typological Elijah. It is interesting that the first mention of the typological Elijah is introduced in what might be called a progressive revelatory fashion in Matthew. In 3:3 he is introduced as a Φωνη (voice) just as קול. Matthew uses a capital phi. Accordingly, indicating it should be understood as a proper name. Here Matthew cites Isaiah 40:3. In 11:10 Matthew introduces him as the τὸν ἄγγελόν μου (*ton aggelon mou*) equivalent to מלאכי. Here Matthew cites Mal 3:1. And in 11:14 he is introduced as Ηλιας (Ēlias) equivalent to אֵלִיָּא. There is no scriptural citation per se but the clause “ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι” (*ho mellōn erchesthai*.) is insightful. The present participle μέλλων conveys the notion of a future action that will certainly take place.⁶⁶ The infinitive ἔρχεσθαι (*erchesthai*) nuances purpose here.⁶⁷ The sense of the clause is the literally the *one who is purposed to come*. It is illuminating that the equivalent ἔρχεσθαι is אָבָה. This is a very prominent term in 4:1-6. The sense of אָבָה (yābō') in Malachi 4:1-6 is the announcement of the arrival of an event. In light of Malachi's eschatological context “ὁ μέλλων ἔρχεσθαι” should be understood as the arrival/fulfillment of typological figure. The Matthean revelation of the typological follows the order of Isaiah 40:3, Mal 3:1 and 4:5 as presented in the OT. This date points to fulfillment for the typological figure of Elijah in John the Baptist.

As stated above the typological figure and the messianic שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָקָה are inextricably bound together. This means as the Elijah found fulfillment in John the

⁶¹See page 50.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, “Based on Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch Zu Den Schriften Des Neuen Testaments Und Der Frhchristlichen [Sic] Literatur, Sixth Edition, Ed. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, With Viktor Reichmann and on Previous English Editions by W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker.”, 3rd (2000) s.v. “πληρω.”

⁶⁴Holmes, “Matthew's Vision,” 150.

⁶⁵Ibid., 1.

⁶⁶Bauer-Danker, *BDAG*, s.v. “μελλω.”

⁶⁷Wallace, *Basics of NT Syntax*, 256.

Baptist so *שִׁמְשׁ צְדָקָה* must equally be fulfilled. Zechariah's words to his son (John the Baptist) show this fulfillment. He says

“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high shall visit us, To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.”⁶⁸

The Hymn sang by Zechariah in v. 76 points out that John would be a prophet of the most high God.⁶⁹ And that his role would be to “prepare His ways.” This no doubt refers to his preparatory ministry. And then he sings “the sunrise from on high shall visit us.” The Greek term for sunrise is the answer is ἀνατολή (anatele). The term refers to the upward movement of celestial bodies, rising sun, a change from darkness to light.⁷⁰ The LXX uses the verbal form ἀνατελεῖ (anatelei) in 4:2.⁷¹ The verb refers to the sun of righteousness. Thus, Luke's usage ἀνατολή no doubt refers to 4:2.⁷² Bock observes the mission of the Messianic *שִׁמְשׁ צְדָקָה*. He notes, “Zechariah concludes the hymn and describes Messiah's mission of guiding the lost, those dwelling in darkness, into God's way.”⁷³ Furthermore, notice Jesus response when John refused to baptize him, “Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”⁷⁴ Robert Mounce commented, “The righteousness fulfilled by the act was the ethical expectation of those who had repented of their sin and had symbolized their change of heart by being baptized.”⁷⁵ Holmes observes that δικαιοσύνη in relation to OT of the text means his saving act.⁷⁶ This is correct for Jesus himself declared “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.”⁷⁷ Therefore it can be concluded that Mal 4:1-6 has a primary Christological fulfillment.

There is also an ecclesiological fulfillment of this prophecy. Elijah the prophet prepare or restore sons and fathers to God. Notice Luke's commentary on the “Elijah-like prophet” (John the Baptist)⁷⁸ in Luke 1:17. He writes, “And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”⁷⁹ 1:17 clearly echoes to Mal 4:6. Both LXX uses terms that connote the idea of bringing back to an original condition to describe the *turning of hearts*.⁸⁰ The Lukan text shows that first, the work of John Baptist would “make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Secondly, it would make

⁶⁸Luk 1:76-79 NAS

⁶⁹Darrel L. Bock, *Luke*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament ECNT (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker, 1994), 186.

⁷⁰Bauer-Danker, *BDAG*, s.v. “ἀνατολή.”

⁷¹Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 193.

⁷²Clendenen, *Haggai-Malachi*, 452.

⁷³Bock, *Luke*, 192.

⁷⁴Matt. 3:15 NAS

⁷⁵Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 25.

⁷⁶Holmes, “Matthew's Vision,” 151.

⁷⁷Jn. 3:17 NAS.

⁷⁸“Elijah like Prophet” is adopted from Burnett, “Eschatological Prophet of Restoration,” 10.

⁷⁹NAS.

⁸⁰Bauer-Danker, *BADG*, s.v. “ἀποκαθιστάνω,” “ἐπιστρέψαι.”

ready the way of the Lord (Luk 1:76).⁸¹ This is significant in lieu of the fact that the early church was called *The Way*.⁸² Notice Acts 18:25 which states, “This man had been instructed *in the way of the Lord*; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with *the baptism of John*.”⁸³ This means that only did the ministry of John prelude the coming of Messiah but also it preceded the established and was essential for the foundation of the church.⁸⁴

So far the discussion has dwelt primarily on the metaphorical Messianic and typological prophet. However, a key element of 4:1-6 is יום. The table below is helpful to see its occurrence in Mal.

According to the layout of the table, the concept appears only chapter 3 if we follow the Hebrew numbering. It is part of three distinct units. It occurs most in confrontation six that concerns the distinction between עֵבֶר אֱלֹהִים (‘aḇōd ’ēlōhim) and לֹא עֲבָדוּ לֹא (lo‘aḇōd ’ē). And it also occurs most with the verb בּוֹא. In collocation with בּוֹא Malachi communicates unequivocally that a moment is coming that יהוה will act. This makes sense in light of the diminished eschatological hopes of Malachi’s audience.

In unit six, some conclude that it’s better to live a wicked lifestyle than to serve יהוה (v.13-15). Whereas others remain committed to יהוה (v.16-17). Verse 13-14 and 16-17 are antithetical to each other. According to Malachi’s conceptions of הַיּוֹם בָּא is the definitive day that antithesis between עֵבֶר אֱלֹהִים (‘aḇōd ’ēlōhim) and לֹא עֲבָדוּ לֹא (lo‘aḇōd ’ē) becomes clear (cf.) v.18. Put succinctly, it is a day of reckoning.⁸⁵ It is important to understand the sequence of events here as Malachi presents them. As demonstrated above the order between the metaphorical Messianic and typological prophet is fixed. The typological prophet comes before the metaphorical Messianic figure. But when you consider 4:1-3 the order is inverted in respect to the day of the Lord.⁸⁶ Hla demonstrates the inversion

- 4:1 Coming of the destruction of the wicked
- 4:2-3 Coming of the “Sun of righteousness”
- 4:5 Coming of Elijah before the Day of Yhwh⁸⁷

Hla’s observations are correct here. However, it is important to note that the “coming of Elijah before the Day of Yhwh” is not a part of the same unit six. So, in effect, Elijah is not mentioned in the confrontation. It seems that here more than in 3:1 (which mentions מְלֹאכִי who is the same as אֱלִיָּה הַנְּבִיא) the focus on showing the connection between the Messianic figure and יום. In other words, when the Messianic figure arrives on the scene so will the הַיּוֹם בָּא (the day of God’s action).

The metaphor “Sun of righteousness” is central to the text here. It is the figure that brings healing and exuberant joy to יִרְאֵי שְׁמִי. This becomes clear in light of the Luke 1:78. The text reads, “Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the

⁸¹Burnett, “Eschatological Prophet of Restoration,” 16.

⁸²Ibid. cf. Acts 9:2, 18:25, 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22.

⁸³NAS.

⁸⁴Burnett, “Eschatological Prophet of Restoration,” 17. Burnett states, “John inaugurates a movement that extends to the early disciples in Acts and ultimately to the ends of the earth, namely, Gentiles.” Although there is no indication that John ever baptizes a non-Jew, he fulfills his task of preparing Israel for her global mission.”

⁸⁵Stuart, *Malachi*, 1386.

⁸⁶Hla, “Sun of Righteousness,” 125.

⁸⁷Ibid., 125.

sunrise from on high shall visit us.”⁸⁸ Simply it can be said salvation is a major element here. Hla’s observations are correct in light unit four 3:1-5. The order of events then is

The preparatory work of typological Elijah
 The appearance of the Messianic figure
 The day of יהוה act

Verse	Unit	Context/cause of יום	Sense of יום
3:2	4	“Where is the God of Judgement?” 2:17	ומי מכלכל את-יום בואו Who may stand the day of his coming?
3:16	6	“you have criticized me sharply,” and “useless to serve” v.13, 14.	ליום אשר אני עשה סגלה in the day I prepare my special property.
4:1	6	Distinction between עבד אלהים and לא עבדו	כי-הנה היום בא Behold the day comes
4:1	6	Distinction between עבד אלהים and לא עבדו	ולהט...היום הבא And will burn...the coming day.
4:3	6	Distinction between עבד אלהים and לא עבדו	ביום אשר אני עשה In the day I will act
4:5	Epilogue	Command to remember תורת משה	לפני בוא יום יהוה Before the coming day of the Lord

The correlation of יום with the typological and Messianic figures logically portend greater significance. Matt 3:1-12 is the focus now. In John’s preparatory work before the coming of the Messiah are interesting connections to Malachi 4:1-3. These are not only thematic and also terminological.

⁸⁸NAS.

Mal 4:1-6	Matt 3
burning imagery v.1	fire terms v.10, 11, 12
the day is coming v.1	wrath to come v.7
useless chaff set ablaze v.1	root of trees cast into fire v.10
root or branch v.1	root of the trees v.10.
Restoration (change) v. 6	Repentance (change) v.8
father son imagery v.6	Abraham our father v.9

The addressees of John here are the Sadducees and Pharisees (7-12).⁸⁹ When they come to John he poses the question, “who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”⁹⁰ In this question is a clear indication John and both the Sadducees and Pharisees understood judgment was coming. The noun ὀργή (orgē) refers wrath of God’s future judgment.⁹¹ The NT concept stands for “settled opposition of God’s holy nature to everything that is evil.”⁹²

The text employs the present participle μελλούσης. The meaning of the root is something that is inevitable.⁹³ The judgment pictured has not come but it is about to come. This sense of immanence τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς (tēs mellousēs orgēs) connects to the imminence of הַיּוֹם הַבָּא. Remarkably, Paul comments in Rom 2:5 “But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourselves in the day of wrath, when God’s righteous judgment is revealed.”⁹⁴ Notice the expression ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς (en hēmera orgēs). Thus, what John has in mind is a specific day of judgment. Rev 6:17 also uses ὀργῆς with ἡμερᾶ. The text reads “For the great day of his wrath comes, and who is able to withstand it.”⁹⁵ This text clearly alludes to Mal 3:2. The parallels are striking. The text is presented as a question, who is able to withstand it?

3:2	6:12
The question: Who can endure the day of his coming? (Mal. 3:2 NET)	The question: because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to withstand it?" (Rev. 6:17 NET)

⁸⁹Gary Yamasaki, “John the Baptist in the Gospel of Matthew: a Narrative-Critical Analysis,” (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1995), 41.

⁹⁰NET.

⁹¹Bauer-Danker, *BDAG*, “ὀργή.”

⁹²Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew The Pillar New Testament PNTC* ed DA Carson (Grand Rapids, Mich.; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 58.

⁹³Bauer-Danker, *BDAG*, “μελλω.”

⁹⁴NET.

⁹⁵NET.

Possession of the day: “the day of his coming” (Messianic figure)	Possession of the day: “their wrath has come” (the lamb)
Inability to stand it: “who can endure”	Inability to stand: “who is able to withstand it?”
The announcement of arrival: “his coming”	The announcement of arrival: “wrath has come.”

The NT consistently shows that this judgment concerns the wicked or those set in evil i.e. Mat 3:7, Luk 3:7, Rom 2:5, Rev 6:16, 17, 14:10, 16:19, 19:15. Yamasaki remarks that the question is a sarcastic taunt of the leaders because they had not intent on being baptized.⁹⁶ The attitude of Sadducees and Pharisees parallels the proud described in confrontation six. The conclusion that serving God is useless indicates opposition to God and his way (Mal 3:14-15).

Mal 4:6 pointed out that the typological figure would restore broken relationships. In Matt 3:9, John makes it clear to them that their relation as the children of Abraham did not preclude them from repentance or change. The usage of this father/child imagery correlates well to Malachi 4:6. Malachi’s usage of the imagery describes the relationship between God and Israel. So here, John the Baptist uses it to highlight a correct relation to God. John then incorporates similar terms like Malachi to make his point to them as highlighted in the parallels. John’s incorporation of similar terms as Malachi makes it possible to postulate that the preparatory message of John here still anticipates the *יום יהוה*. This buttresses the idea of the order of the events in 4:1-6. Thus, the typological figure not only prepares the way for the Jesus Christ but also announces that the judgment is coming.

If the prophetic Elijah is connected to the day of the Lord so must the Messianic figure. Notice what John says in v.11-13

“As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. “And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”⁹⁷

The reference here is clear about whom John prepares the way for. As proved above the Messianic figure. John clearly recognizes the person⁹⁸ coming is great or than he is. Notice the text says, “ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος” (ho de opisō mou erchomenos). ἐρχόμενος is Greek equivalent of *בוא*. The collocation of “ὁ...ἐρχόμενος” is a Messianic formula (Luk 3:16, John 4:25, 7:27, 31, Matt 11:3, Luk 7:19, Heb 10:37). It is used for Messianic expectations. In this instance, John characterizes the one coming after as baptizer with the Holy Spirit and fire. Gary Yamasaki argues that the reference to the Holy Spirit and fire refers to both to blessing and judgment.⁹⁹ However, the dichotomy is not warranted. It seems the

⁹⁶Yamasaki, “John the Baptist in Matthew,” 42.

⁹⁷NAS.

⁹⁸Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, eds. Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, 28th ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 6.

⁹⁹Yamasaki, “John the Baptist in Matthew,” 48.

recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the fire are the same.¹⁰⁰ This makes sense in light of v.12 which seems more indicative of Judgment.

Verse 12 employs interesting imagery to describe the judgment described therein. The metaphor of *winnowing* was an agricultural practice of separating the wheat from the chaff.¹⁰¹ The fact that the one who is coming has the πτύον (to ptyon) denotes imminence to act.¹⁰² The concept of threshing is a judgment concept in the OT.¹⁰³ Morris thinks, “The picture is one of imminent activity; judgment will not be delayed.”¹⁰⁴ This observation correlates well with the imminence of ה'יום בא. The one who is coming accomplishes two things. He gathers the wheat into barns and the chaff is burned. The picture fits well with Malachi’s conception. What is highlighted here is the usefulness of the wheat and the uselessness of the chaff. In light with Malachi 4:1-3 the motif of salvation and judgment is highlighted here. Thus, the coming one should be seen both as a figure of salvation and judgment.

Yamasaki observes that the presentation of John does not focus on baptism but focuses on preaching.¹⁰⁵ This is remarkable but not surprising. As argued earlier the figure of Elijah is best understood as a messenger. He appears in the context of the deliverance of a message. Veritably, baptism is mentioned in vv. 6, 7, and 11 of this pericope but it’s only in the next pericope it takes center stage when Jesus is baptized. Here the point cannot be missed the coming one is Jesus Christ. Thus, the messianic figure prophesied by Malachi comes on the scene. In this sense, the prophecy finds its Christological fulfillment.

In addition, it is noteworthy that Jesus answer to the reluctance of the John to baptize him is “Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”¹⁰⁶ The Greek word for righteousness here is δικαιοσύνη (dikaiosynē). The term means a state or characteristic of righteousness.¹⁰⁷ Leon Morris posits the sense of righteousness is Jesus identification with human beings in Isaiah 53.¹⁰⁸ Holmes thinks this relates to Isaiah 41:2, 10; 42:6, 45:8, 51:5.¹⁰⁹ Both Morris and Holmes agree that the word “fulfill” means the fulfillment of prophecy/scripture.¹¹⁰

The LXX uses δικαιοσύνης in 4:2. The word is equivalent to ה'קדש. The term relates to meeting an ethical standard, honesty, justice, fairness, and loyalty.¹¹¹ Hla comments the Messianic figure would administer and girdle himself with righteousness.¹¹² So in effect, the metaphor of the sun of righteousness correlates well with “fulfill all righteousness.”

¹⁰⁰Morris, *Matthew*, 62.

¹⁰¹Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), Mt 3:12.

¹⁰²Morris, *Matthew*, 62.

¹⁰³Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, Mt 3:12.

¹⁰⁴Morris, *Matthew*, 62.

¹⁰⁵Yamasaki, “John the Baptist in Matthew,” 35.

¹⁰⁶NAS.

¹⁰⁷Bauer-Danker, *BDAG*, “δικαιοσύνη.”

¹⁰⁸Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew The Pillar New Testament PNTC*, ed. D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 65.

¹⁰⁹Holmes, “Matthew’s Vision,” 151.

¹¹⁰See Morris, *Matthew*, 65 and Holmes, “Matthew’s Vision,” 150.

¹¹¹Koehler-Baumgartner, *HALOT*, s.v. “ה'קדש.”

¹¹²Hla, “Sun of Righteousness,” 125.

As in Malachi 4:1-6 the order of events is repeated. First, the forerunner John the Baptist preaches a message of repentance cast in the coming Judgment. Second, the one who is coming brings Baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. And third, he brings definitive judgment by separating the wheat from the chaff. Did this definitive judgment take place?

Two textual elements point out the judgment did not take place. In v.7 John's statement τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς (tēs mellousēs orgēs).¹¹³ As pointed out John looks forward to this event which other NT writers understood as a definitive judgment. It was shown that expression occurs in Rev 6:17 which has parallels to Mal 3:2. The second element is found in v.12. All of the verbs are in the indicative future. Notice the flow

Verb	Morphology	Flow
διακαθαριῖ	Ind. Act. Fut. 3 rd . Ps	He will clean out
συνάξει	Ind. Act. Fut. 3 rd . Ps	He will gather
κατακαύσει	Ind. Act. Fut. 3 rd . Ps	He will burn

Κατακαίω occurs twelve times.¹¹⁴ One interesting occurrence is notable. In 2 Pet 3:10 the verb appears in the passive indicative future. In this instance, it appears with the ἡ ἡμέρα κυρίου (the day of the Lord). V. 9 describes those who think the Lord is slack in fulfilling his promise. The term βραδύνει connotes hesitancy or delay.¹¹⁵ This mentality of questioning/skepticism about God's act is prevalent in Malachi. As in Malachi 4:1-3 the concept of DOL connotes definitiveness. The term appears in contexts that describe burning i.e. Acts 19:19, Hebrew 13:11. Yet more occurrences deal with texts that describe judgment i.e. Matt 3:12, Luke 3:17, 1 Cor 3:15, 2 Pet 3:10, Rev 8:7, 17:16, and 18:8.

Summary and Conclusion

Exegesis of Malachi 4:1-6 shows eschatology resides in the text. Analysis of the fulfillment of the day of Lord, Elijah the prophet and the sun of righteousness depict fulfillment of the passage beyond the situation of Malachi.

The situation of Malachi localizes his prophetic announcement. He addresses ethical concerns such as lack of honor for God, the priesthood, rampant treachery, unfaithfulness in tithe, speaking against the Lord to cite a few. In addition, the technical collocation of *hinnē* and a participle shows the prophet had the immediate situation in mind. He envisioned and emphasized the nearness of Yahweh's impending actions. Additionally, In 4:4 (3:22), Malachi invokes the figure of Moses to challenge the people to live by תורת משה (*tōrat mōšē*). Clearly, post-exilic Judah could fulfill these stipulations.

¹¹³David E. Lanier, "The Day of Lord in the New Testament: A Historical and Exegetical Analysis of Its Background and Usage," (PhD Diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988), 192-193.

¹¹⁴The stats here are computer generated through Bible Works 10.0.

¹¹⁵Bauer-Danker, *BDAG*, s.v. "βραδύνει."

However, a typological analysis of אליה הנביא ('ēlīyyahû hannābî') shows greater fulfillment of the prophecy. In the messianic age, this figure serves a preparatory role for prior to the entrance of the messiah in world history. Jesus, who correlates to the messiah says of John the Baptist. "But why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I say to you, and one who is more than a prophet. "This is the one about whom it is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'" So Elijah the Prophet must be seen in the ministry of John the Baptist.

The fulfillment of the passage heightens when you contemplate the metaphor of rising of the of שמש צדקה. (šemeš š'ḏāqâ). Though scholars debate the meaning of this metaphor. The syntactical and textual elements show that the metaphor must apply to the messiah who John prepares the way for. The textual usage of the imperfect aspect demonstrate further that Malachi envisioned someone beyond his context.

Furthermore, the LXX employes the verb anatele in describing the rise of the sun of righteousness. When Zechariah sings his hymn, we see anatele being used. This leads us to conclude Malachi envisioned the messiah represented in the figure of Jesus.

Another element that demonstrates the prophecy's fulfillment lay later than the time of Malachi is the day of the Lord. The day of Lord as envisioned by Malachi comes laced with fiery language. When John the Baptist enters the scene of biblical history, his ministry carries the same fiery language. When the Pharisees come to John, he interrogates them, "who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?"¹¹⁶ In this question is a clear indication John and both the Sadducees and Pharisees understood judgment was coming. The day of the Lord indicates judgment.

But since the day of Lord comes with fiery elements. We cannot assume it occurred in the time of the Pharisee. But rather it is something which still comes at a later time. The noun ὀργη (orgē) refers to wrath of God at a future judgment in the New Testament.

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¹¹⁶NET.

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