



The Messiah's Messengers

7

Key Theme

- God is faithful to His promises.

Key Passages

- Malachi 3:1a; Luke 1:5–7, 1:11–15, 1:26–27, 29–31

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe how Zacharias received the message of the birth of John the Baptist.
- Describe how Mary received the message of the birth of Jesus.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will review the memory verse by putting the Memory Verse Cards in order and reciting the verse to the class and/or a friend. Cards will be used for Lessons 7–11.



Activity 1: The Messiah's Messengers Class Notes

Students will complete The Messiah's Messengers Class Notes as you study the lesson.



Studying God's Word

God sent the message of the Messiah in a special way. An angel delivered the good news to Zacharias that he and Elizabeth would have a son. This son would prepare the hearts of the people for the Messiah promised by God so long ago. And God sent the angel to tell Mary that she would miraculously conceive a Son who would be Jesus, the Promised One, the Messiah, for whom John would be preparing the people.



Activity 2: Messengers of God Match-Up

Students will flip the cards over and try to match the pictures with their descriptions in a game similar to "Concentration."

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- Print, preferably onto cardstock, and cut out one set of 10 Memory Verse Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Put cards in an envelope or plastic bag. Keep cards for Lessons 7–12.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Cards in envelope or plastic bag for each student



THE MESSIAH'S MESSENGERS CLASS NOTES

- Print The Messiah's Messengers Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- The Messiah's Messengers Class Notes
- The Messiah's Messengers Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Year 2, Quarter 4, Lesson 12 Lesson Theme Poster



MESSENGERS OF GOD MATCH-UP

- Print and cut out one set of Messengers of God Match-Up Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM. Print cards on cardstock if possible.
- If you have a large class, print and cut two or three sets of cards.

- Messengers of God Match-Up Cards



MEMORY VERSE REVIEW GAME (OPTIONAL)

- This is an optional activity to use in some or all of the lessons to review the memory verse if time allows.
- Use one set of 10 Memory Verse Cards from the Come On In Activity above.
- Tape one card to the backs of 10 students.

- Memory Verse Poster
- One set of Memory Verse Cards
- Tape



Memory Verse

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above along with this background.

As we move ahead in our study of the life of Jesus, we will begin at the beginning—not His birth, but the angelic announcements of His birth. These are significant announcements because of the supernatural way God conveyed them and because they verify Old Testament prophecies made about Jesus and the one who would prepare the way for Jesus. You see, God sent His messengers—angels—with these announcements.

The people of Israel knew of the promised Messiah. They had read of Him in the Scriptures, and some were waiting for this one who would redeem Israel (Isaiah 53:4–6, 61:1–3). The people also knew that before the Messiah appeared, God would send a messenger—one who would come to bear witness to the true Light (John 1:6–8). This messenger would prepare the way for the Messiah. A faithful remnant of the Jewish people waited for “Elijah,” the prophet who would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers (Malachi 4:5–6) and who would prepare the way for the Lord whom they had waited for (Malachi 3:1).

Little did Zacharias, the aged priest who served in the Temple of the Lord, know that he would have a son in his old age who would be the forerunner for the Messiah, as prophesied by Malachi. Nor could he have imagined how he would learn of this truth. You see, Zacharias was a righteous man. He and his wife, Elizabeth, had never been able to have children (Luke 1:5–7). But that was soon to change in a most amazing way. How? God sent a messenger—the angel Gabriel—to Zacharias while he was ministering in the Temple. The angel told Zacharias not to be afraid. He said Zacharias and his wife would soon have a son, whom they were to name John. John would be great in the sight of the Lord, and many would rejoice at his birth (Luke 1:13–15).

As God’s messenger, the angel testified that the son, John, would come in the power and spirit of Elijah. He would fulfill the prophecy of Malachi 4:5–6. He would make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17). This son, John the Baptist, was not the Christ but came to give witness to the Christ (John 1:20). John the Baptist was the bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament, and He would make straight the way of the Lord (John 1:23; Isaiah 40:3).

In another, more spectacular announcement, God

again sent His angel Gabriel, this time to the city of Nazareth, to a young woman, a virgin, who was betrothed to be married to Joseph. The angel assured her not to be afraid, for she had found favor with God. She would conceive a child, a Son, who would be called Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). This child would be great, called the Son of the Highest (Luke 1:26–32). What a mystery! Mary was not yet married to Joseph and had never known a man physically (Luke 1:34). But Mary would conceive in a miraculous way by the power of the Holy Spirit. And thus the prophecy of Isaiah—that a virgin would conceive a Son and name Him Immanuel, which means God with us—was fulfilled (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).

The angel Gabriel also told Mary that her Son would reign over a kingdom that would never end. And He would reign over the house of Jacob forever (Luke 1:32–33). Again we see in Jesus Christ the fulfillment of a promise made long ago through God’s prophet Nathan to King David that a house and kingdom would be established through his descendant forever (2 Samuel 7:16).

These very important messages were sent through supernatural messengers by the will of God to announce the forerunner of the Messiah and the Messiah Himself. Angels are unique creations of God, spiritual beings, who do the will of God. In the accounts mentioned above, Gabriel came to herald God’s news that the Messiah was coming—very soon.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

We know from Scripture that there is a spiritual realm beyond the physical realm we live in, with both good and evil beings (1 Peter 3:22; Ephesians 6:12). Comprehending the things that are happening in this spiritual realm is hard to grasp since we don’t see or hear what is happening there. On top of that, the Bible does not give us much detail about these spiritual beings and their activities. However, we do know that these beings do God’s will, heed His Word, do His pleasure (Psalm 103:20–21), praise Him (Isaiah 6:3), worship Him (Hebrews 1:6), minister to God’s people (Hebrews 1:14), and serve God in many other ways. The Bible describes several different spiritual beings who serve God. These are not all necessarily angels, but can be described as “angelic beings” created by God. The Bible gives different names for these created

beings that include seraphim (Isaiah 6:2), cherubim (Genesis 3:24), an archangel (Jude 9), and angels (Revelation 5:11). As we continue our discussion here, we will use the term “angel” knowing that there are distinctions among them.

A comprehensive study of angels would go beyond the scope of our lesson. We do know that the basic meaning of the Greek word *angelos* is “messenger.” And in the accounts of our lesson today, we learned God used His angel Gabriel as a messenger to proclaim good news to God’s people—first to Zacharias about John the Baptist the forerunner to the Messiah and then to Mary about the Messiah Himself.

We understand that angels serve God and act as His messengers. But the Bible also tells us there are angels within the spiritual world who do not serve God, but act as His enemies. These are usually referred to as demons, and it is commonly accepted that these demons were once angels created by God who rebelled against God. It is also believed that these angelic demons were led by Lucifer who was cast out of heaven because of his sin of pride and desire to be like God (Genesis 3:5; Isaiah 14:12–15).

These fallen angels led by Lucifer are a very real threat to Christians. That is why Paul warned the Ephesians (and us!) to put on the whole armor of God. These demons appear to be organized and ready to fight. We read that there are principalities, powers, rulers, and spiritual hosts of wickedness vying for our attention and loyalty (Ephesians 6:10–13). These fallen angels serve as messengers, as well. But their messages are filled with deception, death, and destruction. The Bible even warns us that Satan can masquerade as an angel of light, leading people astray (2 Corinthians 11:13–15).

Many ask the question, “When were the angels created?” The Bible doesn’t give us an exact answer in a single verse, but we can take what we know from the whole counsel of Scripture and come up with a reasonable answer. We know that God created everything in the span of six days (Exodus 20:11), and although the creation account in Genesis does not specifically mention angels, they are created beings that had to be created during the Creation Week (Nehemiah 9:6; John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16). The book of Job speaks of the “morning stars” singing and “sons of God” (also terms for angelic beings) shouting for joy as the foundations

of the earth were being created (Job 38:4–7). Consequently, the angels could have been created on Day 1, when God made the light and the darkness, on Day 2 when God separated the waters to make the firmament, or on Day 3 when God made the dry land.

Another question asked is, “When did the angels fall?” Again, we don’t know for certain. Since God proclaimed everything He made to be “very good” at the end of the Creation Week (Genesis 1:31), there could not have been any evil angels present then. And we can safely assume that it was after Day Seven since God set that day apart as holy (Genesis 2:3). God did not choose to reveal to us how long it was before Satan fell into sin and then turned to tempt Eve, but it probably wasn’t too long since there were no children born before Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden.

We do know angels are God’s creation. Some fell into sin, many did not. And after 400 years of silence from God (between the Old Testament and the New Testament), the silence was suddenly broken when God sent His angel/messenger to communicate the hope of the coming Messiah to Zacharias, Mary, and Joseph. The promises given to Malachi, Isaiah, and others hundreds of years before were about to be fulfilled! Our God is faithful to His promises as revealed in His Word. Let us continue to study that Word and share it with others as we rejoice with the angels and praise God for His goodness in sending the Savior.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Promised One, Messiah, I praise your name. How wonderful to read of the announcements God sent before your birth. Lord, you revealed your purpose for Zacharias and Elizabeth and Mary through an angel. And they trusted you and submitted to your will. My prayer is that my students and I will come to realize that you have a purpose for us, too. It’s revealed to us through the pages of Scripture. May it be our greatest joy to trust you and submit to your will for our lives. Use us, Lord, for your glory!

➤ Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we encourage you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God’s Word.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will review the memory verse by putting the Memory Verse Cards in order. If time allows, they will recite the verse to a friend or to the class.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided this activity on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



The Messiah's Messengers Class Notes

MATERIALS

- The Messiah's Messengers Class Notes for each student
- The Messiah's Messengers Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students complete them as you study the lesson.

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible today. Do not work ahead. We'll fill them in together.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will learn that after 400 years of silence from God, He sent an angel to announce the good news that the time for the Messiah had come. God sent a messenger who would prepare the way for the Messiah. And the Messiah, the one promised by the prophets so long ago, was coming.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

- ? Refer to the Lesson 5 Lesson Theme Poster. Remember the lesson we had that talked about important events in Jesus's life? Well, let's think back to that lesson. What were some of the events we talked about—things that happened in Jesus's life? *Birth, early life, healed the sick, controlled nature, taught His disciples, His trial before Pilate, crucified on the Cross, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven.*

INFINITE

(Refer to Attributes Poster)

Malachi 3:1a

► Use the New Testament History Poster included with your teacher kit as you teach the lesson. Emphasize that Jesus ministered only 3 years, and He lived only about 35 years. Yet His life changed the world forever and brought eternal life to all who believe.

Luke 1:5–7

► Re-read the verses or the portion of the verse(s) that answer the questions you are asking of the text.

? We know a lot about Jesus and what He did on earth and who He was! But do we know everything He said or everything He did? *Allow discussion.*

The Apostle John said we could never know all there is to know about Jesus. But we do know that Jesus is perfect and infinite—the eternal and everlasting God!

? Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. **What does infinite mean?** *Allow discussion. Something that is beyond what we can imagine.*

Jesus is infinite; we can't even imagine everything about Him and how truly perfect He is. But God tells us in the Bible what He wants us to know about Him.

Refer to Year 2, Quarter 4, Lesson 12 Lesson Theme Poster. **Today we are going to find out how God announced the coming of Jesus. God used the prophet Malachi to give God's people a message of hope, a message about the coming Messiah.**

Listen as I read from the book of Malachi in the Old Testament. These are the Words of God. *Read Malachi 3:1a emphasizing the answers to the questions below.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

? **Who was the Lord going to send?** *A messenger.*

? **What would the messenger do?** *Re-read Malachi 3:1a. Prepare the way before the Lord.*

God promised the people, through His prophet Malachi, that there would be a messenger who would come to prepare the way of the Lord.

? **Look at your class notes. Who is the first person in the picture at the top of the page, #1? He was a prophet of God and said a messenger would come.** *Malachi.*

Right! You will be completing your class notes by finishing the names of the people we discuss. Use the Word Bank if you need help spelling. Now let's read the sentence together.

The messenger Malachi spoke of would be John the Baptist. And after 400 years, the time had come for both John, the messenger, and Jesus, the Messiah, to be born. And God was about to announce these men coming in a spectacular way! Let's see how God did that. We'll read from the first chapter in the Gospel of Luke. Listen carefully so you can answer my questions. *Read Luke 1:5–7.*

? **Who was the king of Judea?** *Luke 1:5. Herod.*

? **Who was the priest in this verse?** *Re-read Luke 1:5. Zacharias.*

? **And what was Zacharias's wife's name?** *Luke 1:5. Elizabeth.*

? What does Luke say about Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth? What kind of people were they? *Re-read Luke 1:6. They were righteous, right before God, walked in His commandments.*

Zacharias and his wife believed and trusted in the one true God. They obeyed Him and loved Him.

? What else does it say about this couple? What didn't they have? *Re-read Luke 1:7. They had no children.*

Zacharias was a priest in the house of the Lord, and Elizabeth was his wife. They obeyed God and were righteous before Him. They were very old and had no children. But, that was about to change in a very unusual way!

Let's keep reading in Luke. In this part, Zacharias, the priest, was in the Temple making offerings to God. Let me read Luke 1:11–15. Listen to what happened! *Read Luke 1:11–15. Emphasize the answers to the questions below as you read.*

? Hmm. Something was about to change for Zacharias and Elizabeth! Who appeared to Zacharias? *Re-read Luke 1:11. An angel of the Lord.*

? How did Zacharias feel when he saw the angel? *Re-read Luke 1:12. He was troubled and afraid.*

? Zacharias was afraid! The angel appeared to him and spoke to him. What did the angel tell him? *Re-read Luke 1:13. Do not be afraid.*

The angel was sent by God to give Zacharias some wonderful news! He told Zacharias not to be afraid. Zacharias's prayer had been heard.

? What did the angel tell Zacharias about his wife, Elizabeth? *Re-read Luke 1:13. She would bear a son.*

? And what was this son's name to be? *Luke 1:13. John.*

? Who was this angel? It's here in the Bible; I'll just skip ahead to it. Listen. *Read Luke 1:19. Gabriel.*

Luke 1:11–15

Luke 1:19

Discover the Truth

God spoke through His prophet Malachi. And now the words of Malachi were coming true. God sent His angel Gabriel to tell Zacharias, the priest, that he would have a son. And that son would preach and prepare the people for the Lord—for the Messiah. The angel told Zacharias that even though Zacharias and Elizabeth were old and had never had any children, they would soon have a son!

This son, John, would be filled with the Holy Spirit, and his job would be to make the people ready for the Lord. The Lord would be coming soon!

OK. Take a look at your class notes. Let's fill in the names of these people we've talked about. Use the Word Bank for help if you need it.

► Read the completed answers on the class notes together as you go through the lesson.

FAITHFUL

(Refer to Attributes Poster)

- ? Will someone read #2, please? *Assign a student.* What is the answer? *Zacharias.* Right. Finish his name on your class notes. Read the sentence together with me.
- ? Now look at #3. Who can read that one for us and answer it? *Assign a student.* *Elizabeth.* Finish her name on the class notes. She was Zacharias's wife, the mother of John the Baptist.

Before we continue, let's take a look at the Attributes of God Poster. God had promised through His prophet Malachi that He would send the messenger to prepare the way for Jesus. That messenger was coming. And God was announcing that the promised Messiah would come soon—the one who had been promised for thousands of years.

There is an attribute of God that we have talked about. It is on the Attributes of God Poster, and it means that God will always keep His promises.

- ? Which attribute is that? *Faithful.*
Yes. God is faithful to His children. He will do as He says. We can trust Him. He will always keep His promises.
- ? Who did God send to announce to Zacharias that he would have a son? *Re-read Luke 1:19 if necessary.* Complete #4 on your class notes. *Gabriel.*
- ? And how about #5 on the class notes. This man was the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. He was the messenger that Malachi told about. He would prepare the way for Jesus! What was his name? *John.*

OK. Now read #4 and #5 out loud with me. *Read together.*

God sent His angel Gabriel to Zacharias. Zacharias and Elizabeth would have a son, John. And John would prepare the way for the Lord! Well, there was another very special announcement from God. This time to a young lady. Let's read about that. Listen now! *Read Luke 1:26–27 emphasizing the answers to the questions.*

- ? Who was sent again by God? *Luke 1:26. The angel Gabriel.*
- ? Gabriel was the same angel God sent to Zacharias. Who did the angel Gabriel go to see this time? *Re-read Luke 1:27. Mary.*

OK. Now listen as I read. We will find out how Mary felt when she saw the angel and what the angel told her. Listen carefully! *Read Luke 1:29–31.*

- ? What was Mary's reaction to all this? *Re-read Luke 1:29. She was troubled.*
She was troubled and afraid. An angel came to Mary, a young woman, and spoke to her!
- ? What did the angel tell her? *Luke 1:30. Do not be afraid. You have found favor with God.*

Luke 1:26–27

Luke 1:29–31

? And what was the news God had for Mary? The news Gabriel was bringing to her? *Re-read Luke 1:31. She would have a Son.*

? And what was she to name this very special Son? *Luke 1:31. Jesus.*

Discover the Truth

? Someone read #6 on your class notes for us. How will you answer that? *Assign a reader. Mary.* Finish her name by putting in the missing letters.

? And #7? Who will read it? What is the answer? *Assign a reader. Jesus.* And you can finish Jesus's name on #7.

An angel of God, Gabriel, appeared to Mary, a simple, godly, young woman. She would have a special baby and she would call His name Jesus! Jesus is the one who had been promised for so many years. He would bring forgiveness of sins by dying on the Cross so that many would live. The prophets in the Old Testament had spoken of Him, and now all they had said was finally happening. God's promises were coming true. He is faithful.



Messengers of God Match-up

MATERIALS

- Messengers of God Match-Up Cards

INSTRUCTIONS

Print and cut apart the Messengers of God Match-Up Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM. If you have a large class, you may want to split them into groups to play this game. You will then need more than one set of cards. Place the cards face down on the floor or table. Students will try to match the picture cards with the description cards. Students will take turns reading and trying to match the cards.

Show the cards as you explain. We are going to play Messengers of God Match-Up. This is a card game where you have to find the cards that match each other. Some of the cards have pictures and names. Like John the Baptist, Jesus, Mary, Zacharias, Elizabeth, Malachi—people we talked about in our lesson. The name cards have to be matched with the cards that describe the person or tells what that person did. You'll take turns around

the table turning the cards over, reading the cards, and trying to match them. *Play the game.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Malachi told of the hope that a messenger would one day come to prepare the way for the long-awaited Messiah. And then God's angel Gabriel burst onto the scene! He delivered the good news to Zacharias about a son who would be born to him and Elizabeth. This son, John, would be the one God had promised through the prophet Malachi. John would prepare the hearts of the people for the Messiah—the promised Savior.

And then God sent the angel Gabriel again. This time to the godly, simple, young Mary. She would be the mother of Jesus—the Son of God. This was God's plan of salvation unfolding in God's time according to God's plan!





Memory Verse Review Game (Optional)

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

If you find you have extra time, please consider reviewing the memory verse with your class using this activity.

MATERIALS

- One set of Memory Verse Cards from Come On In Activity
- Masking tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Allow students to look at the Memory Verse Poster and say the verse together as a class a couple of times. Remove or cover the poster before the game begins. Tape the Memory Verse Cards onto 10 students' backs. Students will work together to put themselves in order according to the memory verse. Once they think they are standing in order, check the verse by reading the words out loud according to how they are standing.

If you have fewer than 10 students, tape more than one card in the proper order, on some students. If you have more than 10 students, assign the students without the cards to put the students with the cards into the proper order. Repeat if time allows.

We're going to practice our memory verse. Let's say the verse together a couple times.

Cover the poster before starting.

Tape the 10 cards on the students' backs. Now I am going to tape these 10 Memory Verse Cards to 10 backs! Once I have done that, I want you to work together to get into the right order.

We'll check the verse when you are finished. You have to work together and help each other get in order. *Most groups may need a time limit to encourage them to move at a quick pace. If so, let them know the limit and use a timer to count down the time. Once the students think they are in the right order, check them by reading the words out loud.*

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Our verse reminds us that even though Jesus was fully God, He humbled Himself, came to earth, and obeyed even to death. Jesus was born in a humble and simple way, knowing that He would die on the Cross to save sinners.





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Refer to the Lesson 7 Lesson Theme Poster and the New Testament History Poster. God sent the angel Gabriel to deliver the message that the Messiah was coming soon. This Messiah would be the fulfillment of prophecies made hundreds of years earlier. First, the old priest, Zacharias, received the message that he would have a son, John. God would use John to prepare the hearts of the people for the Messiah. God's angel Gabriel also appeared to Mary. She, too, would have a Son; His name would be Jesus! He would be the Messiah—the Savior God had promised to send.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Angels are a pretty popular subject today. You hear about them on TV shows, in books, and in movies. Some people worship them. Some people think of them as good-luck charms. And some think their dead relatives turn into angels who watch over them. But the Bible doesn't tell us any of that. And we should always look to the Bible to find our answers.

? How did God use the angel Gabriel in today's lesson? *He was a messenger.*

Angels are God's messengers. They were created by God. They are strong. They do God's Word. They listen to Him. They serve Him and do what God commands them to do. We can't make up things about angels. We must go to the Bible to find out about them.

Remember these things. God created angels. Angels do God's will—what God commands them to do! People do not turn into angels. Angels are not cute, cuddly, good-luck charms. And they are not to be worshipped or prayed to!

God alone deserves our worship. And we are to pray only to God. It's a sin to worship anything else or anyone other than the one true God—and that includes angels.



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.



Group Prayer Time

- Praise God for He is good.
- Thank God because He is always faithful to keep His promises.
- Ask God to help us continue to study His Word and share it with others.

