

Malachi the Prophet

Malachi 1–4

The Jewish people had returned to the promised land, and they were ready for God to bless them. The people waited, but nothing happened. Sometimes their lives were hard, and they wondered if God really loved them. The people became lazy in how they worshiped God.

The Lord loved His people, and He wanted them to be holy. He wanted them to obey Him completely. **So God sent a message to His people through the prophet Malachi** (MAL uh kigh). **God’s message told the people about their sins and called them to turn back to Him.**

The priests had disobeyed God. They were supposed to lead the people in worship, but instead of offering God the best animal sacrifices, the priests offered animals that were stolen, lame, or sick. God said, “I’m not pleased. I will not accept your offerings.”

God also said to the priests, “It is your job to help people follow Me; they look to you for instruction. **But you have turned them away from Me. You taught them wrong things.”**

God warned the people that a day of judgment is coming when God will punish sin and reward righteousness. God said, “I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me.” **The messenger would have a very important job: to get the people ready for God’s promised Messiah.**

Next, God talked about some of the wrong things the people were doing. “You are robbing Me!” God said. **The people were not offering to God a share of their wealth.** But everything they had was a gift from God. “Bring a

tenth of your wealth to Me,” God said. “And test Me! See if I will not give you even more blessings—more than you can count!”

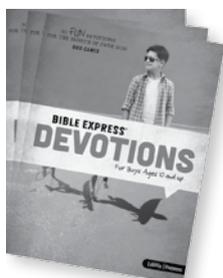
Some of the people were saying things about God that weren't true. “It is useless to serve God,” the people said. “People who live however they want to are better off than we are.”

But other people did honor God, and God noticed them. “They will be Mine,” God said. “I will have compassion on them.”

He said, “A day is coming when everyone who is wicked will be destroyed. But those who honor Me will go out and playfully jump like calves.”

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.

Christ Connection: 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 a final Messenger, Jesus Christ. Jesus would bring good news of salvation.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that Malachi told about a messenger who would prepare the way for the Messiah. John prepared people for Jesus. (Mal. 4:6; Luke 1:16-17)
Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.



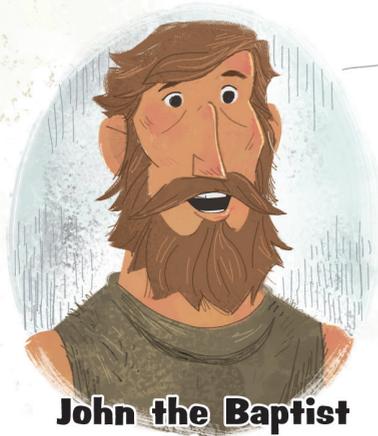
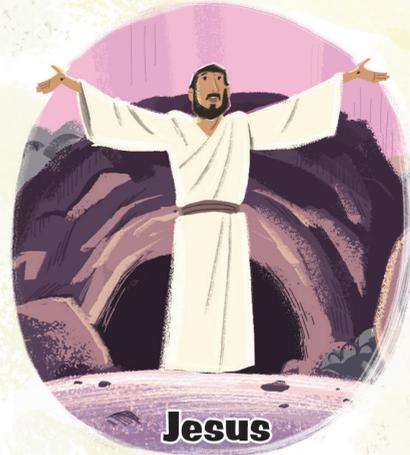
Trace the Path

DOWNLOAD THE
TGP FAMILY APP

INSTRUCTIONS: Trace the path from the prophet Malachi to John the Baptist. Then trace the path from John the Baptist to Jesus.



Malachi



John the Baptist

KEY PASSAGE:

Lamentations 3:22-23

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Does God keep His promises?
Yes, God is always faithful.

BIBLE STORY:

MALACHI THE PROPHET

- God's people disobeyed Him.
- God sent Malachi to talk to His people.
- God told His people to repent.
- Malachi said another messenger was coming who would get people ready for the Messiah.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Was it loving or unloving of God not to bless His people when they disobeyed Him?
- What were some of the things the people were doing wrong?
- Whom can we tell about Jesus so they will be ready when He comes back?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Challenge family members to identify ways they can share what they have and then do it.
- Visit a local farm as a family. Observe the calves. Talk about how we will one day jump and play like calves at Jesus' return.

Preschool Activity Pages
Unit 18, Session 6

Who Am I?

Use your Bible to answer the following questions. Unscramble the circled letters to find out whom the prophet Malachi spoke about.

1. In which testament is the Book of Malachi?

○ _____

2. What is the name of the sixth book of the Bible?

_____ ○ _____

3. How many books are in the Old Testament?

_____ ○ _____

4. Which book comes after the Book of Isaiah?

○ _____

Malachi said God was going to send a messenger to get people ready for the promised Messiah.

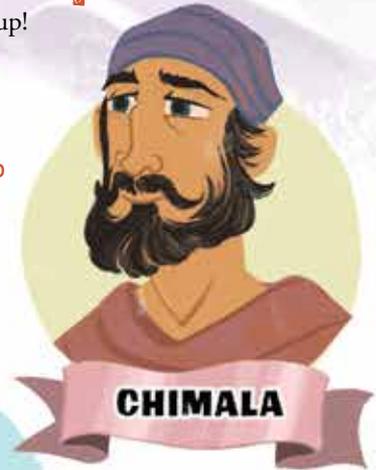
The messenger's name was

_____.

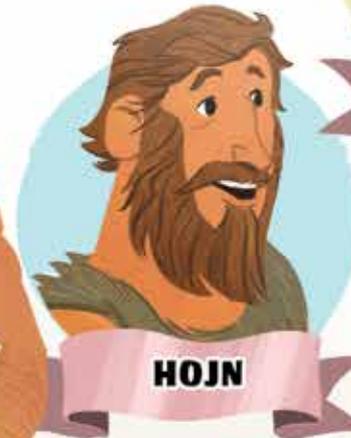
Messenger Mix-Up

The names of these messengers are all mixed up!
Can you sort them out?

_____ was a messenger—a prophet—who told God's people to repent. He also told about another messenger God would send.



_____ the Baptist called people to repent and to get ready for a final Messenger.



_____, the final Messenger, brought good news of salvation.

