



GRACE CITY
— CHURCH —

TRUE DEVOTION

CG TERM 4 2025
LEADER BOOKLET

SIX QUESTIONS  **TO HELP FIGHT HALF-HEARTED FAITH**



Oct 20 - 23	Worship: Malachi 1:6 - 2:9
Oct 27 - 30	Relationships: Malachi 2:10-16
Nov 03 - 06	Justice: Malachi 2:17 - 3:5
Nov 10 - 13	Money: Malachi 3:6-12
Nov 17 - 20	Perseverance: Malachi 3:13 - 4:6
Nov 24 - 27	Mark 1:1-9
Dec 01 - 04	A Year in the Word
Dec 08 - 11	Christmas Social
Dec 12 - Feb 09	CG BREAK
Feb 04 2026	2026 LEADERS TRAINING ALL IN

There are three ways in which this book is the word of the Lord for us today.

First, Malachi saw that at the heart of God's people, the church, must lie a deep, radical and overwhelming conviction that God loves them. Without this at our heart, we are lost.

Second, Malachi knew that the greatest sin of God's people is the sin against God. We easily get confused about sin. We see that we can sin against ourselves, and harm ourselves. We see that we can sin against others, and harm them. But we find it harder to take seriously our sin against God. Yet here is the fundamental sin, the source of all sin.

Third, in Malachi's day the people of God were in a mess. While they were not actually running away from God, and were not worshipping idols, as they had in the past, they seemed to lack the energy to serve God wholeheartedly. They tried to live in neutral territory, neither serving God too enthusiastically, nor turning away from God too enthusiastically. In this they were self-deceived. They thought they were in a grey no-man's land, where they neither needed to respond wholeheartedly to God, nor refuse him. In fact they were in a vicious circle, a terrifying whirlpool, sinking further and further to destruction. Malachi is God's effective remedy for such a situation among the people of God.

Quickstart



PREPARING FOR CG

Preparation isn't a task to get done, it is an encounter with the living God as he speaks to us through his word.

The most important thing you as a leader can do when you prepare is to make sure you have the time and space to allow God to speak to you through your preparation, shaping you. As you are impacted and then reflect on that impact, you will be well prepared to lead others to hear God speak with them.

With that in mind, here are some helpful steps you can take.

1. Pray for yourself and your group and then read the passage once through.
2. Read the passage again and underline/circle/highlight key ideas, questions, observations as you go.
3. Now that you have familiarised yourself with the passage, use the COMA method for yourself to study the passage.
4. As you use COMA, note down any discoveries you make, and how you make them, as these will help you lead the group through the passage.
5. Remember that COMA is simply a box of tools designed to help your members wrestle with and understand the text for themselves. Your job isn't to be the expert, but to equip your members to become the experts over time.

PREPARING FOR CG

As time progresses, and your group uses the tools, they will become more and more proficient in their use. Don't be surprised if they're use of them is a bit clunky as they begin. Assure them that they will find them easier to use as they become more familiar with them.

There are a number of things to consider:

- a. Which sections of COMA will be the whole group chatting through and which will be in pairs/triplets?
- b. Are there any major questions you need answers to before being able to lead the study? (Can you chat to your co-leader or coach or consult a commentary?)
- c. Having done your observation and meaning preparation, ask yourself which are the ideas, themes, or concepts in your current passage that has the author raised earlier in the book. These will be the ones to help your group recall as they do Context.

6. Pray for your Community Group.

COMA Cheatsheet

CONTEXT: recognises that the things that the author has already said often shapes what comes next. Remembering the key ideas from previous passages will help give colour to what we read next.

With bibles closed, remind each other what Paul has taught us so far in Ephesians.

You might find it helpful to:

- a. Have fun with this.** You'll find as you go that your group will remember their own discoveries and may develop its own shorthand. They will remember what happened when 'lights came on' in the previous weeks. This is a good thing.
- b. Try to have at least one key idea from each passage** that we have studied so far.
- c. Limit context to around 5 minutes** — this will be more important as we get further into the letter.

There are 2 key goals with Context:

- i. **To read the passage faithfully.** A text without a context can so easily become a 'con'. Allowing the author's previous content to shape what they are now telling us is a key to discovering what they want us to understand.
- i. **To learn the outline of the whole book or letter.** We want to ensure our members have confidence that they know the whole book and can read it for themselves.

COMA Cheatsheet

OBSERVATION: involves carefully examining the passage you're reading. For Romans 9-13 there are a number of different observation exercises for you to do with your group.

Each exercise is designed to be done in pairs or triplets, no more.

They are designed to get each person speaking about God's word with their partner/s and making discoveries for themselves. The more the pair/triplet speak, as they do the exercise, the better.

The exercises are designed to be simple.

Don't let their simplicity fool you into thinking that they lack power. Some of your members may want to 'rush' through the exercise and 'just get them done'. If they finish quickly, push them back into the text and challenge them, asking if they have actually discovered everything that could be found. If they have simple answers, encourage them to see if there is more that can be found to flesh them out.

Give the group 10+ minutes for each of the exercises.

It's important to note that no matter how much time you give the group to do their observations, they'll often run out of time. Finding the balance between giving them enough time to dig in to make their own discoveries and finishing the task is an art rather than science. This is especially true when it comes to exercises that require drawing. The goal isn't the perfection of the finished product, it's to explore God's word and hear him speak to us as we do.

When you come back together as a large group, don't simply gather all the answers or get each pair to present. This tends to be tedious and has little educational value. Rather, get each pair to share just one observation that stuck them, or surprised them, or encouraged them etc. We tend to remember things we discover for ourselves.

COMA Cheatsheet

MEANING: is all about discovering the main point or idea that the original human author, Paul, wanted his original audience, the Romans, to understand in a particular text. Discovering the meaning involves remembering the context and allowing your observations to lead you to the author's intended goal.

The easiest thing to do is simply ask, **“What do you think Paul wanted his readers to understand as he wrote this passage?”**

Asking your group to have a go at this task in their pairs/triplets before having a group discovery can be really helpful in the long run. Again, the more individuals can discover for themselves the higher the impact will be on them.

You'll need to keep an eye on the time in this section.

There may be difficulties with a passage that simply can't be resolved in your Community Group. That's OK. Getting bogged down in the minutiae and missing the big idea of the passage is a danger to avoid.

Again, this is an art that you'll grow into as time progresses.

COMA Cheatsheet

APPLICATION: simply asks how we are to respond to the passage.

It asks the question, “If that is true, so what?” or, “What difference does it make to the way that I think, or feel or act (head, heart, hands, mouth)?”

Many groups find it helpful to begin the application time as a large group. They benefit from gathering a large basket full of possible applications before sending members off into their pairs to zero in on particular applications that may resonate for individuals.

So spend a few minutes as a whole group reflecting on the real world application of the passage before breaking into your H3M pairs.

H3M



Part 1 Alone

H3M: APPLICATION SECTION OF COMA

- Spend 3 minutes discussing application as a group.
- **HEAD or HEART or HANDS or MOUTH:** Look at the questions below and choose one application point that comes out of this passage. Write your application in your booklets.

Part 2 in 2s/3s

- **Break up into triplets/pairs and share the H3M.**
- **Pray for each other.**

Head

What thoughts or beliefs have been confirmed or challenged by this passage?

Hands

What behaviours has this passage revealed that I need to stop/start/keep doing?

Heart

What has this passage revealed relating to an attitude or idol that I need to deal with?

Mouth

What from this passage do I share with someone this week?
Who will I share it with?

WEEKLY CHECK IN H3M check in & personal prayer (in 2s/3s)

We want to joyfully and sacrificially be applying what we learn from God's word to our lives. As we do that using H3M each week, sometimes it will be harder than other times. Sometimes we will get stuck and sometimes God will graciously open our hearts and minds to obediently walk in His way. Consider these questions as you check in with each other.

1. **With last week's H3M in mind**, what is one area you would like to pray for growth and/or celebrate today?
2. **More generally**, is there anything on your heart that you want give thanks or request prayer for?
3. **Pray with each other.**

STUDIES

T4 2025



Malachi 1:6 — 2:9

1:6 ‘A son honours his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honour due to me? If I am a master, where is the respect due to me?’ says the Lord Almighty.

‘It is you priests who show contempt for my name.

‘But you ask, “How have we shown contempt for your name?”

7 ‘By offering defiled food on my altar.

‘But you ask, “How have we defiled you?”

‘By saying that the Lord’s table is contemptible. **8** When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?’ says the Lord Almighty.

9 ‘Now plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?’ – says the Lord Almighty.

10 ‘Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and I will accept no offering from your hands. **11** My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations,’ says the Lord Almighty.

12 ‘But you profane it by saying, “The Lord’s table is defiled,” and, “Its food is contemptible.” **13a** And you say, “What a burden!” and you sniff at it contemptuously,’ says the Lord Almighty.

13b ‘When you bring injured, lame or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?’ says the Lord. **14** ‘Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and my name is to be feared among the nations.

2:1 ‘And now, you priests, this warning is for you. 2 If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honour my name,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honour me.

3 ‘Because of you I will rebuke your descendants; I will smear on your faces the dung from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it. 4 And you will know that I have sent you this warning so that my covenant with Levi may continue,’ says the Lord Almighty. **5** ‘My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. **6** True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.

7 ‘For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth. **8** But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi,’ says the Lord Almighty. **9** ‘So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law.’

1. CONTEXT:

- Where are we in the Old Testament?
- Where we are in Malachi so far?

2. OBSERVATION:

- What is the accusation(s)?
- What is the evidence that the accusation is true?
- What change does God want?

3. MEANING:

- What is the meaning for Malachi's original hearers?
- We live on the other side of the cross. What is the meaning for us today, remembering that some things will be the same and some things will be different?

4. APPLICATION:

- How do we apply what you discovered in the meaning section? Use H3M to help you.
- **Worship:** Will we honour and display God's immeasurable worth to a watching world?

NOTES

Malachi 2:10 — 16

10 Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?

11 Judah has been unfaithful. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves by marrying women who worship a foreign god. **12** As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the Lord remove him from the tents of Jacob – even though he brings an offering to the Lord Almighty.

13 Another thing you do: you flood the Lord's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favour on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. **14** You ask, 'Why?' It is because the Lord is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

15 Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

16 'The man who hates and divorces his wife,' says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'does violence to the one he should protect,' says the Lord Almighty.

So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

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- How do we apply what you discovered in the meaning section? Use H3M to help you.
- **Marriage:** Will we be marked by covenant faithfulness, marrying in the Lord and raising godly offspring?

NOTES

Malachi 2:17 — 3:5

17 You have wearied the Lord with your words.

‘How have we wearied him?’ you ask.

By saying, ‘All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord, and he is pleased with them’ or ‘Where is the God of justice?’

3:1 ‘I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,’ says the Lord Almighty.

2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. **3** He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, **4** and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years.

5 ‘So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud labourers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,’ says the Lord Almighty.

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- What is the meaning for Malachi's original hearers?
- We live on the other side of the cross. What is the meaning for us today, remembering that some things will be the same and some things will be different?

4. APPLICATION:

- How do you apply what you discovered in the meaning section? Use H3M to help you.
- **Justice:** Will we live righteously and reflect God's heart for the weak and the vulnerable?

NOTES

Malachi 3:6-12

6 'I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. **7** Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,' says the Lord Almighty.

'But you ask, "How are we to return?"

8 'Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

'But you ask, "How are we robbing you?"

'In tithes and offerings. **9** You are under a curse – your whole nation – because you are robbing me. **10** Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. **11** I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,' says the Lord Almighty. **12** 'Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,' says the Lord Almighty.

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4. APPLICATION:

- How do you apply what you discovered in the meaning section? Use H3M to help you.
- **Money:** Will we give generously out of faith-filled obedience and a hunger for God's blessing?

NOTES

Malachi 3:13 — 4:6

13 ‘You have spoken arrogantly against me,’ says the Lord.

‘Yet you ask, “What have we said against you?”

14 ‘You have said, “It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty? **15** But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.”’

16 Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honoured his name.

17 ‘On the day when I act,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. **18** And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

4:1 ‘Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘Not a root or a branch will be left to them. **2** But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. **3** Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,’ says the Lord Almighty.

Malachi 3:13 — 4:6

4:4 ‘Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

5 ‘See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. **6** He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.’

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- How do you apply what you discovered in the meaning section? Use H3M to help you.
- **Perseverance:** Will we commit together to serve the Lord, convinced it makes an eternal difference?

NOTES

Mark 1:1-9

1:1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, **2** as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

‘I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way’ –

3 ‘a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
“Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.”’

4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the River Jordan.

6 John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. **7** And this was his message: ‘After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. **8** I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.’

9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan.

CHECK IN:

- Last week's H3M?
- Anything on your heart that you want give thanks or request prayer for?

1. CONTEXT:

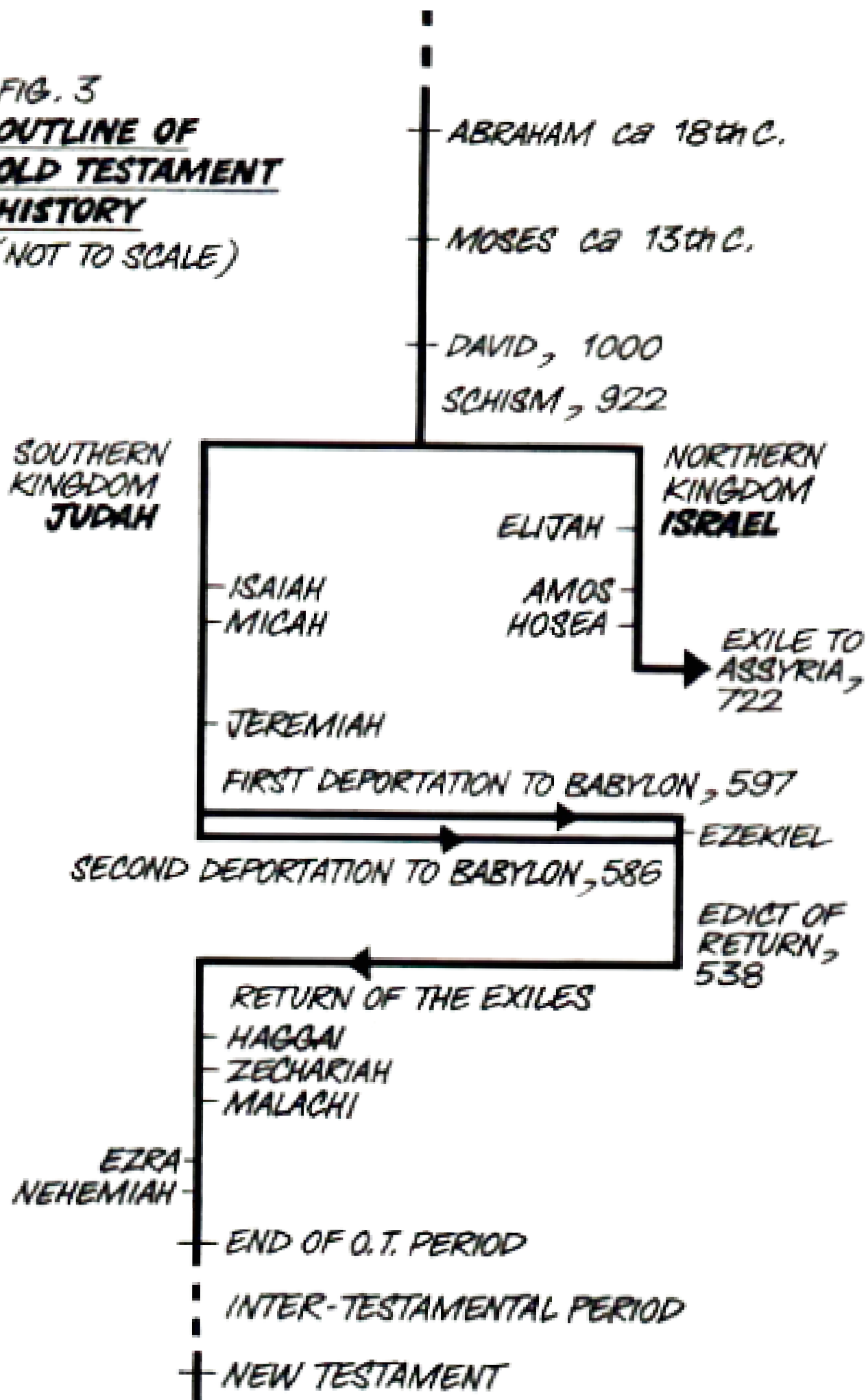
What is the Context of Mark 1? (10mins max)

Answer: The whole of the Old Testament.

Get the group to tell as much of the story of the Old Testament as they can remember. If you're familiar with Graeme Goldsworthy's Old Testament timeline, you may want to use that (***see next page***) You can draw the outline on a large sheet of paper and fill in the details as members of the group remember them.

2. Get the group to notice what happens after Malachi before Mark - 400+ years of God sending no new prophets. That was a first in Israel's history.

FIG. 3
OUTLINE OF
OLD TESTAMENT
HISTORY
(NOT TO SCALE)



2. OBSERVATION: Nearly everything in Mark 1:1-8 is a little weird or at least surprising. We are so used to reading it that we miss how shocking some of the surprises are. With the eyes of a detective, get your group to unearth as many of the surprises as they can. Get them to chase up any cross references that they can to find the Old Testament background to some of the things that Mark tells us.

To help you as a leader, here are some of the surprises.

- God is sending the Messiah
- The Messiah will be God's son
- The quotes from Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1-2 make it clear that Yahweh is coming, God himself. The word in Isaiah 40:3 is LORD - which is short for Yahweh, God's name.
- John preaches in the wilderness, yet EVERYONE goes to see him. Remember it's a 40km walk one way from Jerusalem to the Jordan, and it's 1170m drop from the mountain that Jerusalem is built on the the Jordan, one of the lowest places on the planet. Why did everyone do this?
- Why are we told about John's clothing. The only person in the gospel whose clothes are described. Check out 2Kings 1:8 and the promise in Malachi 4:5-6 to see if there is a link.
- Whoever comes after John will baptise with the Holy Spirit. Who in the OT baptises with the Holy Spirit? See Ezekiel 34:24-32

Give the group members 15 mins to hunt down the clues in pairs.

Get them to chase up cross references that may lead them to the passages above. **Whatever you do, don't give them the answers. Some pairs will find some clues, others will find different things. That's OK. The goal isn't for everyone to discover everything at this point.**

Once they've had a good explore, bring the pairs back together and gather all the clues together in a large discussion.

3. MEANING:

Having gathered the clues, simply ask, “What would Mark’s original readers have understood that he was trying to help them to see from Mark 1:1-8?”

Pro Tip: Mark is creating in his readers the expectation that God is fulfilling his promises and is about to turn up. That is, John is preparing the nation to meet Yahweh himself, as promised and expected.

... Once the group has seen that ... ask, “Who turns up in verse 9 and what does Mark want us to see?”

4. APPLICATION: Use the application basket to toss in your groups thoughts about the differences this passage make to our head, heart, hands and mouth.

NOTES



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