

400 Years of Divine Silence Followed This Prophetic Word

I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. He is coming, says the Lord of Hosts (Mal. 3:1).

The final book of the Old Testament was written roughly 400 years before Jesus' birth by a prophet named Malachi. Chapter 3 speaks of the coming of John the Baptizer. Malachi 4:5–6 provides more details about this messenger John: "See, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreaded day of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

God makes the incredible promise to enter human history, following a messenger who has a preaching ministry like Elijah's who will herald the Lord's arrival much like a parade that gets everyone fired up for the honored guest at its end. He will come to the temple, and one of the effects of his ministry will be to bring sinners to repentance.

Following this prophecy, there are 400 years of divine silence as the Old Testament concludes and awaits the fulfillment of this prophecy. No book of the Bible is written, and no prophet speaks. Some begin to wonder if God's provision has left God's people. With exceptions, each generation becomes a little more stiff-necked, hard-hearted and cold. Many people aren't walking with God as they ought.

But a remnant remains devoted to the Lord, including a man named Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth. Luke tells us, "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly" (1:6). It

is their son John who will fulfill Malachi's prophecy and prepare the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who do you know who has remained faithful to the Lord amidst trials like Zechariah and Elizabeth? How can you encourage them today (for example, with a call or text)? {eoa}

Mark Driscoll is a Jesus-following, mission-leading, church-serving, people-loving, Bible-preaching pastor and the author of many books, including Spirit-Filled Jesus, which you can order [here](#). He currently pastors The Trinity Church in Scottsdale, Arizona, with his family. For all of pastor Mark Driscoll's Bible teaching, please visit or download the app. You can download a free devotional e-book from pastor Mark [here](#).