

## Lesson 118

# Malachi Prophecies of Jesus

In the midst of rebuke, the Lord gives hope of a Savior.

# 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 confession and tell God we're sorry.

I'll start. Dear God, I'm sorry 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 to mark the first passage to be read.

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**

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### **Introduction**

Refer to Lesson 113 Flip Chart. Zerubbabel and the first group of Jews returned to Judah to rebuild the temple.

Refer to Lesson 115 Flip Chart. When Ezra went back to Jerusalem, he helped the Jews understand their sin of marrying foreign people who worshipped false gods. As a consequence, they had to send away their wives and children who were causing them to turn from God.

Refer to Lessons 116-117 Flip Charts. Then God sent Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah trusted God and came up with a plan for the Jews to be ready to fight against enemies as they worked on the wall. As governor of Jerusalem, Nehemiah helped the poor people in the city and gathered everyone to hear Ezra read God's laws.

Have a used toy/game in a gift bag ready. Optional: separate gift bag with treats.

Today, we'll start with a question. Who remembers one of the gifts you got for your last birthday? Allow answers.

I have a gift in this bag. Do you want to see it? Pull out the used/broken toy or game.

Aww! What's wrong with this gift? Allow discussion.

Why would you not be happy with this gift? Allow answers. It isn't new/it's broken. It shows that the person didn't care to spend the time or money to get you something special.

If you brought the optional gift bag with treats: Maybe this gift would be better. Pass out treats to each student.

In today's lesson, we'll see how the Jews were bringing sacrifices to God that were not their best—kind of like giving a bad gift—and God was not pleased. The Jews began to disobey God's commands for worship, so God sent his prophet Malachi with two messages: a warning and a message of hope.

## God's Warning About Worship

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. We're going to read from Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament.

Show the Lesson Flip Chart. Malachi was a prophet around the time of Nehemiah. God gave him a message about something that the priests weren't doing right. Take a look at the Flip Chart. Can you tell what they were doing wrong? They were offering imperfect animals.

Why would it be a bad thing to offer an animal like this to God? Allow discussion.

Malachi 1:8

Let's find out what God thought about the way the priests were worshipping him. Listen to Malachi 1:8. Have the student with the Bible bring it up and turn to the sticky note. Read the verse.

When the priests offered blind animals in sacrifice, God said, "Is that not" what? Evil.

What did God call it when the priests offered lame (crippled) or sick sacrifices? Evil.

When the priests gave sick animals as offerings, they dishonored God and didn't show respect. God said that it was an evil thing for them to do; their hearts were not right. He commanded that any animal sacrificed in the temple should not be sick, blind, or weak. It was supposed to be the BEST animal they had since they were offering it to a holy God to cover their sins.

The priests were setting a bad example for the people. Their job was to lead the people to obey God, but they were not doing that. They were causing the people to disobey and sin against the Lord.

God expected his people to treat him with the right heart attitude of honor and respect. Through Malachi's message, God told the priests that if they would not listen and begin to honor God the right way, their offerings would bring a curse instead of a blessing.

We don't offer God burnt offerings or animals anymore, but we worship him in other ways. We can praise God, pray to him, and obey him by doing good things because we love him. We need to be careful about what kind of attitude we have in our hearts. God wants us to obey him with an attitude

of worship that shows we love and honor him and are sorry when we do wrong.

Think about things we do to worship God, like bowing our heads to pray. That's a good thing to do, right? But what if, instead of really listening to the prayer, we're thinking about other things—like going out for ice cream after church? That certainly is not our best worship, is it? It's like the priests who didn't worship the way they should when they gave animals that were sick. We must remember to offer our best worship from our hearts because God deserves it.

## God's Promise of Hope

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. God had another message for Malachi to give the people. But this was not a message of warning—it was a message of hope! Malachi said that a special messenger would come to prepare the way for the Messiah.

The Messiah was the anointed one, chosen to be the Savior who would save the people from their sins.

Who is the Messiah, the one who came to save sinners? Jesus.

That's right. Malachi wrote about Jesus many years before he was born! And he wrote that a messenger would come before Jesus to tell the people how to get ready for him.

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Let's find out who this messenger was. We're going to jump ahead to the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament. Luke tells about a priest named Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth. They were both getting old and had no children yet, so they were praying that God would give them a child. As Zechariah went into the temple one day, he was surprised when an angel came and spoke to him.

Luke 1:13 & 16

Listen to what the angel said. Read Luke 1:13.

What did the angel say they would have? A son.  
What were they supposed to name their son? John.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. Zechariah and Elizabeth's son was John the Baptist. He came just before Jesus and told the people that the Messiah—Jesus—would be coming.

But the angel said more. Listen to verse 16. Read the verse.

What would John do? He would turn many of the children of Israel, the Jews, to whom? To the Lord their God.

Malachi said a messenger would tell the people about the Messiah so that they would be ready to turn to the Lord and believe in him when he came. John the Baptist did that, just as Malachi said.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. God gave Malachi two messages for the Jews. First, he warned the priests to stop disobeying God and to worship him with the right heart attitude. And second, he delivered a message of hope to remind the people that a messenger would come to make things ready for the Messiah, who would save sinners.

Continue with the Lesson Review Game below.

## **K-1st Lesson**

### **Introduction**

Refer to Lesson 113 Flip Chart. Zerubbabel and the first group of Jews returned to Judah to rebuild the temple and the altar so the people could offer sacrifices to God as he commanded.

Refer to Lesson 115 Flip Chart. When Ezra went back to Jerusalem, he heard that the Jews were marrying foreign people who didn't worship the true God. Ezra helped the Jews understand their sin, and as a consequence, they had to send away their wives and children who worshipped false gods.

Refer to Lessons 116–117 Flip Charts. Then God sent Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah prayed and trusted God. He came up with a plan for the Jews to be ready to fight against enemies as they worked on the wall. As governor of Jerusalem, Nehemiah helped the poor people in the city and gathered everyone to hear Ezra read God's laws.

Have a used toy/game in a gift bag ready. Optional: separate gift bag with treats.

Today, I have a gift in this bag. Who will come and show us what it is? Choose a student to pull out the used/broken toy or game. Show it to the class and have student return to seat.

How would you feel if someone gave you something like this for your birthday? Allow discussion.

Why would you not be happy with this gift? Allow answers. It isn't new/it's broken. It shows that the person didn't care to spend the time or money to get you something special.

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In today's lesson, we'll see how the Jews were bringing sacrifices to God that were not their best—kind of like giving a bad gift—and God was not pleased. The Jews began to disobey God's commands for worship and sacrifice, so God sent his prophet Malachi with two messages: a warning and a message of hope.

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Show the Lesson Flip Chart. Malachi was a prophet around the time of Nehemiah. God gave him a message about something that the priests weren't doing right. Take a look at the Flip Chart. Can you tell what they were doing wrong? They were offering imperfect animals. Why would it be a bad thing to offer an animal like this to God? Allow discussion.

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When the priests gave animals that were sick or blind as offerings, they dishonored God and didn't show respect. God said that it was an evil thing for them to do; their hearts were not right. He commanded that any animal sacrificed in the temple should not be sick, blind, or weak. It was supposed to be the BEST animal they had since they were offering it to a holy God to cover their sins.

The priests were setting a bad example for the people. Their job was to teach the people how to obey God and to show them a good example of worshipping him. Instead, they were causing the people to disobey and sin against the Lord.

God expected his people to treat him with the right heart attitude of honor and respect. The Bible tells us that God was not pleased with the priests or with their sacrifices of sick animals. Through Malachi's message, God told the priests that if they would not listen and begin to honor him the right way, their offerings would bring a curse instead of a blessing.

## Psalm 51:17

How could the people make this right? What kind of attitude does please God? Psalm 51:17 tells us the answer. Read the verse.

What kind of sacrifices does God want us to give? What kind of spirit? A broken spirit.

What kind of heart? A broken and contrite heart.

A broken and contrite heart is one that is truly sorry for sin and wants to obey God. We need to be careful about what kind of attitude we have in our hearts. God wants us to be obedient with an attitude of worship that shows we love and honor him and are sorry when we do wrong.

We don't offer animals to God anymore, but we worship him in other ways. We can praise God, pray to him, and obey him by doing good things because we love him. We need to be careful, though. It can be easy to say

we're doing things to worship God but deep inside, we may really just want others to think we're great because of what we do. Is that our best worship? That's like offering a sheep with a broken leg!

Sometimes, we may worship only halfway. For instance, when we pray, do we think about the words we're saying, or do we think about something else—like going out for ice cream after church? That certainly is not our best, is it? That's kind of like giving a sick goat that lost all its hair! We must remember to offer our best worship from our hearts because God deserves it.

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The Messiah was the anointed one, chosen to be the Savior who would save people from their sins. The Jews were ready for this message. They had waited a long time for the Messiah to come.

Who is the Messiah, the one who came to save sinners? Jesus.

That's right. Malachi wrote about Jesus 400 years before he was born! And he wrote that a messenger would come before the Messiah to tell the people how to get their hearts ready for him.

Can you guess who the messenger was that came before Jesus? Allow guesses.

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Let's find out who this messenger was. We're going to jump ahead 400 years to the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament. In the first chapter of Luke, he tells about a priest named Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth. They were both getting old and had no children yet, so they were praying that God would give them a child.

### Luke 1:13 & 16

As Zechariah went into the temple one day, he was surprised when an angel came and spoke to him. Listen to what the angel said. Read Luke 1:13.

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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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