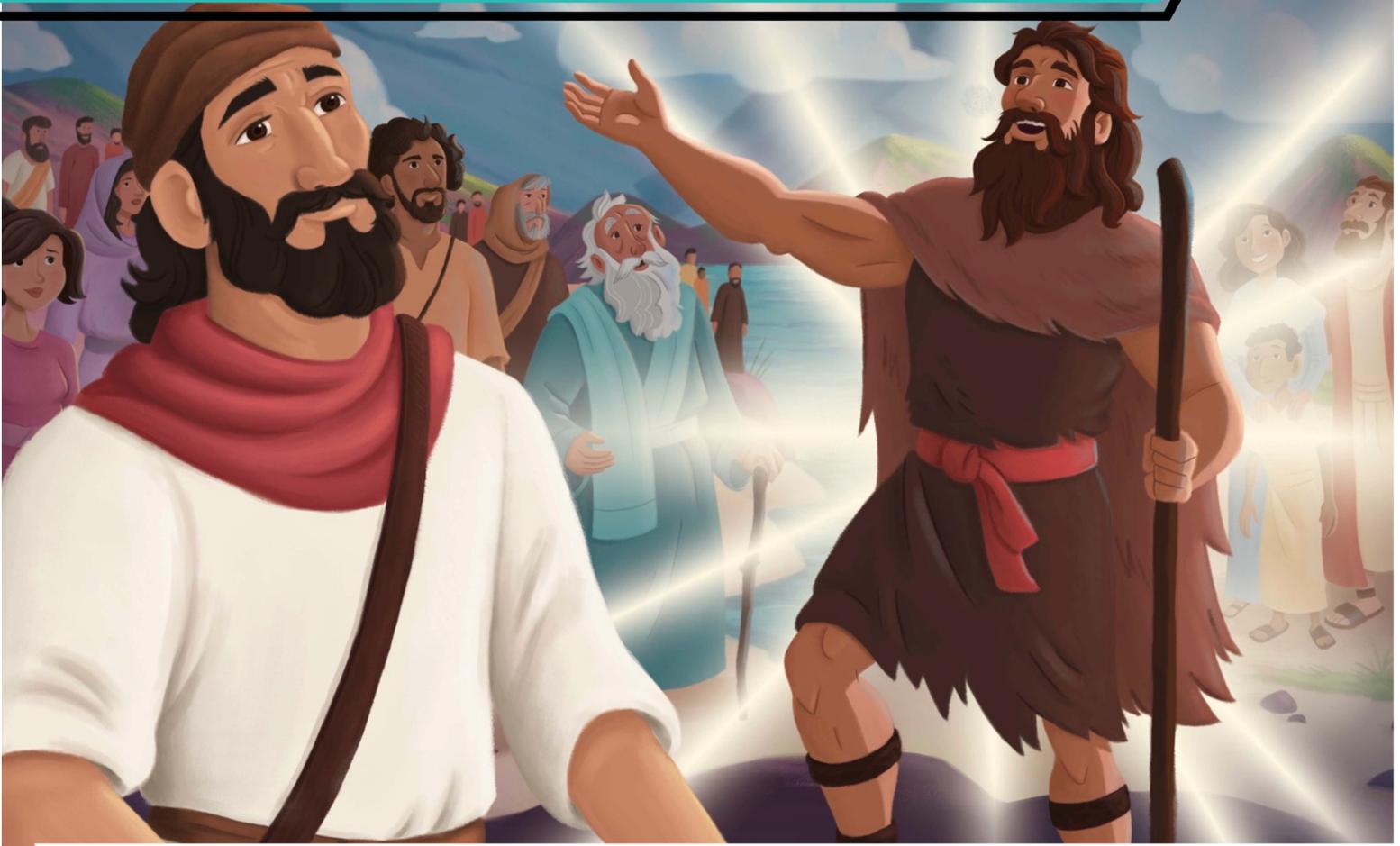


PRETEEN MINISTRY

4TH & 5TH GRADE



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.

LEADER DEVO

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.

ARRIVAL

When kids arrive, they can play in the game room, Large Group room, or the balcony area. They can go between the areas as they want until Large Group starts. Leaders should be spread out in these areas to watch kids. Use this time to interact with kids and build relationships with them. Ask them about their week, big events coming up, or follow up on a prayer request from the week before.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

THIS MONTH'S 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



NEXT BIBLE BUCKS DAY

MAR 22

There are many techniques and tools to help kids (and you!) memorize Scripture.

THIS MONTH'S TOOL: DIY VERSE PUZZLE

Grab at least eight “puzzle pieces” (these can be Legos, blocks, index cards, etc.). On each of the puzzle pieces, write a part of the verse so that when all the pieces are put together in the correct order, you can see the entire verse.

Use this to practice memorizing the verse by putting it together, racing yourself, trying to fill in the gaps from memory, etc.

LESSON

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.

SMALL GROUPS

OUR GOAL

To create opportunities that invite preteens to discover for themselves what it means to own and live out their faith.

DISCUSSION / APPLICATION

1) The book of Malachi opens with God telling His people that He has loved them. Think back over the stories we've learned this year. How have we seen God love His people?

Brought them out of slavery, gave them the promised land, saved them from their enemies, gave them a king, stayed with them in exile, etc.

2) Does God still love us? How do you know? (see John 3:16; Romans 5:8, 8:38)

3) Read Malachi 4:5-6. What is God going to do?

4) Who is God referring to as "Elijah the prophet"?

5) Read Malachi 4:6 again. Who is God talking about?

This is the last verse in the Old Testament! After this there was a period of silence for 400 years. What (or who) finally broke the silence?

6) How can you share God's love with others this week?

PICK UP

After small group, kids can play in the game room, Large Group room, or the balcony area. They can go between the areas as they want until they are picked up. Leaders should be spread out in these areas to watch kids.

Use this time to interact with kids and follow up on any questions or discussions from small group time.

As parents arrive upstairs, direct them to the game room, Large Group room, or balcony to pick their kids up. Make sure to match their security code with their kid's name tag and remove the name tag before they leave!

CLEAN UP

- Put away any supplies used during small group.
- Turn off TVs and lights in the small group rooms.
- Turn off both air hockey tables and put away extra pucks or paddles.
- Gather any balls or other items left out in the game room and put them away in the correct bins.
- Put away any games, books, or supplies in the balcony area.
- Check for any items left behind by kids and put them in the lost and found.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING!