



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Matthew 14–28 Sermon Series

Supports Session 4: Glory

Sermon Title: “The Forerunner” (Malachi 4:4-6)

Connection to Session 4

Session 4 emphasizes the glory of Christ as the hope of Law and the Prophets. While the Old Testament foreshadowed Jesus, it never revealed the full glory of the risen Savior. In Jesus, we see God’s plan of salvation unfold in full.

One of the central questions of Matthew 16 is answered by Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ. It is after this confession that Jesus revealed the details of His redemptive plan, and He openly told the disciples He will be crucified and rise on the third day (Matt. 16:21). This led to Jesus’s transfiguration and a following conversation about Elijah and John the Baptist (17:9-13).

For the disciples, this would have been an important conversation. The last prophetic word from God before the angel announced to Zechariah that John the Baptist would be born is found in the book of Malachi. Through this Old Testament prophet, God told the people that Elijah would come before the arrival of the Lord. In Jesus’s transfiguration, we see that He is the divine Son of God.

Introduction/Opening

Have you ever received important instructions—and then forgotten them? Often the pressure of “important” instructions can make us forget them! Whether it is a boss to an employee, parents to children, or maybe even a grocery store list from your spouse, it is easy to forget key details.

Malachi 4 is God’s final instructions to Israel before 400 years of prophetic silence. Until the angel’s visit to Zechariah in Luke 1, there would be no word from God after this moment. These final instructions were meant to guide the people and prepare them for the coming Messiah. Malachi 4:4–6 is a unique Old Testament passage that mentions both Moses and Elijah. Together, these figures reappear at Jesus’s transfiguration to authenticate Christ’s identity as the divine Son of God. The Law and the Prophets bear witness to Christ as the Savior of the world.

Outline

Be Ready to Recall My Word (Malachi 4:4)

God told the people to “Remember the instruction of Moses my servant.” As God’s servant, Moses led the people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. But his role was more than leadership—he received God’s commandments and gave them to the people. Moses’s teachings were later summarized by the term, “the Law,” given at Mount Saini, or also known as Horeb (Deut. 4:10) Along with the Ten Commandments, there were instructions for the tabernacle, worship, civic matters, and more. All of these were to instruct the people to be a holy people (Deut. 7:6).

By Malachi’s time, the people had not been faithful to God’s Word for generations, which brought judgment by exile into Babylon. Though the people had returned to the land, the blessing of God had not returned because they were still unfaithful to the Lord. Malachi called the people back to faithfulness in all matters of the Mosaic Law. By returning to God’s Word, the people were returning to God Himself.

They were to “remember” God’s Word by keeping it central in every aspect of their lives.

Be Ready to Receive My Messenger (Malachi 4:5)

Not only did God give the Law, but He also gave the prophets. These men of God called the people back to obedience. The most notable prophet was Elijah. While other prophets spoke more words or performed more miracles, Elijah’s ministry was seen as the template for calling the nation to repentance. Just as Moses personified the Law, Elijah personified the prophetic writings. To speak of “Moses and Elijah” was to present a summary of the entire Old Testament revelation.

Malachi said that Elijah will come again but with a very specific purpose. His role will be to announce the coming of the Lord in final judgment. This is a recap of Malachi 3:1-4, where a messenger (now revealed to be Elijah) will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. The people must be ready to receive the messenger because the Lord Himself will quickly follow.

Be Ready to Rejoice at My Restoration (Malachi 4:6)

The future ministry of the Elijah figure will be unique. He will not pronounce famine or call down fire from heaven. Rather, he will “turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers.” In Malachi’s day, families were broken because of sin and divorce. Yet in this future day, there will be repentance and restoration! This is in stark contrast to the gruesome description of family cannibalism during the judgment of Ezekiel 5:10. This will not be like the exile, but a glorious “Day of the Lord” when all things will be set right. Elijah will call people to repentance and restoration. This is good news! The nation will be given a final opportunity to repent of sin and receive the promised Messiah. For the true followers of the Lord, this is an opportunity for rejoicing as God’s promises of redemption will be finally fulfilled.

For those who do not heed the call to repentance, a final state of judgment awaits. For those who do not receive God’s law, God’s prophets, and God’s Messiah, there will be a final curse. Malachi pleaded with the people to turn to the Lord before it was too late. Restoration is promised, so repent of sin and return to the Lord!

Application Points:

- *Be ready to receive God’s Word.* As believers, we must remember that we have the full counsel of God in the Bible. How much more should our hearts love God’s Word!
- *Be ready for the Lord’s return.* Jesus is returning one day to set all things right. Do our hearts long for His return? Are we ready for the “great and terrible day of the LORD” (v. 5)?
- *Be ready to declare restoration.* The promise of the Lord’s return should motivate us to declare the gospel. This is news of restoration! Share this truth with clarity and urgency.
- *Be repentant before the final reckoning.* If you do not know Christ as your Savior, there is an opportunity to believe today. Don’t wait any longer and risk eternal judgment!

Conclusion

Moses and Elijah pointed to the fullness of glory in Jesus Christ. Just as Malachi called the people to be ready for God’s redemptive plan, we have an opportunity to call people to the person of that redemptive plan—the Lord Jesus Christ. His return is promised, so receive His restoration by grace through faith in Christ today!

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