



UNIT 18 | SESSION 4 | FEBRUARY 22-23, 2020

## 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> Lesson

# Malachi the Prophet

**Bible Passage:** Malachi

**Story Point:** Malachi called God's people to repent to prepare for the Messiah.

**Key Passage:** "The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." 1 Peter 5:10

**Christ Connection:** Malachi told about another messenger God would send. This messenger, John the Baptist, would call people to repent and get ready for Jesus.

**Big Picture Question:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

**KID CONNECT:  
10 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:  
30 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP:  
20 MINUTES**

## LEADER BIBLE STUDY

After many years living as prisoners in Babylon, God's people had returned to Judah. They had worked hard and overcome opposition to rebuild the temple and the walls around Jerusalem. Surely God would restore them ... finally! But nothing happened. As they waited, they faced drought and economic uncertainty. God's people probably didn't feel like God had blessed them at all.

"It is useless to serve God," they said. "What have we gained by keeping his requirements?" (Mal. 3:14). Did God still care? It wasn't long until God's people fell back into the same patterns of sin that led to their exile in the first place: idolatry, covetousness, hypocrisy, arrogance, and abuse of the poor.

But God did still love His people. He had been working out His divine plan of redemption, and He never gave up on them. God sent a message to His people through the prophet Malachi.

Malachi was the last of the Old Testament prophets. He spoke to God's people approximately 100

years after the end of the Babylonian captivity. Malachi's message from God was a wake-up call.

God communicated through Malachi that the people's lack of blessing didn't mean that God didn't care. God exposed His people's sin and made clear that their actions merited a curse. God's people needed to repent and turn back to God. "But for you who fear my name," God said, "the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings" (Mal. 4:2).

Explain to kids that 400 years of silence followed Malachi's prophecy; God did not communicate to His people. This period brings us to the New Testament, when the silence would be broken by the last prophet before Jesus, John the Baptist. His words about Jesus in John 1:29 offered hope to all who heard: "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

## KID CONNECT

### WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO/OUTRO MUSIC)

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Prompt kids to discuss what it takes to get ready for guests to stay at their house. How does their family prepare to make them feel welcome? Why is being prepared important?

## LARGE GROUP

### COUNTDOWN

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN)

Show the countdown video as you transition to Large Group. Set it to end as the session begins.

### LARGE GROUP GAME

(SFX: GAME INTRO MUSIC, VIDEO: MOVIN' ON UP, SFX: FUN MUSIC)

#### MOVIN' ON UP

(28 Blue Cups (14 per kid), 2 Red Cups (1 per kid))

SAY • Hey guys! It's game time again. For this game, I need 2 kids - 1 boy and 1 girl. *Choose 2 kids - we recommend you choose the older kids in the room.* OK, we are going to play a game called Movin' On Up. Watch this video!

*Play Movin' On Up (Minute to Win It video)*

Don't worry! We're not going to use that many cups here today! That's for adults on the TV show. Instead, you will have 15 total cups with your red cup being at the bottom. Just like in the video, you have to take one cup off the top and put it on the bottom, over and over, until

the red cup makes its way *back again* to the bottom of your stack. Oh, and you have to hold your stack of cups the whole time, too. Whoever does that first wins! Let's play!

## WORSHIP

(VIDEO: LET IT BE KNOWN, VIDEO: WAVEWALKER)

SAY • Let's worship God!

## INTRODUCE THE SESSION

(No Supplies Needed)

SAY • Hey everyone! I have a question for you. How many of you are really good at being patient? *Wait for a show of hands.* Oh really? That seems like a lot of you. I wonder what your parents or siblings would say if we asked them! Well, I will be honest – sometimes it's really hard for me to be patient. Waiting for something, *especially* if I'm looking forward to it, is tough!

For example, what if you saw a commercial or advertisement for an awesome new game coming out – one that you and your family/friends would LOVE to play – but then discover that it comes out in one year??

Or what if you ask your parents for a game that's already come out and they tell you that you have to wait for your birthday – which is 7 months away! Waiting and being patient is something that we all have to do at times...but it's not always easy.

Today you'll learn about a time when the Jewish people grew lazy in their worship. They had been waiting on God a long time and began to doubt that He really loved them. We will see that God had a plan to turn His people back to Him.

## BIG PICTURE QUESTION

(CG: BIG PICTURE QUESTION)

SAY • First, it's time for our big picture question! Do you all remember the question we have been answering the past few weeks? Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Even when it seems like God is silent, He has a plan and is in complete control.

## GIANT TIMELINE

(CG: GIANT TIMELINE)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY • A few weeks back, we learned that the walls and gates around Jerusalem had been destroyed and that God's people were in danger from their enemies. Nehemiah went to Jerusalem, and God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Fifty-two days later, the walls were completed and the people celebrated! Ezra read God's Word, and the people recognized their sin. God's people repented and promised to be faithful.

God told the Jewish people that He would bless them, but time passed and the people began to doubt. God sent Malachi to remind His people that God keeps His promises. Malachi said that God is faithful. Listen closely to Malachi's story.

## WATCH THE BIBLE STORY

**(VIDEO: MALACHI THE PROPHET, CG: BIBLE STORY PICTURE, CG: STORY POINT)**  
**(Bible)**

Show the Bible story video "Malachi the Prophet."

SAY • In today's story, the Jewish people wanted God to bless them when they thought He should bless them, but God knows what is best and knows exactly when to bring about blessings in our lives.

The Jewish people grew impatient and made wrong choices. Do you remember some of the wrong choices they made? (They grew lazy in their worship, doubted God's love, and offered sick animals as sacrifices.) When we do not trust God, we are tempted to make sinful choices.

But God still showed compassion. He loved His people and wanted them to follow Him. God sent them a messenger named Malachi, and Malachi reminded them of God's character.

What are some things that Malachi told them? (Be patient, God has not forgotten you, God will come to rescue His people.) Malachi called God's people to repent to prepare for the Messiah.

Ultimately, Malachi reminded the Jewish people that they can trust God, even when they do not hear His voice or see Him moving. We can trust God, even when He seems silent.

## CHRIST CONNECTION

**(CG: CHRIST CONNECTION)**

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

SAY • Malachi told about another messenger God would send. This messenger, John the Baptist, would call people to repent and get ready for Jesus. Jesus was the one they had been waiting for. Jesus would sacrifice His life to fix our relationship with God.

## KEY PASSAGE

**(CG: KEY PASSAGE)**

**(Bible)**

Show the key passage slide. Open the Bible and lead the kids to read 1 Peter 5:10 together.

SAY • Our key passage reminds us that God has promised to restore, establish, strengthen, and support us. God keeps His promises. God has a purpose and a plan for our lives. This verse also tells us that our life will have suffering and hard times.

In today's story, the Jewish people questioned whether God loved them because they did not hear His voice. We can still trust that God keeps His promises, even when life is hard or it seems like God is silent.

## **BAPTISM ANNOUNCEMENT!**

**(CG: BAPTISM SLIDE)**

SAY • Before we head to small groups, I want to let everyone know that this weekend we are having baptisms. Baptism is a celebration when a person shares that they have decided to follow Jesus. Do we have any kids in here getting baptized today? (*If so, celebrate with kids*) I want to encourage everyone to go outside and cheer on all our friends getting baptized today right after service.

## **PRAY AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUP**

### **SMALL GROUP**

**Bible Passage:** Malachi

**Story Point:** Malachi called God's people to repent to prepare for the Messiah.

**Key Passage:** "The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." 1 Peter 5:10

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**Big Picture Question:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.

## **KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY**

**(Key Passage Poster or Dry Erase Board/Marker, 1 per group, Small Sticky Notes, per group)**

Write the key passage on a dry erase board or use the key passage poster. Place sticky notes over half of the words. Go through the key passage word by word with the kids, allowing the kids to raise their hands if they know the next word that is covered.

SAY • Great job memorizing our key passage. Why do you think it's important to memorize God's Word? [*Give kids an opportunity to answer.*] When we memorize Scripture, we have God's perfect Word with us at all times. We can be prepared for anything that comes our way with truth.

## GIVE GOD YOUR BEST

(Paper Bag, 1 per group, Snacks, 2 per group, Paper Heart, 1 per group, Allergy Alert)

Help kids apply today's Bible story with an object lesson to demonstrate giving God leftovers instead of their best.

**SAY** • "Today I brought some snacks as a reward for kids that have been very well behaved." (*Pull out snacks from the paper bag.*) "Let me see, who has been well-behaved today? Well, let me first show you what the snacks are." (*Pick up each snack and talk about how wonderful it is, and how good it tastes as you take a bite out of each one*) "Alright, let me see. To what kid should I give this \_\_\_\_\_?" (*Pause and look at the snack, then look at the kids quizzically.*) "What's the matter? Some of you are looking at me like something is wrong." (*Allow children to respond.*) "Okay then, if you don't want a half-eaten \_\_\_\_\_, how about a \_\_\_\_\_? Is that better?" (*Then take another bite.*)

"Listen friends. If you invited the President to come over for a meal and he didn't arrive right away-let's say you were hungry-so you ate without him. Just when you finished eating, in walked the President. So, you did the very best thing you could do. You gave him leftovers!" (*Hold up a half-eaten snack for kids to see.*) Would that be a good idea? Is that how a very important person should be treated? May I encourage you today to not give God your leftovers? We need to give God our best in everything we do. When we come to church, come prepared to give God your best. God doesn't necessarily want your whole snack, but God does want your whole heart." (*Show heart from bag.*)

"One of the things that made God unhappy in our story today was the people's greed and selfishness. God doesn't need anything, but they didn't give Him what He deserved. He told the people they needed to bring Him their best. Giving your time, talents and money to God can be one of the biggest blessings in life. It doesn't make us right with God, because only Jesus can do that, but it is a good reminder that everything comes from God and belongs to Him. Just as Jesus generously gave His whole life to save us, we can give generously and trust God to take care of our needs."

## DISCUSSION

(Bibles)

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to the Book of Malachi. Explain that Malachi the prophet wrote the Book of Malachi. The name *Malachi* means "my messenger." God sent Malachi to remind His people that God still loved them and expected them to obey Him. Read Malachi 3:17-18 to the kids.

**SAY** • God's people made wrong choices and became lazy in their worship, but God still loved them and cared for them. God showed compassion, treating them with kindness even though they did not deserve it. Malachi called God's people to get ready for the Messiah to come. God also shows us kindness, even though we do not deserve it.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

Why do you think the people offered God their sick animals instead of their healthy animals? *Point out that we sometimes try to make shortcuts to obey God because we don't trust Him like we should or we act selfishly. But God wants us to obey Him completely, offering Him our very best. The people were supposed to make a sacrifice to worship God, but they gave Him their leftovers instead of their best. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Sam. 15:22.)*

What does it mean to sacrifice something? *Help kids recall that to sacrifice means offering God our very best of everything. The people in the story were supposed to be making a sacrifice to worship God. Sacrifice expresses love, thanksgiving, or the need for forgiveness; and sacrifice often comes at great cost to us. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 51:16-17.)*

What is something you can give to God this week? *Encourage the kids to think beyond belongings, such as toys, and to think about sacrificing time or effort. For example, they may give God 10 minutes a day to read the Bible with their family and pray or serve someone using a gift God has given them. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 12:1-2.)*

## REFLECTION AND PRAYER

**(Journal Page, 1 per kid, Pencils)**

Ask the kids the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Make time for prayer requests and pray for your group. If time allows, have kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session.

## BAPTISM

**(Baptism Discussion Guide, Baptism stickers)**

This weekend, Hope is celebrating baptisms. If you need to get out early or come late in order to be a part of or see the baptisms happening today, talk with your coach and other leaders in your room about how your group can be covered. Baptism is a once-in-someone's-lifetime experience, and we want to do everything we can to be sure you don't miss it.

Also, don't forget to talk with your group about baptism – celebrate those who are being baptized, and talk about how everyone can celebrate their relationship with Jesus by being baptized themselves. Use the Small Group Baptism Discussion page for questions, talking points, and ideas on sparking the conversation.

## CONNECT WITH PARENTS/INFLUENCERS

**(Older Kids Activity Page, 1 per kid)**

Hand each 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade kid an Older Kids Activity Page and encourage them to do it at home with their family this week.