

Does Malachi 3:1 Support Christ's Godhood and Pre-existence?

In Malachi 3:1 we have a classic example of "Hebrew agency"... recall the Law of Jewish Agency states that the agent is as the Principal himself. (For a full treatment of this theme see my book *They Never Told Me This in Church!*)

Put simply, this verse is saying that when God's messenger (Heb. '*malak*'; LXX '*angel*') appears in the Temple, Israel is to know he comes in the full authority of the LORD God Himself (here called "the LORD of hosts"). "The Lord" who is "the messenger of the covenant" is the agent being commissioned by "the LORD of hosts."

The NASB gets it [partially] right here by distinguishing the 'two Lords' in the Hebrew Scriptures (*Adonai* who is always and only ever YHWH God, and *Adoni* which in the Hebrew Bible nearly always refers to a human superior, "my lord". Occasionally *adoni* refers to an angelic superior). Thus, the messenger is 'the lord' (*adoni*) but the One commissioning him is 'the LORD of hosts' (*Adonai*), i.e. YHWH.

When Mark applies this verse to Jesus Christ (Mk 1:1-3), most think "the messenger" turns out to be John the Baptist preparing the way for the Messiah who is himself "God in the flesh". But *John the Baptist is not introduced until verse 4!* In other words, verses 2 & 3 belong to verse 1 forming the introduction to "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Messiah, the Son of God. As it is written ..."

In other words, **Jesus Christ is the messenger** of God's good news, the one who prepares the way for God, ***not John the Baptist!***

You will note that Matthew & Luke when applying "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" preparing the way, cite from Isaiah, not Malachi 3:1! (see Matt. 3: 1-3; Lk 3:2-6). Hence, the understandable confusion that the Lord whom John is preparing the way for must be Yahweh Himself in the body of Jesus.

We may therefore I think, put it this way: John the Baptist is the pre-messenger to "the Messenger of the covenant" who represents the LORD of hosts as per Malachi 3:1. No Hebrew reading these verses would for a moment think the LORD God is both the angel and the God of Israel. In the New Testament Jesus "the [human] Lord" is never confused with God the Father Who is "the LORD of hosts" in Malachi 3:1.