

REBUILD

Date: 11.17.24 | Title: Malachi | Scripture: Malachi

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

Middle School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

God wants us to live for His glory.

God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

High School Students

The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.

God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.

God wants us to live for His glory.

God is a righteous judge.

God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.

Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.

Jesus gave His life for us on the cross and He is the only way for salvation.



**MEMORY
VERSE**

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.” Lamentations 3:22-24

REBUILD

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

God's people had grown lazy in their worship of God. They offered sick and lame animals for sacrifice. Malachi called God's people to repent to prepare for the Messiah. Malachi told of a messenger to come who would prepare the way for Jesus- John the Baptist. We will learn more about John the Baptist during our first New Testament Unit after Christmas.

Malachi wrote his book at a time when the Jews had been free from Babylonian captivity for some time. Many of the problems Ezra and Nehemiah faced with the Jewish people were also problems Malachi tackled: marriage messes, tithing troubles, and social sins. Xerxes of Persia was the reigning king, but other than collecting taxes, he left the Jews to themselves. Malachi's heart cry was for the people to repent of their sins and return to true worship and faithfulness to God.

The book of Malachi was the last prophetic word before a period of 400 years of so-called silence from God, which was broken by the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and the writings of the New Testament. In biblical history, those 400 years of silence between the Old and New Testaments are known as the intertestamental period.

The book of Malachi is an intensely personal conversation between two parties: God through His prophet, Malachi, or "Messenger"- and the people of Israel.

The last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, begins with this proclamation to Israel: "I have loved you' says the Lord" (Malachi 1:2). Just in case all the years of tough love didn't prove it, He just came out and said it- a direct assertion. Right after God expressed His love for Israel, Israel responded: "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?'" (Malachi 1:2). You love us, God? How? God answered them by giving a direct contrast: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?... Yet Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated" (v 2-3). In other words, "I chose you. And you say, 'Prove it.'"

The root of all Israel's problems lay in their failure to believe in the love of God. This has probably been the room of sin since the Garden of Eden when Satan tricked Eve into doubting God's best intentions for her, planting a seed of doubt in her heart that grew into disobedience. The original sin set a pattern for all of mankind. We'd rather believe the devil when he leads us to believe God has neglected us than the pattern of love God has shown time and time and again. Here, as the Old Testament wraps up, God makes it clear: He loves His people, whether they believe Him or not.

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BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Once God made it clear that His care for Israel was not in question, He engaged in a sort of debate, presenting His complaints about Israel's behavior, stating their questions in response, and then answering them. Over the next few chapters, God complains to His people about them. In chapters 1, 2, and 3, He objects to their cheating, their apathy, their mixed marriages with worldly and ungodly people, their divorces, their theft and their pride and arrogance. The back and forth nature of the dialogue suggests that loving Israel was often more heartbreaking than rewarding.

What exasperating and irritating excuses! "You have wearied the Lord with your words; yet you say, 'In what way have we wearied Him?' In that you say, 'Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them' or 'Where is the God of justice?'" (Mal 2:17). The people were exhausting God's patience with their religious show fueled by their lack of any real relationship with Him. They let temporary, earthly matters get in the way of looking at God as their protector and provider. The result was lukewarm religion. The people of Israel were holding back their tithes, saying "Things are tight this month," which forced the priests, who were sponsored by those tithes, to go out and work in the fields. God's ministry through the priests was being hindered because the people didn't trust that God would meet their needs. In that way, they robbed God, but they were actually robbing themselves because God responded to their faithlessness by shutting off the rain, which spoiled the crops.

God was about to go silent for four centuries. Malachi, the messenger, foretold of a NT messenger- John the Baptist- who would go before the greatest Messenger of all, Jesus Christ. One messenger would point the way, and the other Messenger would be the Way.

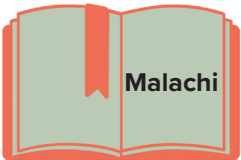
Malachi predicted a bridge between the Old and New Testaments "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:5-6), Elijah the prophet had lived several centuries before this time, and it would be another four after Malachi before God spoke again, so what's the deal with saying He would send Elijah?

When Jesus referred to John the Baptist as "Elijah who is to come" (Matthew 11:14), He didn't mean that John was some reincarnation of Elijah, but that John was a prophet in the tradition and style of Elijah a powerful, no-nonsense spiritual heir. As the angel told John's father Zacharias, before John was born, that John would "also go before Him (the Messiah) in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children" (Luke 1:17). The angel quoted Malachi 4:6 to verify this spiritual lineage. While talking with John and Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:10-13), Jesus confirmed that John was Elijah's spiritual successor, and that, in keeping with Malachi 4:5, the actual Elijah would return at some point in the future, likely as one of the two witnesses of Revelation 11.

The Old Testament closes unfulfilled-all sorts of predictions, prophecies and promises waiting in hope and anticipation.

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LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



Tell the story: Use the Background Info for Leaders or The Message Bible summary of scripture to help tell today's story. "The Great and Awesome Day of the Lord" in The Biggest Story Storybook Bible will also be helpful

TELL THE STORY

God loved His people, and He wanted them to be holy. He wanted them to obey Him completely. God sent a message to His people through the prophet Malachi. He told the people about their sins and called them to turn back to Him.

The priests had disobeyed God. They offered as sacrifices animals that were stolen, lame, or sick. They turned people away from God and taught them wrong things.



Read directly from Scripture, use the message, or the summary provided in the lesson

God warned that a day of judgment is coming when God will punish sin and reward righteousness. God would send a messenger to get people read for God's promised Messiah. Next, God talked about some of the wrong things the people were doing. They were not offering to God a share of their wealth. Some of the people were saying things about God that weren't true.

Other people didn't honor God, and God noticed them. "They will be Mine," God said. "I will have compassion on them."

Malachi told the people to be patient. God had not forgotten about them. Life was not easy, but if they served God and followed Him, they would be happy on the day when God would keep His promise to rescue His people.



Have students re-tell the story as best they can.

Attributes of God: Determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true change the way we live in Christ?

Put the events in order, draw a comic strip, build it with blocks or playdough, act it out, etc...

Share the GOSPEL: Malachi was a messenger- a prophet- who told God's people to repent. Malachi also told about another messenger God would send. This messenger, John the Baptist, would call people to repent and get them ready for one final Messenger, Jesus Christ. Jesus would bring good news of salvation.

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“Storying” Questions: As you ask these questions, have your students find the answers in the actual verses of scripture instead of recalling them from your re-telling of the story. We always want to encourage all of our students to go directly to God’s Word over a commentary on or summary of scripture. Use the Bible Study Bookmark Questions as well as these questions to help students understand the text:

1. What are some of the sins still plaguing the Israelites?
2. What are some things we learn about God’s love for the Israelites throughout the OT?
3. Why should we offer our best to God? How does God offer us His best?
4. Who was the messenger Malachi said would come before Jesus?
5. What happens at the end of Malachi?
6. Who is one of the first people introduced in the NT?
7. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
8. What does this story teach me about myself?
9. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
10. Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
11. How does this story help me live on mission better?

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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

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ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.

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PRAYER PROMPTS

God, thank you for your faithfulness in the OT and in our lives today. We are so grateful for your unchanging plan to bring salvation to Your people, no matter how much we don't deserve it. Remind us of Your great love every moment of every day and help us to live lives dedicated to following You fully and completely! We love You!

IF TIME ALLOWS:

Help the students in your group practice memorizing the books of the Bible:

- Torah: Genesis-Deuteronomy
- History: Joshua-Esther
- Poetry: Job-Song of Solomon
- Major Prophets: Isaiah-Daniel
- Minor Prophets: Hosea-Malachi
- Gospels: Matthew-John
- Paul's Letters: Romans-Philemon
- General Letters: Hebrews-Revelation

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

For the months of November and December Creek Families will be collecting money for the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. Encourage your class to collect money in the jars we will pass out today at the end of service. Students can donate with their families as they arrive, or you can go together as a class on the way back to the Worship Center at the end of SS. Money can be donated each week, or at the end of December.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Work on memorizing this weeks verse with the students in your group. You can use the first letter of each word in the verse to help with this. For example, the unit verse would look like this:

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Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?

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Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?