

## **ELIJAH, ELECTION, AND THE USE OF MALACHI IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

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At first glance, the book of Malachi seems not to play a prominent role in the NT. To be sure, key themes from this last oracle of OT prophecy reappear in the later Scriptures. One may compare, for example, the Jews' contemptuous treatment of their sacrifices (Mal 1:7-14) with Paul's admonitions to the Corinthians concerning the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34), the disobedience of the priests and Levites (Mal 2:1-12) with Jesus' consistent critique of many of the Pharisees and Sadducees in his day, God's hatred of divorce and his monogamus designs for marriage (Mal 2:13-16) with Jesus' and Paul's teachings on the same topics (Mark 10:1-12 pars.; 1 Corinthians 7), the promise of the Lord's coming in righteousness to his temple both to save and to judge (Mal 3:1-4; 4:1-3) with the repeated NT emphasis on the fulfillment of these prophecies in Christ's first and second comings, or the insistence that God's blessings are contingent upon the faithful stewardship of one's tithe (Mal 3:8-12) with Paul's teaching on the collection for Jerusalem (2 Cor 8-9).<sup>1</sup> Yet only two explicit quotations from Malachi find their way into the pages of the NT. These two passages, however, by virtue of their theological importance more than compensate for their lack of companions.

<sup>1</sup> In each case, the OT teaching is not adopted without qualification. The salvation-differences between the testaments make it clear that the nature and role of priesthood, temple, and tithe, and the exceptions to the prohibition divorce are all altered in NT times. The precise nature of those alterations is and usually determined on the basis of larger theological systems.

### *I. The Coming of Elijah*

"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me" (Mal. 3:1a).

#### A. Text and Attribution

All three Synoptic gospels contain quotations of this statement (Mark 1:2; Matt 11:10; Luke 7:27) in almost identical form, and apply it to John the Baptist. Matthew and Luke have virtually the same Greek verbatim:<sup>1</sup> Ιδοὺ (ἐγώ) ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, δος κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδόν σου ἐμπροσθέν σου, while Mark merely deletes the final two words. The first clause of this quotation parallels the LXX of Exod 23:20 exactly, but the second finds no equivalent there. Both clauses are paralleled more loosely in the LXX of Mal 3:1, where καὶ ἐπιβλέψεται ὁδόν occurs before the phrase πρὸ προσώπου, instead of δος κατασκευάσει τὸν ὁδόν after it. Also the personal pronouns are first person μου's in Malachi, while the verb ἀποστέλλω has the prefix ἐξ attached.

In Exodus, the promise of a divinely sent messenger occurs in the context of preparation for guidance during the Israelites' trek from Sinai to the Promised Land. Malachi's prophecy may deliberately echo the Pentateuchal text;<sup>2</sup> if not, a later rabbinic juxtaposition of these two texts may suggest that their combination was already traditional in Jesus' day.<sup>3</sup> Interpreters of the gospels should therefore not read too much into this reminiscence of Exodus.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Mark's juxtaposition of this conflation of Exodus and Malachi with a quotation of Isa 40:3 (Mark 1:3), highlighting the wilderness theme which Isaiah's "crying voice" and John the Baptist share, may suggest that the gospels' wording was designed to call to mind the remote setting of the Israelites in Exodus.<sup>5</sup> The change from ἐπιβλέψεται to κατασκευάσει follows the Massoretic pointing of the Hebrew (*pinna* rather than *pana*).<sup>6</sup> The addition of the definite article before ὁδόν enhances the parallelism with the Isaiah quote in Mark 1:3,<sup>7</sup> and

<sup>2</sup> C. L. Feinberg, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (Chicago: Moody, 1977) 260.

<sup>3</sup> W. L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 45, citing *Exod. Rab.* 23:20.

<sup>4</sup> However, contra G. L. Archer and G. C. Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1983) 165, eight consecutive paralleled words seem more than "purely verbal resemblance," especially when Exodus and the Synoptics both contain the same shift in pronoun from the text of Malachi.

<sup>5</sup> This, rather than any innovative, christological interpretation of Mal 3:1 most naturally accounts for the shift in person of the pronouns.

<sup>6</sup> H. B. Swete, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1909) 2.

<sup>7</sup> So also A. Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1948) 363.

**Ἐμπροσθεν** may reflect stylistic variation from πρὸ προσώπου.<sup>8</sup> Notwithstanding these minor changes, the Hebrew text of Malachi is represented very naturally by the Greek form of the Synoptic passages in question.

A more substantive preliminary puzzle arises from the conjunction of Mal 3:1 with Isa 40:3 in Mark 1:2-3. Mark attributes the composite quotation to Isaiah. The textual variant, "in the prophets," adopted by the KJV, is too weakly attested and obviously harmonistic to be accepted as original. Hypotheses about later textual errors or glosses are even less supportable.<sup>9</sup> The vast majority of commentators not surprisingly claim that Mark has simply made a mistake, although reasons for that mistake range from Mark's alleged distance from and unfamiliarity with primitive gospel tradition and its Jewish roots<sup>10</sup> to his uncritical adoption of early, traditional materials in which the two passages had already been linked (perhaps along with others as well) under one heading.<sup>11</sup>

Scholars who have not viewed Mark's attribution as an error have proposed alternate explanations. Some suggest that a literary convention existed in ancient Judaism by which a reference to more than one person's writings could be attributed simply to the most prominent author<sup>12</sup> or to the source of the more significant reference, but without supplying extra-biblical examples of this phenomenon.<sup>13</sup> W. Hendriksen sidesteps the real problem by encouraging critics not to complain that Mark supplies two things after only promising one!<sup>14</sup> The most helpful solution is suggested by the example of the Dead Sea text 4QTestim, in which several quotes, not all from the Pentateuch, are juxtaposed under the common head, "The Lord said to Moses," irrespective of their relative prominence or significance. Mark most likely follows this practice, which was apparently accepted in

<sup>8</sup> R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1967) 12.

<sup>9</sup> As, e.g., with V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London: Macmillan, 1952) 153.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., P. Parker, "The Posteriority of Mark," *New Synoptic Studies* (ed. W. R. Farmer; Macon: Mercer, 1983) 76.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., E. Schweizer, *The Good News according to Mark* (Richmond: John Knox, 1970) 29; K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament* (Lund: Gleerup, 1954) 51.

<sup>12</sup> E.g., G. L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).

<sup>13</sup> E.g., D. Edmond Hiebert, *Mark: A Portrait of the Servant* (Chicago: Moody, 1974) 29; R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium* (2 vols.; Freiburg: Herder, 1976-77) 1. 77.

<sup>14</sup> W. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel according to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975) 34.

his day, but no conclusions may be drawn from it concerning the respective importance of the Malachi and Isaiah quotations, nor may Mark fairly be accused of erring.

Matthew and Luke not surprisingly omit the quotation from Malachi in their parallel accounts (Matt 3:3, Luke 3:4-6) and thus dispense with the problem of the attribution to Isaiah. These omissions are accounted for far better by the hypothesis of Markan priority than by any of its competitors; the idea of Mark introducing this ambiguity into a source which was free of it seems odd in the extreme.<sup>15</sup> The two "minor agreements" of Matthew and Luke against Mark do not offset this, since the three contexts in question are not parallel. Matthew and Luke cite Mal 3:1 as part of Jesus' explanation to the crowds concerning the identity and mission of John, after the Baptist had been imprisoned, whereas Mark uses the quote as his introduction to John's ministry. Undoubtedly the quotation had come down to the evangelists in at least two traditions (Mark and the material common to Matthew and Luke).

### *B. Meaning and Pedigree of the Passages*

No one disputes that the Synoptic evangelists use Mal 3:1 to elucidate the ministry of the Baptist nor that they do so in a way which presupposes that the messenger of 3:1 is none other than Elijah, whose coming is foretold in 4:5-6 (MT 3:23-24).<sup>16</sup> Three key questions which are debated, however, include: (1) Did Jesus himself understand John to be Malachi's prophesied messenger in this sense? (2) In what way, if any, did John understand himself in this role, especially in light of his denial of it in John 1:21? (3) Are the gospels' interpretations fair to the original text and context of Malachi?

*1. Jesus' Understanding of John.* The passage common to Matthew 11 and Luke 7 explicitly attributes the quotation of Mal 3:1 to Jesus. Matthew's account is longer and more detailed, but this is

<sup>15</sup> Similarly A. T. Hanson, *The Living Utterances of God* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983) 36.

<sup>16</sup> A few scholars argue that Luke, in contradistinction to Matthew and Mark, downplays or altogether obliterates this John = Elijah typology, possibly because he sees Jesus as the new Elijah instead. This type of hypothesis might account for Luke's omission of Mark 9:11-13 but it does not explain his retention of 7:27, nor his insertion of the unparalleled statement in 1:17 about John coming in the spirit and power of Elijah. Luke may well have seen parallels between Jesus and Elijah too; typologies are by nature fluid and often somewhat interchangeable. For a fuller discussion of the various views, see J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke I-IX* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981) 320, and R. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 276-77.

probably due to Luke's customary abbreviation of his sources rather than to Matthean expansion. Matthew's most noteworthy distinction occurs with Jesus' words in 11:14: "if you are willing to receive [it], this is Elijah, the one about to come." The conditional clause suggests that the interpretation may be a novel one and will not meet with universal acceptance. The same equation is again attributed to Jesus in Mark 9:11-13 (par. Matt 17:10-13) when the disciples who were descending from the Mount of Transfiguration ask Jesus about the coming of Elijah. Here Jesus replies more elliptically by simply remarking that Elijah has come, but Matthew adds that the disciples understood their master to be referring to John.

Older commentators often took this equation for granted, and assumed without question that pre-Christian Judaism widely believed that Elijah would return from heaven as a Messianic forerunner. Since Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah, his application of Mal 3:1 to his forerunner, John, would have been entirely natural, and the element of uncertainty introduced by "if you are willing" would have stemmed only from the fact that John was not the literal Elijah returned from heaven but simply an ordinary human personage whose prophetic ministry paralleled that of Elijah in important respects.<sup>17</sup>

This line of interpretation (along with traditional views of Jesus' self-understanding more generally) has been sharply criticized by recent studies, which take their starting point from the claim that no unambiguous evidence exists for a pre-Christian Jewish belief in Elijah as a Messianic forerunner.<sup>18</sup> The rabbinic texts traditionally cited on behalf of this belief are all post-Christian and mostly Talmudic,<sup>19</sup> while demonstrably pre-Christian references to Elijah's return (most notably Sir 48:10) do not link the prophet with a Messiah. No convincing explanation has been given, however, for the post-Christian Jewish adoption of a perspective which supported the Christian interpretation of Mal 3:1. In light of rabbinic Judaism's censorship of numerous Christian beliefs which earlier Jews seem to

<sup>17</sup> Cf., e.g., Jeremias, "**Ηλ(ε)ίας**," *TDNT* 2 (1964) 928-41. More recently, cf. A. Wiener, *The Prophet Elijah in the Development of Judaism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) 42, who uncritically assumes that the Gospels' reference to the scribes' belief in Mark 9:11 par. combined with Justin's 2nd century Dialogue with Trypho (8:49) "unequivocally show that until the beginning of the Christian era the ordinary Jewish people as well as the spiritual elite expected the return of Elijah as the precursor and attendant of the Messiah from the house of David."

<sup>18</sup> See esp. M. M. Faierstein, "Why Do the Scribes Say that Elijah Must Come First?" *JBL* 100 (1981) 75-86. Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, "More about Elijah Coming First," *JBL* 104 (1985) 295-96.

<sup>19</sup> For a relatively full list of texts, see L. Ginzberg, *An Unknown Jewish Sect* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1976)212, n. 14.

have held, it seems likely that some pre-Christian Jewish precedent must have given rise to these traditions.<sup>20</sup> But this cannot be proven, and such traditions, if they existed, may well not have been widespread.

What both the traditional and the more recent sides of this debate fail to grasp is that the gospels do not suggest that the logic of Jesus' equation of John with Elijah follows from his self-understanding as Messiah and belief in Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6 as Messianic prophecies. There is no clear reference to the Messiah in Malachi and no indication that the NT writers found one there. Rather the texts speak of God himself coming (3:1b) to usher in the day of judgment and salvation (3:2-5). Whatever Jesus' specific beliefs about the ministry of the Messiah, it is widely admitted that he believed himself to be some kind of special envoy from God who was to usher in God's kingdom, at least in inaugurated form, incipiently bringing both salvation for those who would turn from their sin and judgment for those who would not. The logic of the John = Elijah equation may thus be encapsulated as follows: (1) Malachi speaks of Elijah, the messenger, preparing the way for the Day of the Lord. (2) Jesus' ministry brings at least a partial fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the Day of the Lord. (3) The one who prepared the way for Jesus must therefore at least partially fulfill the role of Elijah according to Malachi.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, there is high Christology here, all the more significant as it is merely implicit, since Jesus is appropriating a text about the coming of God and applying it to himself.<sup>22</sup>

The above syllogism clearly does not reflect pre-Christian Jewish thought and was replaced early on in the history of the church with a more specifically Messianic interpretation.<sup>23</sup> The criterion of dissimilarity can therefore be invoked to support the authenticity of Jesus' equation of John with Elijah. The multiple attestation of this tradition in Mark, the teachings common to Matthew and Luke, and the distinctively Lucan material (Luke 1:17) further supports its genuineness, as does the incidental reference to scribal tradition vis-a-vis clear scriptural teaching<sup>24</sup> and the enigmatic nature of Jesus' comments on the topic more generally.<sup>25</sup> Tradition-critical dissections of Mark

<sup>20</sup> Cf. D. C. Allison, "Elijah Must Come First," *JBL* 103 (1984) 257.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 296; H. Schiirmann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (Freiburg: Herder, 1969) 1.417.

<sup>22</sup> R. T. France, *Matthew* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1985) 194.

<sup>23</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 673.

<sup>24</sup> Allison, "Elijah," 256.

<sup>25</sup> A. Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London: Robert Scott, 1915) 240.

9:11-13 and Matt 11:10-14 are largely based on alleged inconsistencies within the passages, which are highly subjective and sometimes self-canceling.<sup>26</sup> W. Wink's notion of a Markan "Elianitic secret" modeled after his Messianic secret fails to shore up the numerous weaknesses in the latter hypothesis.<sup>27</sup> G. B. Caird's conclusion, with specific reference to the Moses and Elijah typology applied to John in Luke 7:27, could quite naturally embrace all the texts in question: "it is far more likely that such a synthesis of ideas as this had its origin in the creative mind of Jesus."<sup>28</sup>

2. *John's Own Views.* The Synoptics never report John's own opinions concerning his identity. But all three agree on information which is generally acknowledged to be historical about the nature of his ministry: he preached a message of repentance thoroughly consonant with the oracles of the OT prophets, he adopted the dress of an Elijah-like figure (camel's hair and a leather girdle; cf. 2 Kgs 1:8), and the location of his ministry in the wilderness easily conjured up memories of both Elijah and Moses who spent so much time in similar locations.<sup>29</sup> While it cannot be proven that John consciously set out to model Elijah specifically, he should hardly have been surprised to find others pointing out the similarities.

Why then does the Fourth Gospel report John's response to his Jerusalemite inquirers in terms of a flat denial to their question, "Are you Elijah?" (John 1:21)? Most modern scholarship affirms that this is just another Johannine inaccuracy, where theology has outrun history. A popular theory has been to assume that an important but divisive element in the Johannine community was a group of over-zealous followers of the Baptist, who perhaps even saw him as a Messiah, and that the fourth evangelist deliberately modified the more authentic tradition reflected in the Synoptics in order to try to combat their

<sup>26</sup> So, e.g., A. H. McNeile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London: Macmillan, 1915) 54; D. Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Oliphants, 1972) 200; on which see D. A. Carson, "Matthew," *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (12 vols.; ed. F. Gaebelein; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 8. 264. Other objections are often based on implicit false dichotomies; e.g., J. Gnilka (*Das Evangelium nach Markus* [2 vols.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener; Zurich: Benziger; 1977-78] 2.41) who labels Mark 9:9-13 a "Gemeindedisput"; or V. Schonle (Johannes, *Jesus und die Juden* [Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1982] 53) who notes that Matt 11:14 is explicit rather than implicit. Both observations may be correct, but neither needs impinge on the authenticity of the sayings involved.

<sup>27</sup> W. Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition* (Cambridge: University Press, 1968) 16.

<sup>28</sup> G. B. Caird, *The Gospel of St. Luke* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963) 113.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. C. H. H. Scobie, *John the Baptist* (London: SCM, 1964) 127, 129.

devotion.<sup>30</sup> J. A. T. Robinson has stood this approach on its head, arguing that the Fourth Gospel, here and elsewhere, is more historically accurate than the Synoptics where they seem to contradict one another, and that only later did John's status become elevated, accompanying the early church's development of a higher Christology.<sup>31</sup>

There are several plausible hypotheses, though, which find neither John nor the Synoptics involved in a contradiction. The most common is that the Baptist was simply denying that he was the literal Elijah returned from heaven as some Jews were expecting.<sup>32</sup> It might be asked if this would not have been self-evident to John's inquirers. Others think that John did not genuinely know he was fulfilling the function of an Elijah,<sup>33</sup> but in light of his historical actions, noted above, this seems somewhat dubious. Perhaps a better approach is to side with M. de Jonge, who notes the popularity of an expectation of a purely human Messiah who would not know his identity until Elijah revealed him; John would naturally deny this type of Elijahic role.<sup>34</sup> Alternately, J. R. Michaels proposes that the series of denials in John 1:19-21 (that the Baptist was not the Christ, the Prophet, or Elijah) all refer to the same fact--that John was not the Messiah.<sup>35</sup> The type of role for Elijah which John would have disclaimed would then be one which was Christological in nature itself, perhaps a development from the facts that Malachi's messenger could easily be seen as priestly (Mal 2:7) and that the Dead Sea sect had already developed the doctrine of two Messiahs--a priestly as well as a Davidic one.<sup>36</sup> It is difficult to choose among all of these options, but objective historiography demands that a viable, harmonistic solution be preferred to one which requires that the gospels contradict themselves.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>30</sup> For a detailed discussion from this perspective, see Wink, *John the Baptist*, 89-93.

<sup>31</sup> J. A. T. Robinson, "Elijah, John and Jesus: An Essay in Detection," *NTS* 4 (1957-58) 263-81; cf. B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (London: Olibphants, 1972) 103-4. C. S. Mann, *Mark* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1986) 364-68, generally endorses Robinson's perspective but argues that Jesus himself first made the switch in identification.

<sup>32</sup> Classically, B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel according to St. John* (London: Macmillan, 1908) 34; cf. also L. Morris, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 134-35; Carson, "Matthew," 269.

<sup>33</sup> C. F. D. Moule, *The Phenomenon of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1967) 70; cf. also Morris and Carson as in n. 32 above.

<sup>34</sup> M. de Jonge, "Jewish Expectations about the 'Messiah' according to the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 19 (1972-73) 246-70.

<sup>35</sup> J. R. Michaels, *John* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984) 12.

<sup>36</sup> Cf., in part, B. V. Malchow, "The Messenger of the Covenant in Mal 3:1," *JBL* 103 (1984) 252-55.

<sup>37</sup> See esp. C. L. Blomberg, "The Legitimacy and Limits of Harmonization," *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon* (ed. D. A. Carson and J. D. Woodbridge; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) 139-74.

*3. The Context of Malachi.* Even if the authenticity and non-contradictory nature of the gospel texts can be maintained, the final and perhaps most important question of the meaning of Mal 3:1 in its original context must be faced. Has the NT fairly utilized this Scripture by interpreting it first in light of 4:5-6 on Elijah and then by applying it to John the Baptist? With respect to the first question, it must be admitted at once that the referent of the messenger in 3:1 is not self-evident. Commentators have suggested a host of different figures besides Elijah; the more significant include Malachi himself (whose name means "messenger"), God himself (taking v 1b as parallel), the angel of the Lord (as God's heavenly representative on earth), an ideal figure (and thus not to be equated with any historical individual), and the whole line of divinely ordained prophets.<sup>38</sup> But scholars also tend to agree that the function of 4:5-6 is to identify the messenger of 3:1 as Elijah.<sup>39</sup> These verses, along with 4:4, are frequently considered, however, as a later appendix to Malachi's prophecy, added by a redactor and therefore not determinative of the original meaning of 3:1.

To these consensus views three replies need to be made. First, when a verse as ambiguous as 3:1 is interpreted both by later verses in the same book (whether or not they were added by the same hand) and by later works in the same religious tradition in one and only one way, that interpretation should receive at least *prima facie* priority.<sup>40</sup> Even if it might be plausibly construed in other ways as well, Mal 3:1 makes sense as a reference to Elijah, and that observation bears considerable weight. Second, there is no clear indication that Mal 4:5-6 is a later addition, despite the popularity of that view. There is not a shred of textual evidence to support the hypothesis,<sup>41</sup> even though conclusions to biblical books are often the sources of conflicting textual variants. Third, even if 4:5-6 were offering an interpretation contradictory to that intended by the author of 3:1, Jewish and Christian interpreters alike have historically affirmed that

<sup>38</sup> On the alleged parallelism of vv 1a, b, and c, see C. D. Isbell, *Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) 58-59; for all the other views and sample representatives, see R. L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (Waco: Word, 1984) 327-28.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., J. M. P. Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Malachi* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912) 62-63; A. Cohen, *The Twelve Prophets* (London: Soncino, 1948) 349; B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM, 1979) 496. Childs even acknowledges that while 4:5-6 go beyond the prophet's original message, they do not do injustice to it.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. E. Achtemeier, *Nahum-Malachi* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986) 184, who notes that regardless of its pedigree, this interpretation "is just as valid as any of the many others that have been proposed."

<sup>41</sup> Cf. R. L. Alden, "Malachi," *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (12 vols.); F. Gaebelein, ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985) 7. 700.

it is the final, canonical form of a given book of Scripture which determines its interpretation, not any hypothetical earlier stage of tradition history.<sup>42</sup> Jesus and the evangelists would almost certainly have been following this principle, already enshrined in pre-Christian Jewish tradition, when they took 4:5-6 as normative for the interpretation of 3:1.

The final question that remains is whether or not Mal 3:1 was entirely fulfilled in the ministry of John the Baptist. Since John only prepared the way for Christ's first coming, those who accept the NT belief in a second coming of Christ will naturally wonder if a similar messenger will prepare the way again in the last days. Rev 11:1-13 describes two such messengers, whose prophetic ministries closely resemble those of Moses and Elijah (vv 5-6).<sup>43</sup> Irrespective of the specific identity of these two figures, it seems reasonable, therefore, to say that Mal 3:1 and 4:5-6 have a still future aspect to their fulfillment, and to reject both poles of the interpretive spectrum which affirm on the one hand that the prophecy was entirely exhausted in the life of the Baptist<sup>44</sup> and on the other that the prophecy could not have been fulfilled at all in John.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> This principle has become the cornerstone of B. Childs' form of canon criticism and is stressed throughout his works. See esp. his *Old Testament as Scripture* and *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (London: SCM, 1984).

<sup>43</sup> Some commentators prefer to compare the two with Enoch and Elijah, often in conjunction with the belief that these witnesses will be heavenly envoys (since Enoch and Elijah were the two OT figures who never died and so apparently already live in heaven in human form). According to Wiener (*Elijah*, 146) the early church fathers generally favored a view which looked for the return of a literal Elijah *redivivus*. On the other hand, since Christ's return will not be the coming of a literal David *redivivus*, despite numerous prophecies that might give that impression, a less literal interpretation seems more probable.

<sup>44</sup> E.g., C. F. Keil, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (2 vols.; 1868, reprinted, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 2.457; E. Henderson, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (1858, reprinted, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) 268-69.

<sup>45</sup> A natural view, of course, for interpreters who do not find the Christian canon normative. More puzzling is the approach of W. C. Kaiser, Jr. (*Malachi: God's Unchanging Love* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984] 80-81) who appears not to realize that the future ἀποκαταστήσει in Matt 17:11 is a direct quote of Mal 4:6 (LXX) and so argues that John only mirrors Elijah in spirit and power, while the true fulfillment of this prophecy still awaits the end times. Even less persuasive is his attempt (pp. 107-8) to drive a wedge between Malachi's "Elijah the prophet" and the historical "Elijah the Tishbite" in order to open "the door for a succession of announcers all the way up to the second advent of Messiah when the first and last Elijah would step forth as the beginning and end of the prophets." Among this succession Kaiser includes such men as Augustine, Calvin, Meno Simons, Luther, Zwingli, Moody, and Graham! Such a historicist hermeneutic would wreak havoc with the rest of Scripture if it were consistently applied elsewhere in similar fashion.

## *II. The Election of Jacob*

"I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated" (Mal 1:2b-3a).

### *A. The Context of Malachi*

This short, dramatic pronouncement reappears as a crucial plank in Paul's discussion in Romans 9 of what theologians have come to refer to as election and reprobation (v 13). There is no significant difference among the MT, LXX, and NT texts, only the inversion by the NT of the subject and predicate in the first clause. Unlike with Mal 3:1, the meaning of 1:2-3 is remarkably clear. This time it is the NT use of the passage which sharply divides commentators. Exegetical clarity therefore dictates a reversal of sequence of topics for discussion; Malachi must be examined before Romans.

The most startling discovery for the *Neutestamentler* or theologian accustomed to hearing this verse cited on behalf of the Calvinist doctrine of double predestination<sup>46</sup> is the way in which Malachi interprets Jacob and Esau exclusively in light of the nations or peoples of Israel and Edom and in terms of their political and temporal destinies (1:3-5). This interpretation is so self-evident from these three verses that commentators do not even raise alternate views.<sup>47</sup> The question can be asked, however, whether or not Malachi has been fair to the Genesis narrative which describes God's selection of Jacob and Esau when he applies it in this limited, corporate fashion. Isaac's two sons were, after all, individuals before they became the ancestors of nations. Yet the key verse in Genesis, the second half of which is also cited by Paul (Rom 9:12) immediately before the reference to Mal 1:2-3, specifically begins with God's promise to Rebekah, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other. . ." (Gen 25:23, NIV). Moreover, as the story of the relationship between Jacob and Esau unfolds, there is not a hint anywhere that Esau's "curse" is to extend to his personal, eternal destiny.<sup>48</sup> If anything, the

46 E.g., J. H. Gerstner, *A Predestination Primer* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960) 43; K. D. Johns, *Election: Love Before Time* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1977) 6. For brief histories of the development of this doctrine and the debates it has incited, see L. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 136-53; P. K. Jewett, *Election and Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 5-23; and in more detail but limited to the post-Reformation period, A. P. F. Sell, *The Great Debate: Calvinism, Arminianism and Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983).

47 Cf., e.g., Alden, "Malachi," 709-10; Keil, "Malachi," 430-32; J. G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1972) 222-24.

48 Later Jewish tradition often did make this suggestion, but it also rationalized Mal 1:2-3 so as to deny most all of God's initiative in the treatment of Edom (H. J.

ultimate reconciliation of the two brothers (Genesis 33) strongly suggests that Esau also eventually became right with God.<sup>49</sup>

A more immediate exegetical problem concerns the precise nuances of ‘*ahab* and *sane*’ (usually “love” and “hate”) in Mal 1:2-3. Even if the prophet has nations rather than individuals in mind, and temporal punishments rather than eternal ones, the description of God hating Esau continues to trouble many. Some interpret the contrast after the way Matt 10:37 rewords Luke 14:26--“love” and “hate” really mean “love more” and “love less.”<sup>50</sup> But Jesus’ saying in the gospels deals with two objects of honor-God and family, whereas Malachi contrasts the honor attaching to Jacob with the dishonor of Esau. Others insist that personal animosity or favor ought to be predicated of God, in light of the usual meanings of the Hebrew terms elsewhere.<sup>51</sup> But the Scriptures are filled with anthropomorphisms--terms which change their usual meaning when lifted out of the human realm and applied to God, so this is an untrustworthy guide as well. The best solution undoubtedly is to side with those scholars who have pointed out the frequent OT use of love and hate in a covenantal or political context,<sup>52</sup> to note the importance of faithfulness to the covenant for the message of Malachi,<sup>53</sup> and therefore to interpret the terms dispassionately as “to choose” and “to reject,” in the context of the temporal and national blessings of God’s covenant with Israel.<sup>54</sup>

Schoeps, Paul [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961] 239, n. 1; cf. J. Munck, *Christ and Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress" 1967] 39-41), so this tradition is unreliable for exegetes concerned with Malachi's original meaning.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. G. Stockhardt, cited by J. Piper, *The Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983) 44. G. L. Archer, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958) 59, notes that the possibility of repentance also remained for Esau's descendants (see esp. Amos 9:11-12 and cf.its interpretation in Acts 15:16-18).

<sup>50</sup> E.g., Kaiser, *Malachi*, 27.

<sup>51</sup> W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1896) 247; J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) 22-23; A. C. Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1979) 294-95. Tellingly, the last two of these authors wind up substantially redefining the type of hate appropriate for God even while insisting on translating the word that way; the first two assume that Paul is simply adopting a common Jewish interpretation, without dealing with the question of its appropriateness for Malachi.

<sup>52</sup> See esp. J. A. Thompson, “Israel's 'Haters,'" *VT* 29 (1979) 200-5.

<sup>53</sup> See esp. S. L. McKenzie and H. N. Wallace, “Covenant Themes in Malachi," *CBQ* 45 (1983) 549-63.

<sup>54</sup> E.g., R. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 305; Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 222-23; C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975-1979) 2. 480. Similarly G. C. Berkouwer

### B. Usage in Romans

Paul Jewett suggests that the interpretive bias resulting from one's theological traditions affects commentators on Romans 9 as much as on any other passage of Scripture.<sup>55</sup> A survey of studies of this chapter, sadly, does not call Jewett's verdict into question. Yet surely the undisputed meaning of the passage in Malachi should be given at least *a priori* preference before interpreters attempt to explain Paul's use of the OT in some less than straightforward manner. If a NT text can make sense in light of the plain meaning of the OT passages it cites, one should not complicate matters by introducing new interpretations. This is especially crucial here in light of the fact that Paul specifically chose to refer to the choice of Israel via an OT text which can only be interpreted in one way, rather than limiting himself to texts from the Genesis narrative which can be taken to refer either to individuals or nations.<sup>56</sup>

Can Rom 9:13 be seen as a reference to the corporate and temporal selection of Israel and rejection of Edom? This verse plays a crucial role in Paul's developing argument in chaps. 9-11 on the role of Israel in God's plans since the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel,<sup>57</sup> and more immediately in Paul's attempt in 9:1-29<sup>58</sup> to deal with the question of why so many Israelites have not responded

(*Divine Election* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960] 72 and n. 29) who stresses that his translation of "to prefer" and "not to prefer" has nothing whatever to do with any Arminian tendencies. On God's "hating" more generally as not an emotion so much as a rejection in will and deed, see O. Michel, " $\mu\iota\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ ," *TDNT*, 4.687.

<sup>55</sup> Jewett, *Election*, 67.

<sup>56</sup> So, e.g., Cranfield, *Romans*, 479; F.-J. Leenhardt, *L'epitre de saint Paul aux Romains* (Neuchatel: Delachaux & Niestle, 1957) 142. Some have suggested that Paul's choice of Mal 1:2-3 to complement Gen 25:23 simply followed the rabbinic practice of citing both the Torah and the Prophets to prove a particular point (e.g., E. Kasemann, *Commentary on Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980] 264), but this would still not explain the choice of this particular prophetic passage, since numerous others also deal with these topics.

<sup>57</sup> On the structure of these chapters more generally, especially in light of their use of the OT, see J. W. Aageson, "Scripture and Structure in the Development of the Argument in Romans 9-11," *CBO* 48 (1986) 265-89; F. Siegert, *Argumentation bei Paulus gezeigt an Rom 9-11* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985); C. A. Evans, "Paul and the Hermeneutics of 'True Prophecy': A Study of Rom. 9-11," *Bib* 65 (1984) 560-70.

<sup>58</sup> A glaring weakness of Piper, *Justification*, is his failure to include vv 24-29 in his analysis. That this context forms the proper boundaries for an analysis of v 13 is further confirmed by recent studies which have shown that vv 6-29 form a tightly knit unity following the rabbinic form known as a proem midrash. See esp. E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 155; W. R. Stegner, "Romans 9:6-29-A Midrash," *JSNT* 22 (1984) 37-52.

positively to that proclamation.<sup>59</sup> In 9:6 Paul specifically raises the potential protest that the word of God might have failed. Paul responds to this objection by arguing that true Israel has never been coterminous with physical Israel; there has always been only a remnant of Jews in any given generation who received God's covenant blessings (cf. v 27). In Paul's day that remnant is equivalent to all Jewish Christians.<sup>60</sup> In earlier eras, illustrations of the remnant principle have included the choice of only one of Abraham's sons (9:6-9) and only one of Isaac's sons (vv 10-13) to be recipients of the covenant blessings. More broadly, a principle is at work throughout history where God bestows his mercy and wrath as he wills, and not through human merit (vv 14-16). This principle emerges not only in the Abraham and Isaac narratives but also in the accounts of God's dealings with Moses and Pharaoh (vv 17-18).

When the logic of these verses is sketched in this fashion, no reference to eternal, individual predestination either to salvation or damnation comes into play until at least v 21, nor is such a reference needed to make sense of the passage. Vv 21-23 may reflect a stronger kind of predestination, though, since at this point in his argument Paul is speaking of those who accept or reject the gospel, and the accompanying "new covenant" blessings are certainly both individual and eternal. If that is the case, then one must ask if in fact this broader concept of election has been implicit all along or if Paul is now contradicting his earlier teaching. One option, of course, is to see Paul shifting gears in the middle of the chapter, irrespective of consistency, but this view not viable for those with a high view of Scripture, nor is it fair even for interpreters of other convictions to treat as profound and nuanced a thinker as Paul in such cavalier fashion.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, it is not clear that such a shift from temporal to eternal election is necessarily self-contradictory;<sup>62</sup> both kinds could well be specific examples of a more general principle-

<sup>59</sup> L. Gaston ("Israel's Enemies in Pauline Theology," *NTS* 28 [1982] 411) protests that although this explanation of the transition from Romans 1-8 to 9-11 is widely held, it is never explicitly stated by Paul and therefore indefensible. Any attempt to apply such a logically fallacious principle on a wider scale would result in massive exegetical agnosticism!

<sup>60</sup> It is important to realize that at least until v 18 no reference to Gentile Christians explicitly occurs. They are not specifically mentioned until v 25, where it becomes clear that God's people are now, in Christ, a combination of Jew and Gentile.

<sup>61</sup> J. E. Barnhart ("Every Context Has a Context," *SJT* 33 [1980] 502) stresses that consistency is only required by inerrantists, a point which needs strongly to be disputed.

<sup>62</sup> Contra Piper (*Justification*, 46, 52-53) who argues that a reference to individuals in the latter part of the passage must imply a reference to individuals in the former.

that God dispenses his mercy as he sees fit, in all types of situations—and it is precisely this overarching truth to which 9:15 points.<sup>63</sup>

But the case can be made even more persuasively. Assuming that vv 22-23 do refer to individuals' eternal salvation and damnation,<sup>64</sup> two important observations disclose the asymmetrical nature of Paul's statements about the two kinds of people. The "vessels of mercy" have been specifically prepared by God and that preparation has occurred "beforehand." The "vessels of wrath," however, are simply in a state of readiness for destruction, with the one responsible for that condition left unexpressed and with no temporal prefix attached to the verb (*καταρτίζω*) rather than *προητοιμάζω*).<sup>65</sup> 2 Tim 2:20-21 contains wording strongly reminiscent of these verses, but suggests that vessels prepared for dishonor can, if they become clean, be transformed into honorable vessels. Thus if a doctrine of predestination is to be derived from Rom 9:21-23, it can only be one of single rather than double predestination.<sup>66</sup> Yet in 9:13 Paul refers to a bipolar process of irrevocable selection and rejection. Unless one is to argue that Paul has contradicted himself, therefore, that earlier process must be seen to refer to something other than eternal, unalterable destinies.

Vv 6-9 and 14-18 reinforce this conclusion, when one examines the original contexts of the OT references employed. Nothing in the OT suggests that either Ishmael or Pharaoh was eternally damned, though unlike with Esau, nothing suggests positively their restoration to God's favor either. What the passages Paul uses do teach is that Isaac shall be the ancestor of those of Abraham's offspring who will inherit God's promises concerning a nation, a great name, and a blessing to all the peoples of the earth (Gen 21:12; cf. 12:1-3), that this son will be born to Abraham and Sarah despite their advanced age (Gen 18:10-14), that Esau would serve Jacob (Gen 25:23), as transpired once he sold his birthright to his younger brother, and that

<sup>63</sup> Cf. R. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 306-7.

<sup>64</sup> Even this assumption can be disputed. See esp. W. W. Klein's forthcoming monograph on the doctrine of election in the NT.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. E. F. Harrison, "Romans," *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (12 vols.; ed. F. Gaebelein, 1976) 10. 107; Cranfield, *Romans*, 492-97.

<sup>66</sup> On the doctrine of single predestination more generally, see esp. D. P. Scaer, "The Doctrine of Election: A Lutheran Note," *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology I* (ed. K. S. Kantzer and S. N. Gundry; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 105-15; and cf. D. Moody, *The Word of Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981) 341; and F. L. Fisher, *The Purpose of God and the Christian Life* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962) 92-112. See now also B. Demarest and G. Lewis, *Integrative Theology* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987-) 1. 293-335.

Pharaoh's hardheartedness in refusing to let the Israelites leave Egypt would lead to successively greater miracles (culminating in the Exodus), thereby proclaiming the greatness of God's name and glory to all the earth (Exod 9:16).

The most significant remaining objections to this "temporal"<sup>67</sup> interpretation of Rom 9:13 must now be addressed. They include: (1) Paul's language in 9:8 ("children of God," "children of the promise") is elsewhere primarily used for Christians" so more than just the earthly OT promises must be in view.<sup>68</sup> (2) The choice of a given people to receive God's earthly blessings strongly predisposes them to be receptive to God's eternal blessings. To put it another way, surely a much greater percentage of Jews than Gentiles were "saved" in OT times, thus revealing the artificiality of divorcing eternal from temporal gifts.<sup>69</sup> (3) Regardless of their wider contexts, the actual passages Paul has chosen to quote refer exclusively to individuals not to collectives, rendering the national view of election suspect.<sup>70</sup> (4) Election in the NT should always be interpreted as election in Christ to salvation (cf., e.g., Eph 1:4). Neither temporal nor reprobational interpretations focus on the core of the doctrine.<sup>71</sup>

The problem with objection (1) is that it proves too much. Elsewhere, admittedly, Paul uses "children of God (or of the promise)" to refer to all Christians--Jews and Gentiles (cf. Gal 3:26-29; 4:21-31; Rom 2:25-29). But such meaning here would subvert his intention to point out the perennial existence of a remnant within Judaism (see esp. n. 60 above).<sup>72</sup> Immediate context must always take precedence over usage elsewhere. Objection (2) may be accepted in part, but unless it is applied deterministically, it does not threaten the temporal interpretation of the passages at hand. Paul's entire thrust in the opening chapters of Romans is to deny that any are unaccountable before God, Jew and Gentile alike. And the rebellion of so many

<sup>67</sup> Phrasing it this way, rather than emphasizing the corporate or national nature of OT election, avoids the relatively convincing counterargument that it is impossible to predestine groups of individuals without predestining at least one individual within each group (to ensure that someone exists in order to form the "group").

<sup>68</sup> So esp. Piper, *Justification*, 48-52.

<sup>69</sup> So, e.g., Murray, *Romans*, 17-19; C. Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (1886; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950) 310.

<sup>70</sup> So, e.g., Piper, *Justification*, 40, 46-47. Cf. Johns, *Election*, 9.

<sup>71</sup> So, classically, K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 2.2. 3-506; summarized by G. Bromiley, *An Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 86-98. Cf. also M. Barth, *The People of God* (Sheffield: ISOT, 1983); and C. K. Barrett, *Romans* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957) 183.

<sup>72</sup> So esp. Gaston, "Israel's Enemies," 415; and, less unequivocally, Munck, *Christ and Israel*, 36-37.

individuals in so many generations of OT Jews could make the cynic wonder how much of a "better chance for salvation" they actually had! Objection (3) poses a false dichotomy. Options for interpretation are not limited to the views which see all Israel or only individuals within Israel as the elect; Paul is taking a mediating position and defining election in terms of the corporate concept of a remnant.<sup>73</sup> Point (3) also avoids the full force of the position it contests by viewing it primarily as a collective or national rather than temporal or earthly election. The Barthian approach of (4) depends on numerous exegetical and theological decisions, the investigation of which lie well beyond the scope of this short study. Jewett's brief but incisive critique aptly summarizes its major strengths and weaknesses; suffice it to say that it has not found widespread support among interpreters of either Calvinist, Arminian or various intermediate traditions, largely because of its incipient universalism.<sup>74</sup>

The most glaring weakness of the view which interprets Rom 9:13 as teaching double predestination to salvation or damnation is its utter failure to handle adequately the text of Malachi 1. For less conservative interpreters this poses no problem; E. Kasemann, for example, is refreshingly candid when he explains of Gen 25:23 and Mal 1:2-3 in Romans 9 that "the quotations are taken out of their context and its sense is disregarded. For Paul is no longer concerned with two peoples and their destiny, but timelessly with the election and rejection of two persons who are elevated as types."<sup>75</sup> Ironically, J. Piper's robust, evangelical defense of the traditional Calvinist interpretation of Rom 9:1-23 draws upon Kasemann's exegesis more than that of any other commentator on 9:13 without once interacting with Kasemann's first sentence just cited or admitting the contradiction involved.<sup>76</sup> Approaches which fall back on a hermeneutic that speaks of Paul as the OT's authoritative interpreter either beg the question at hand or presuppose an unfalsifiable fideistic position which renders OT exegesis irrelevant.<sup>77</sup>

A second lacuna is the regular omission of any consideration of single predestination as a viable explanation of Rom 9:22-23. Many Calvinists and Arminians alike simply assume that election and reprobation stand or fall together and therefore never interact with an

<sup>73</sup> Cf. W. D. Davies, *Jewish and Pauline Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 132. Contra H. Hubner, *Gottes Ich und Israel: Zum Schriftgebrauch des Paulus in Romer 9-11* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984) 22.

<sup>74</sup> Jewett, *Election*, 47-56.

<sup>75</sup> Kasemann, *Romans*, 264.

<sup>76</sup> Piper, *Justification*, 46, 52-53, 228-29, nn. 25-26.

<sup>77</sup> So, e.g., Barnhart, "Context," 502.

important possible alternative.<sup>78</sup> To be sure it is not easy to see how one may simultaneously affirm that God elects those who are saved and maintain that those who are damned are entirely responsible for their own fate, but these two statements so fundamentally encapsulate major strands of biblical teaching that neither may fairly be denied.<sup>79</sup> The apparent tension is similar to that which surrounds divine sovereignty and human responsibility more generally, a tension which cannot be shown to be either necessarily contradictory or obviously compatible, but which best summarizes numerous passages in which both doctrines are sharply juxtaposed.<sup>80</sup> In both cases, the distinction between necessity and certainty may point the way toward an explanation.<sup>81</sup>

It would be easy to digress far beyond the bounds set by analysis of Malachi in the NT. Suffice it to conclude that if any predestination is in view in these verses it is, as U. Wilckens phrases it, salvation-historical and not cosmological.<sup>82</sup> Or as H. Ridderbos admits, despite his heritage in the Reformed tradition, Paul has here the continuation of the holy line of the people of God in view rather than any election or reprobation to eternal destiny.<sup>83</sup> Here, if ever, historical and contextual exegesis must set strict boundaries which systematic theology may not be permitted to transgress.<sup>84</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Two explicit citations of a given OT work scarcely lead to any generalizations about "the use of Malachi in the New Testament." But

<sup>78</sup> Thus, e.g., Jewett, a Calvinist, declares that "election obviously implies rejection" (*Election*, 26) and never again raises the question. R. Shank, an Arminian, succeeds in spending 44 pages (*Elect in the Son* [Springfield, MO: Westcott, 1970] 108-52) discussing conditional election with special reference to Romans 9 without even considering single predestination once, despite frequent citations of its supporters when they side with Shank in opposing the Calvinist doctrine of reprobation.

<sup>79</sup> E. Brandenburger ("Paulinische Schriftauslegung in der Kontroverse um das Verheissungswort Gottes [Rom 9]," *STK* 82 [1985] 1-47) helpfully stresses how Paul's teaching on predestination develops directly from his teaching on justification (which stresses both of these statements), rather than vice-versa.

<sup>80</sup> See esp. D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981).

<sup>81</sup> See, e.g., M. J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* 3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983-85) 1. 356-62.

<sup>82</sup> U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Romer* (3 vols.; Neukirchen- Vluyn: Neukirchener; Zurich: Benziger, 1978-82) 2. 195-96.

<sup>83</sup> H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 344.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. D. E. H. Whiteley, *The Theology of St. Paul* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974) 96.

each citation by itself plays an integral role in the passages in which it is embedded, and correct understanding of the OT text is crucial to valid exegesis of the larger NT context. As so often in studies of the use of the OT in the NT, commentators generally jump too quickly to the assumption that the NT writers were not concerned with valid exegesis in their appropriation of Scriptural materials. Not surprisingly, therefore, only a minority of modern studies takes the time to build on a carefully laid foundation of OT interpretation when treating the application of its texts by the New. The relationship between the testaments is arguably the least satisfactorily resolved issue in contemporary evangelical scholarship and the most pressing problem for those who would defend a high view of Scripture, though it is often not perceived as such. Hopefully this brief look at two perplexing passages from Malachi may contribute constructively to the ongoing study of this relationship.<sup>85</sup>

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