

Lesson 119

400 Years of Waiting

God prepares the world for Jesus.

Studying God's Word

Lesson Time

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Have the students assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs.

Bring your stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, and any items you prepared for this lesson.

Prayer

This prayer time is designed to help the students begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to encourage them to pray.

We start our Bible lesson with prayer. Turn to the Flip Chart Prayer Page. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there.

Today let's say prayers of thanksgiving and tell God what we're thankful for.

I'll start. Dear God, thank you for . . . (insert personal prayer here).

Pass a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—around the circle, giving all the students an opportunity to pray, or choose a volunteer to stand beside you and pray.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away, and we'll answer our Bible Truth questions.

I love you prayers—Adoration
I'm sorry prayers—Confession
I'm thankful prayers—Thanksgiving
Please prayers—Supplication

Bible Truths

These four questions will be repeated each week to help the students learn foundational truths.

All of God's words in the Bible are what? True!
What word means God will always keep his promises? Faithful.
When can we trust God? All the time.
Is forgiveness of sins a gift from God? Yes. We are saved by grace.

Bible Treasure Hunt

Before Bible Treasure Hunt, place a sticky note in your Bible between the Old and New Testaments for today's lesson.

Each week before class, hide your Bible somewhere in the room. Use different methods each week to keep the students excited about finding the Bible. For example, you might set a timer, play music while the students search, tell students when they are getting warmer and colder, or choose a student to hide the Bible and let you or classmates find it.

We are going to start out today by looking into God's Word, the Bible. God's Word is true, and we can always trust what it says. It's like a great treasure that tells us about who God is and what he has done for us. But where is this treasure? You will have to help me with that. We're going to go on a Bible Treasure Hunt. Somewhere in this room, I've hidden the Bible. When I say "Go," you will need to look for it. Whoever finds the Bible must bring it back to their seat and hold it very carefully until it is time to look in it. When it is time to read, you can bring it to me, and we'll open it to see what we are going to talk about today! Explain the method you chose for today. Ready? Set! Go!

K-1st Lesson continues next.

Pre-K Lesson

K-1st Lesson

Pre-K Lesson

Introduction

Refer to Lesson 118 Flip Chart. In the last lesson, we saw how God gave Malachi a message of warning for the priests who were sacrificing sick animals instead of their best animals. God wants us to have the right heart attitude showing love and respect for him and being truly sorry when we sin.

Malachi also wrote that a messenger, John the Baptist, would come to get the people ready for Jesus. But it would be 400 years before the messenger would come!

Now, 400 years is a long time to wait, isn't it? To help us think about how much things can change in 400 years, let's take a short trip back in time.

Have Illustrations ready.

You may add/change the questions/examples below so they relate to your students (e.g., the founding of your church, city, or country).

Have students line up along the wall at one end of the room or a hallway. We're in the year 20_____. We have all kinds of interesting things like cell phones, smart TVs, and video games. But let's walk back in time about 50 years. Lead students to walk about the length of the room/hall. Guess what! Fifty years ago, people didn't have cell phones! Show Illustration #1.

Let's go back 100 years. Lead students to the length of the room/hall. Lots of things were changing in America. People were driving some of the first cars. Show Illustration #2. They looked different 100 years ago, didn't they?

Now, let's go back 200 years. Lead students to the length of the room/hall. America was a new country. Show Illustration #3. There were no cars yet or TVs or even phones 200 years ago!

What if we go back 400 years in time? Lead students to the other end of the room/hall. There were no cities, cars, or phones in America, but there was a lot of exploring to do. Show Illustration #4.

Have students take their seats. Do you see how things can change a lot in 400 years? That's a long time, and many things can happen.

Show the Lesson Flip Chart. Today we'll look in the Bible at another 400 years, between the time of the prophet Malachi in the Old Testament and Jesus' birth in the New Testament.

Daniel's Vision

Have the student with the Bible bring it up and turn to the sticky note in the section between the Old and New Testaments. Many things happened during the years between the Old Testament and the New Testament. But God was sovereign. He was in control to make things happen just the way he wanted. God knew everything that would happen during the 400 years before Jesus was born, and he shared some of these things with Daniel.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Who remembers what we learned about Daniel? Allow discussion.

God gave Daniel visions, like dreams, of things that would happen in the years before Jesus was born. In one vision, Daniel saw a ram (a boy sheep) that raced all over the place with great power, and no one could stop him. But then a goat with a big horn on his head came and attacked the ram! The ram died, and the goat became very powerful. That's a strange dream, isn't it?

Daniel 8:20-21

An angel explained what Daniel's vision meant. Let's read what he said from Daniel 8. We'll start with verse 20. Read the verse.

Who was the ram supposed to be in Daniel's vision, the kings of what? The kings of Media and Persia.

The kings of Media and Persia were powerful like the ram and took over Babylon. We've learned a little about them in other lessons. King Darius the Mede was the king who threw Daniel into the lions' den. And the kings of Persia were the ones who let the Jews go back to Judah.

Listen to the next verse. Read verse 21. Who was the goat in the dream, the king of what? The king of Greece.

Refer to the Flip Chart. The strong goat from Daniel's vision stood for the kingdom of Greece. The horn on his head stood for Alexander the Great, who was a powerful ruler and warrior. As ruler of Greece, he took over

many countries, including Judah, which meant the Greeks would rule over the Jews.

Refer to the Flip Chart. One Greek ruler did terrible things to the Lord's temple and tried to force the Jews to worship false gods. Some Jews fought against this ruler. The man who led the fight was given the nickname Maccabee, which means "hammer." After many battles, they took back the temple. It was cleaned out and the lampstands were relit to worship God again. People celebrate a holiday called Hanukkah to remember this time.

One reason God allowed the Greeks to take over many countries is so that many people would learn to speak the Greek language. God knew that if most people spoke the same way, it would be easier to spread the good news of Jesus when he came to earth.

Roman Rule

Refer to the Flip Chart. Now, there were two groups of Jews who didn't get along because they believed different things about God and his Word and how they should live. One group, called the Sadducees, thought it would be okay to be like the Greek people. But the other group, called the Pharisees, didn't want to follow the ways of the Greeks.

The Pharisees and Sadducees both wanted to rule over the Jews. They fought and argued with each other trying to get their own way. Finally, they asked a Roman general for help. The Pharisees wanted the general to fight the Sadducees—and the Sadducees wanted him to come and fight the Pharisees!

Refer to the Flip Chart. But the general wasn't a Jew; he was a Roman, so he came and took over all of them! Now the Jews had to obey the Romans. It was during this time, while the Romans ruled, that Jesus was born.

The Romans built many roads, which made travelling easier. People could go from place to place faster than before. Just as God allowed the Greeks to spread their language, he also allowed the Romans to come and build their roads so that the good news of Jesus could be spread more easily to new places.

God was in control of everything that happened during the 400 years between the Old Testament and the New Testament. He was getting the world ready for Jesus.

Continue with the Lesson Review Game below.

K-1st Lesson

Introduction

Refer to Lesson 118 Flip Chart. In the last book of the Old Testament, we saw how God gave the prophet Malachi a message of warning for the priests who were sacrificing sick animals instead of their best ones. God wants us to have the right heart attitude showing love and respect for him and being truly sorry when we sin.

Malachi also wrote that a messenger, John the Baptist, would come to get the people ready for the Messiah. But it would be 400 years before the messenger would arrive!

Now, 400 years is a long time to wait, isn't it? To help us think about how much things can change in 400 years, let's take a quick trip back in time.

Have Illustrations ready.

You may add/change the questions/examples below so they relate to your students (e.g., the founding of your church, city, or country).

Have students line up along the wall at one end of the room or a hallway. We'll start here, where we are today. We're in the year 20_____. We have all kinds of interesting things like cell phones, smart TVs, and video games. But let's walk back in time about 50 years. Lead students to walk about the length of the room/hall. Here we are in the 1970s. And guess what; people didn't have cell phones! Show Illustration #1.

Let's go back in time 100 years to the 1920s. Lead students to the length of the room/hall. Lots of things were changing in America. People were buying some of the first cars to ride in instead of using horses and wagons. Show Illustration #2.

Now, let's go back about 200 years, to the early 1800s. Lead students to the length of the room/hall. America was a new nation. There were no cars yet or TVs or even phones! Show Illustration #3.

Let's go 400 years back in time. Lead students to the other end of the room/hall. America was just starting at a place called Jamestown. At this time, in the 1600s, hardly anyone was here in America except Native Americans. There were no cities, cars, or phones, but there was a lot of exploring to do. Show Illustration #4.

Let's make our way back to the present time. Pause and refer to Illustrations as you move back through the room/hall. Now we're back in the year 20_____. You can see how things have changed a lot in the last 400 years.

Show the Lesson Flip Chart. Today we'll look in the Bible at another 400 years when there were many big changes going on in the world—the years between the time of the prophet Malachi and Jesus' birth.

Daniel's Vision

Have the student with the Bible bring it up and turn to the sticky note in the section between the Old and New Testaments. Many things happened during the years between the Old Testament and the New Testament. But God was in control to make things happen just the way he wanted.

What is the word that means God is in control of everything? Sovereign. Right. And what word means God knows everything? Omniscient.

Because God is sovereign and omniscient, he knew exactly when and where everything in the world would take place. He chose to share some of these important things with Daniel to show him what would happen during the 400 years before Jesus was born.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Who remembers some things about Daniel in the Bible? Allow discussion.

God gave Daniel visions, like dreams, of things that would happen in the future. In one vision, Daniel saw a ram (a boy sheep) with one horn that was bigger than the other. The ram raced around all over the place with great power, and no one could stop him. But then a goat with a big horn on his head came and attacked the ram! The ram died, and the goat became very powerful. Then the goat's horn broke, and four smaller horns grew. Wow! That's a pretty strange dream, isn't it?

Daniel 8:20–21

An angel explained what Daniel's vision meant. Let's read what he said from Daniel 8. We'll start with verse 20. Read the verse.

Who was the ram supposed to be in Daniel's vision? The kings of Media and Persia.

The kings of Media and Persia were powerful, like the ram, and took over Babylon. We talked a little about them in other lessons. King Darius the Mede was the king who threw Daniel into the lions' den. And the Persian kings were the ones who gave the Jews permission to go back to Judah.

Listen to the next verse. Read verse 21. Who was the goat in the dream? The king of Greece.

Who was the great horn on the goat supposed to be? The first king of Greece.

Refer to the Flip Chart. The goat from Daniel's dream stood for the kingdom of Greece that became strong. The horn on his head stood for Alexander the Great, who was a powerful ruler and warrior. As ruler of Greece, he took over many countries, including Judah, and the Greeks ruled over the Jews for about 150 years.

Refer to the Flip Chart. One Greek ruler hated the Jews. He did terrible things to the Lord's temple and tried to force the people to worship false gods. Some Jews fought against this ruler. The man who led the fight was given the nickname Maccabee, which means "hammer." After many battles, he took back the temple! Today many Jewish people still celebrate a special festival called Hanukkah to remember when they took the temple back and relit the lampstands to worship God again.

God was in control even over the powerful Greek leaders. One important reason God allowed them to take over many countries is so that many people would learn the Greek language. God knew that if most people understood the same speech, it would be easier to spread the good news of Jesus when he came to earth.

Roman Rule

Refer to the Flip Chart. Now, there were two groups of Jews who didn't get along because they believed different things about God and his Word and how they should live. One group, called the Pharisees, didn't want to follow the ways of the Greeks. They were very worried about accidentally disobeying God. They wanted to stay so close to the Jewish way of life that they even made up extra laws for the Jews to obey. But the other group thought it would be okay to be like the Greek people; they were called the Sadducees.

Both the Pharisees and Sadducees wanted to rule over the Jews. They fought and argued with each other for power, wanting things their way. They finally asked a Roman general named Pompey for help. The Pharisees wanted him to fight the Sadducees—and the Sadducees asked him to come and fight the Pharisees!

Refer to the Flip Chart. But Pompey wasn't a Jew; he was a Roman, so he decided to come and take over all of the Jews for his country of Rome! Now the Jews had to obey the Romans. It was during this time, while the Romans ruled, that Jesus was born.

The Romans were good builders; they built many roads and ship ports, which made travelling easier. Now people could go from place to place faster than before. Just as God allowed the Greeks to spread their language, he also allowed the Romans to come and build their roads.

Do you see how God was getting things ready for Jesus? People could spread the good news of Jesus more easily to new places with one language and many roads. Looking back through the 400 years of history between the Old and New Testaments, we have seen how God was in control so that everything happened according to his plan. God was getting the world ready for Jesus' birth.

Continue with the Lesson Review Game.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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