

May 2nd, 2021

## **Bible Story: Malachi the Prophet**

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. God 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. 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.

## **Bible Story Review: Malachi the Prophet**

Supplies: none

Directions: Discuss and ask the kids the questions below.

1. Who was the last prophet in the Old Testament? (Malachi)
2. What kind of sacrifices were the people offering? (They brought lame or sick animals, Mal. 1:8)

3. God promised that when the Messiah comes the righteous would jump like what kind of animal? (calves, Mal. 4:2)
4. Why was God so unhappy with the people's sacrifices? Guide the kids to see that God's people were going through the motions of worship, but their hearts were not in it. By offering sick and lame animals, they communicated that they did not believe God deserved their best. They were trying to save their best animals for themselves. God always deserves our best.
5. When is it easy to obey God? When is it difficult to obey Him? Guide kids to see that obedience is easier when our hearts are full of love for God and those around us love Him too. Help them see that obedience can be difficult when we are surrounded by people who do not love God. But God promises to be with us and strengthen us. He promises that the reward will be great for our obedience.
6. What can we do when we realize that we are living in sin? When we confess our sin to God, we can ask Him to restore us. Jesus had paid the price for our sin once and for all, so we can have forgiveness through Him.

### **Memory Verse: 1 Peter 5:10**

Directions: Whoever has memorized the verse gets candy! Work with your kids and see if they can get at least part of the verse without looking. Reward with candy: older kids get candy if they have memorized it or try. Younger kids get candy if they have memorized it, try, or if they can remember the first sentence.

### **Bible Story Game: Follow the Path**

Supplies: paper

Directions: Make a path on the floor using paper. Choose one of your kids and instruct them to close and cover their eyes with their hands as they follow the path you have made with the paper squares. They should be able to feel the difference if he steps off the path. Allow all your kids to take turns walking the path with their eyes covered and closed. If they are struggling to feel the difference between the floor and the carpet squares, allow them to remove their shoes and follow the path.

SAY: Was it easy to stay on the path when you could see anything? It's hard to know where you're going when you can't see the road in front of you. Malachi called God's people to repent to prepare for the Messiah. Malachi prophesied that another messenger would prepare the way for Jesus to come. This messenger was John the Baptist, and he would be the last prophet before Jesus.

### **Movement Mania: Malachi Says**

Supplies: none

Directions: We are playing, Simon Says! BUT it is Malachi Says. You can come up with ideas, but here are some ideas for crazy movement directions → Malachi Says...

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|---|--|
| -Do a cartwheel                                   | -Run to the gaga pit and back              |
| -Do ten jumping jacks                             | -Do a summersault                          |
| -Say the memory verse as fast as possible         | -pretend to be a tornado                   |
| -Say your ABC's as fast as possible               | -say this volunteers favorite color        |
| -Act like a squirrel                              | -pretend to be a dinosaur, rawr!           |
| -pretend to be a rocket and blast off to the moon | -pretend to be a frog and hop to the fence |

### **COVID Clean Up**

- Please clean off every item that has been touched with wipes
- When finished, please use hand sanitizer or wash your hands