



MARCH 15, 2026

THE PROPHET MALACHI

MALACHI

CHRIST CONNECTION

Malachi told the people to turn away from sin as they looked forward to the promised Messiah. Years later, God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus—the Messiah. Jesus brought a message of repentance and salvation.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

What is the Bible about? The Bible is the story of God's plan to save people through Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE

John 20:31

PREPARE



Take time to reflect on today's lesson.

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

The book of Malachi reveals how people who have experienced God's miraculous works can quickly turn away from following Him. God had delivered His people from captivity and helped them restore Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. And yet, shortly after their promise to obey the Lord's commands, they were living in a way that was displeasing to Him. Complacency and corruption had replaced faithfulness to God's Word.

Malachi told the people they were offering blemished sacrifices. He revealed how their leaders—particularly the priests—were leading the people astray. Malachi also told the people they had dishonored God in their marriages in two ways: First, they married women of foreign descent who worshiped other gods. Secondly, men were divorcing their wives for unjust reasons that were selfish—treating marriage as if it were disposable.

Despite the unfaithfulness of God's people, God again remained faithful. In Malachi 3, God told them that He had not destroyed them because they are His people. He called them to return to Him. He promised that if they returned to Him, He would return to them. God invited them to repent and return to Him just as He did time and time again throughout the Old Testament.

As Malachi urged the people to return to God, he also foretold the coming Messiah—Jesus. Malachi spoke of the sun of righteousness who would bring healing—a picture of Jesus as the light of the world who would bring redemption. Specifically in Malachi 3, God shared His plan to send a messenger who would clear the way for the Messiah. In His sovereignty, God fulfilled this prophecy through the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, as one crying out in the wilderness: “Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight” (Luke 3:4).

The book of Malachi serves to remind us of the dangers of growing apathetic in our walk with the Lord. Help kids see how Malachi also reminds us that when we do fall short, God is faithful and ready to restore us when we turn back to Him. Through Jesus, we see God's grace and mercy to redeem and restore all who trust in Him.

WELCOME



Connect with kids as they arrive.

OPENING ACTIVITIES

Greet each kid as they arrive. Use this time to build relationships and help new kids connect to your group. Before heading to Large Group, you can play a game, chat with kids, or do the Memory Verse Activity below as a group!

MEMORY VERSE

...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:31, ESV

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

Each month, we'll have a new memory verse that goes with the lessons we're learning from the Bible. Choose one of the provided activities in your room's Memory Verse folder to review the verse with the kids.

Note: Our next Bible Bucks Day will be on March 22!





THE PROPHET MALACHI

God's people had returned to Jerusalem, the temple and city walls had been rebuilt, and the law had been read to the people. Even though the people promised to obey God, they turned back to their sinful ways. God sent the prophet Malachi to speak His words to the people.

God spoke to Israel through Malachi and said, "I have loved you." The people doubted God's love for them. But God reminded them of how He chose Jacob over Esau, just as He chose Israel to be His people.

God loved His people, but they didn't show they loved Him. God told Malachi to share how the priests dishonored Him through their blemished sacrifices. The priests offered animals that were blind, lame, and sick. God is a great King, and He deserves the best offerings.

God spoke through Malachi and gave the priests a warning: "If you don't listen, and if you don't honor my name, I will send a curse among you." God said that the priests were supposed to speak God's words to the people and help the people know God. Instead, the priests led the people away from God.

But God made a promise. He said, "I am going to send my messenger to clear the way before me. Then the Lord you seek will come to his temple." This promise was about the coming Messiah. The Messiah would make people pure, and they would be able to give offerings that please God in righteousness.

Then Malachi said a day was coming when God will judge those who oppress the widow and the fatherless, and those who don't do justice. God told the people, "Return to me, and I will return to you." God said the wicked will be destroyed, but those who fear God will see the sun of righteousness.

After Malachi there were no more prophets for 400 years. This was the last message from God to His people as they waited for the promised Messiah, and for the messenger who would prepare the way for Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Malachi told the people to turn away from sin as they looked forward to the promised Messiah. Years later, God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus—the Messiah. Jesus brought a message of repentance and salvation.

ACTIVITIES



Do crafts and games with kids after Large Group.

MAIN ACTIVITY

Evenly distribute the provided craft supplies to kids. Tell kids that they're going to use these supplies to make binoculars.

Kids are free to get creative and decorate them how they would like, but somewhere on their binoculars, have them write, "I can look forward to God's promises" and/or "God always keeps His promises".

CONNECT THE DOTS



Malachi encouraged God's people by reminding them of the promise God had made to send the Messiah—the rescuer who would save people from sin. Malachi knew that God always keeps His promises, and even though they had to wait for the Messiah to come, He did come! Jesus is that promised Messiah.

BIBLE SKILLS

This is our last week learning about the Old Testament for a while! Spend some time reviewing the Old Testament and play either the Old Testament Scavenger Hunt game or the Old Testament Scramble game (both are provided on the TVs in your room).

CLOSING ACTIVITIES



Continue to engage kids before parent pick-up.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW

Ask the following questions and lead your small group to discuss.

1. What might tempt you or others to turn from God?
2. Like the priests who offered lame animals, what are ways we don't give our best to God?
3. The priests were supposed to help people follow God's ways. How can we help people follow God's ways?
4. Do you ever doubt God's love? Why?
5. What is one way you can display your love for God this week?

HAVE EXTRA TIME?

If you have extra time or your group needs to get out some energy, play one of the games/activities in your extra time bin in the cabinet or the "extra time" folder on the TV.

If there's a new game or activity you want to have available for your group in the future, let Taylor know!

BEFORE YOU GO...

Second service leaders, please clean up by doing the following:

1. Put all extra supplies and binders back in the curriculum bins.
2. Clean all trash off the tables.
3. Put all crayons, markers, etc. back in the appropriate containers and cubbies.
4. Erase the whiteboards and put markers/erasers back in the holder.
5. Turn off the TVs as you leave.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING WITH US!