

MASTER THE CONTENT OF SCRIPTURE



The Book of Malachi

(Observe, Interpret, Apply & Go)

Armando Rodríguez

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

In our studies of the Bible, we will be using an inductive approach. This approach is a fun and exciting way to study the Bible! It's like being a detective. Instead of starting with a conclusion, you look at the details and clues in the text to discover the meaning for yourself.

Here's how you can do it:

1. **Observation:** First, you look closely at the Bible passage. You pay attention to:

- a. Who is in the story
- b. What is happening
- c. Where it is taking place
- d. When it is happening
- e. Why things are happening
- f. How they are happening.

You write down or make a mental note of all the details you notice.

2. **Interpretation:** Next, you try to understand what those details mean.

- a. You think about why the characters did what they did
- b. You think about what the important words and phrases mean.
- c. You may need to look up some words or ask questions to understand better.

3. **Application:** Finally, you think about how the story applies to our lives. What truth does it communicate?

- a. **What does it teach us about God?**
- b. What does it teach us about ourselves?
- c. What action (s) does it call us to take?

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

CHAPTER 1

Summary of Chapter

Malachi 1 begins with a message from God to the people of Israel, emphasizing His love for them despite their doubts. The chapter critiques the priests for their corrupt practices and failure to honor God properly. The people are accused of offering blemished and impure sacrifices, showing disrespect for God's holiness. The chapter concludes with a call for the priests and people to honor God with sincere and proper worship. It highlights the importance of offering the best to God and maintaining reverence in worship.

Opening Question

1. What does it mean to offer your best in service or worship, and why is it important?
 2. How can we ensure that our actions and attitudes reflect genuine respect and reverence for God?
-

Outline

1. God's Love for Israel (Malachi 1:1-5)

- Malachi begins with a declaration of God's love for Israel, despite their questioning of His love.
- Application Question: How can we recognize and appreciate God's love even when we face difficulties?
- Application Question: In what ways can we express our gratitude for God's love in our daily lives?

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

2. The Priests' Corruption (Malachi 1:6-14)

- The chapter accuses the priests of dishonoring God by accepting and offering blemished sacrifices.
- Application Question: How can we avoid the pitfalls of hypocrisy in our own spiritual practices?
- Application Question: What steps can we take to ensure that our worship and service are sincere and honorable?

3. The Call to Honor God (Malachi 1:11-14)

- God calls for proper worship and respect, highlighting that He deserves the best offerings.
- Application Question: How can we apply the principle of giving our best to God in practical terms?
- Application Question: What does it look like to offer our best in our personal and communal worship?

Possible Activities

1. **Memory Verse Challenge:** Memorize Malachi 1:14: “For I am a great King, says the Lord Almighty, and my name is to be feared among the nations.” Create a fill-in-the-blank worksheet with key words missing from the verse.
 2. **Role Playing Activity:** Have students role-play a scenario where they must choose between giving their best or a less valuable offering in a worship setting. Discuss the importance of each choice and how it reflects their attitude toward God.
 3. **Discussion Activity:** Lead a discussion on how the quality of our offerings to God—whether time, talents, or resources—affects our relationship with Him. Ask students to share examples of how they can give their best in different areas of their lives.
-

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

Quiz

1. What does Malachi 1:2 declare about God's relationship with Israel?
 - A) God has abandoned Israel
 - B) God loves Israel despite their doubts
 - C) God is indifferent to Israel
 - D) God has chosen another nation
2. What does Malachi accuse the priests of doing?
 - A) Offering perfect sacrifices
 - B) Ignoring their duties
 - C) Offering blemished sacrifices
 - D) Leading the people in proper worship
3. How does God describe Himself in Malachi 1:14?
 - A) As a great King to be feared
 - B) As a humble servant
 - C) As an indifferent deity
 - D) As a distant ruler
4. What is the primary message of Malachi 1 concerning offerings?
 - A) Offer whatever is convenient
 - B) Offer the best and most valuable sacrifices

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

- C) Offer only once a year
 - D) Offer only what is leftover
5. What is the consequence of offering defective sacrifices, according to Malachi 1?
- A) Immediate blessings
 - B) God's displeasure and rebuke
 - C) Increased wealth
 - D) Praise from the people
6. What does Malachi 1:11 emphasize about worship?
- A) Worship should be casual and relaxed
 - B) Worship should be conducted with sincerity and reverence
 - C) Worship should be infrequent
 - D) Worship should be done only in private
7. How does Malachi 1:6-14 critique the attitude of the priests?
- A) They are too generous
 - B) They are disrespectful and corrupt
 - C) They are overly strict
 - D) They are indifferent
8. What does Malachi 1 say about God's name among the nations?

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

- A) It is to be forgotten
 - B) It is to be feared and honored
 - C) It is to be ignored
 - D) It is to be debated
9. How does the chapter address the issue of honoring God with offerings?
- A) It suggests giving only minimal amounts
 - B) It emphasizes giving the best and most sincere offerings
 - C) It encourages withholding offerings
 - D) It advises against any offerings
10. What does Malachi 1 reveal about the significance of worship in God's eyes?
- A) It is not very important
 - B) It is a central expression of reverence and respect
 - C) It is a secondary concern
 - D) It is irrelevant to daily life

Answers: B, C, A, B, B, B, B, B, B, B

Fill in the Blank

1. Malachi 1 begins with a declaration of God's _____ for Israel.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

2. The chapter accuses the priests of offering _____ sacrifices.
3. Malachi 1:14 describes God as a _____ King.
4. God calls for _____ worship and respect.
5. The chapter highlights the importance of giving _____ offerings to God.

Answers: love, blemished, great, proper, best

Vocabulary Words

1. **Blemished (מְשֻׁחָת)** - Imperfect or damaged, often used to describe sacrifices that are not up to standard.
2. **Corruption (שֻׁחָת)** - The act of being dishonest or unethical, especially in religious or moral contexts.
3. **Reverence (יִרְאָה)** - Deep respect or honor, often associated with worship and devotion.
4. **Offering (מִנְחָה)** - A gift or sacrifice presented to God as an act of worship.
5. **Honor (כְּבוֹד)** - To show high respect and esteem, especially in relation to God's commands and expectations.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

CHAPTER 2

Summary of Chapter

Malachi 2 addresses the failures of the priests and their negative impact on Israel. The chapter rebukes the priests for their corruption, unfaithfulness, and failure to uphold God's covenant. They are accused of leading the people astray through improper sacrifices and neglecting their sacred duties. The chapter also discusses the consequences of their actions, including God's displeasure and the curse upon their blessings. Malachi calls for a return to righteousness and emphasizes the importance of integrity and faithfulness in worship and service to God.

Opening Question

1. How can leaders influence the spiritual well-being of a community or group?
 2. What does integrity in one's duties and responsibilities look like in everyday life?
-

Outline

1. Rebuke of the Corrupt Priests (Malachi 2:1-4)

- Malachi begins with a strong rebuke of the priests for their failures and corruption.
- Application Question: How do you think a leader's failure affects their followers?
- Application Question: What are some ways to ensure integrity in leadership roles?

2. Consequences of the Priests' Failures (Malachi 2:5-9)

- The chapter outlines the consequences for the priests, including the loss of blessings and God's curse.
- Application Question: How should knowledge of consequences influence our actions?

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

- Application Question: What personal changes might we make if we believed our actions had direct consequences?

3. **Faithlessness in Marriage and Worship (Malachi 2:10-16)**

- Malachi condemns faithlessness in marriages and improper worship practices.
- Application Question: How does faithfulness in personal relationships reflect our relationship with God?
- Application Question: What practices can we adopt to improve our worship and commitment to God?

4. **The Problem of Injustice and Disrespect (Malachi 2:17)**

- The chapter concludes with a discussion on the problem of injustice and disrespect toward God.
- Application Question: How can we address and correct injustices we see in our communities?
- Application Question: What are some ways to show greater respect for God's commands in our lives?

Possible Activities

1. **Memory Verse Challenge:** Memorize Malachi 2:7: "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." Create a matching activity where students match parts of the verse to their meanings.
2. **Role Playing Activity:** Divide the class into groups and assign each group a scenario from Malachi 2. Have them create a short skit showing the issues described and how they might be resolved.
3. **Discussion Activity:** Lead a discussion on how personal integrity impacts leadership and community trust. Ask students to share examples from their lives or observations where integrity played a key role.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

Quiz

1. What is the primary focus of Malachi 2?
 - A) The prophecy of future events
 - B) The failures and corruption of the priests
 - C) The history of Israel's kings
 - D) The laws of sacrifice
2. What does Malachi accuse the priests of in this chapter?
 - A) Teaching false doctrines
 - B) Offering improper sacrifices
 - C) Ignoring the needs of the poor
 - D) Encouraging rebellion
3. What consequence is mentioned for the priests' failures?
 - A) Loss of their position
 - B) Curses and loss of blessings
 - C) Exile from the land
 - D) Death
4. How does Malachi describe the priests' role in society?

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

- A) As protectors of the covenant
 - B) As messengers of the Lord
 - C) As rulers of the nation
 - D) As military leaders
5. What does Malachi say about faithfulness in marriage?
- A) It is not important
 - B) It should reflect one's faithfulness to God
 - C) It is secondary to worship practices
 - D) It is only a cultural tradition
6. How does Malachi describe the general state of worship in Israel?
- A) As pure and righteous
 - B) As corrupt and insincere
 - C) As unchanged and faithful
 - D) As focused on external rituals
7. What does Malachi call for in response to the priests' failures?
- A) A new priesthood
 - B) A return to righteousness and integrity
 - C) Increased sacrifices

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

D) Public confessions

8. How does Malachi describe the impact of the priests' actions on the people?

A) They lead the people away from God

B) They provide inspiration and guidance

C) They are largely ignored by the people

D) They are seen as role models

9. What is one of the major criticisms Malachi has about the priests' sacrifices?

A) They are too costly

B) They are offered with wrong intentions

C) They are performed too infrequently

D) They are not properly recorded

10. What issue does Malachi address regarding justice in this chapter?

A) The importance of legal reforms

B) The problem of injustice and disrespect toward God

C) The need for new judicial leaders

D) The role of justice in personal relationships

Answers: B, B, B, B, B, B, B, A, B, B

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

Fill in the Blank

1. Malachi 2 rebukes the priests for their _____ and failure to uphold their duties.
2. The priests' _____ led to the loss of blessings and a curse upon them.
3. Malachi condemns faithlessness in _____ and improper worship practices.
4. The chapter also addresses issues of _____ and disrespect toward God.
5. Malachi calls for a return to _____ and integrity in leadership.

Answers: corruption, failures, marriages, injustice, righteousness

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

CHAPTER 3

Summary of Chapter

Malachi 3 addresses the coming of the Lord's messenger and the day of judgment. The chapter foretells the arrival of a refiner's fire and a launderer's soap, symbolizing purification and judgment. It also promises that God will send His messenger to prepare the way before Him. The chapter emphasizes the need for repentance and highlights the people's failure to bring tithes and offerings. It concludes with a promise of blessings for those who are faithful and a warning of judgment for those who are not.

Opening Question

1. How can the process of refining or purifying be compared to personal growth and change?
 2. What does it mean to be faithful in one's responsibilities, and how does this affect our relationship with God?
-

Outline

1. **The Coming of the Lord's Messenger (Malachi 3:1-4)**
 - Malachi prophesies the coming of a messenger who will prepare the way for the Lord.
 - Application Question: How can we prepare ourselves for spiritual growth and change?
 - Application Question: What steps can we take to ensure we are ready for significant changes in our lives?
2. **The Refiner's Fire and Launderer's Soap (Malachi 3:2-4)**
 - The chapter uses the imagery of a refiner's fire and a launderer's soap to describe the purifying work of the Lord.
 - Application Question: In what areas of your life do you need purification or refinement?

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

- Application Question: How can we support each other through personal and spiritual refinement?

3. Call to Repentance and Faithfulness (Malachi 3:5-12)

- Malachi calls for repentance and highlights the failure to bring tithes and offerings.
- Application Question: How can we demonstrate faithfulness in our responsibilities and commitments?
- Application Question: What are some practical ways to practice generosity and stewardship?

4. The Promise of Blessings and Judgment (Malachi 3:13-18)

- The chapter concludes with a promise of blessings for those who are faithful and a warning of judgment for those who are not.
- Application Question: How does understanding the promise of blessings and judgment affect our daily decisions?
- Application Question: What are some ways to live in alignment with the values and promises outlined in this chapter?

Possible Activities

1. **Memory Verse Challenge:** Memorize Malachi 3:10: "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." Create a fill-in-the-blank worksheet with key words missing from the verse.
2. **Role Playing Activity:** Divide students into groups and assign each group a scenario related to purification or repentance. Have them act out their scenarios and discuss how the principles from Malachi 3 apply to their situations.
3. **Discussion Activity:** Lead a discussion on the concept of spiritual refinement. Ask students to share personal experiences of times when they felt they were being refined or purified, and how it impacted their faith and character.

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

Quiz

1. What does Malachi 3:1 prophesy about the coming of the Lord?
 - A) A great flood
 - B) A messenger who will prepare the way
 - C) A new king
 - D) A period of peace
2. What imagery does Malachi use to describe the purifying work of the Lord?
 - A) A gentle breeze and rain
 - B) A refiner's fire and a launderer's soap
 - C) A lion and a lamb
 - D) A storm and a rainbow
3. What does Malachi call the people to do in Malachi 3:10?
 - A) Give offerings only on special occasions
 - B) Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse
 - C) Offer sacrifices without expecting anything in return
 - D) Stop giving to the temple
4. What is promised to those who bring the whole tithe into the storehouse?

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

- A) A new house
 - B) The floodgates of heaven will be opened and blessings will overflow
 - C) An immediate cure from illness
 - D) Protection from enemies
5. How does Malachi describe the people's failure to bring tithes and offerings?
- A) As a minor issue
 - B) As a serious sin that impacts their blessings
 - C) As a sign of prosperity
 - D) As a result of ignorance
6. What will happen to those who are faithful, according to Malachi 3?
- A) They will be judged harshly
 - B) They will receive blessings and protection
 - C) They will be ignored
 - D) They will be punished severely
7. What does Malachi say about the state of the people's worship?
- A) It is pure and pleasing to God
 - B) It is insincere and corrupt
 - C) It is unchanged and faithful

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

D) It is ritualistic but not heartfelt

8. What role does repentance play in Malachi 3?

A) It is optional for those who have sinned

B) It is a key element in receiving God's blessings

C) It is irrelevant to the message of Malachi

D) It is only for those who have committed serious offenses

9. What does the chapter promise for those who do not heed the call to repentance?

A) Prosperity and peace

B) Judgment and curses

C) Ignorance and disregard

D) Immediate rewards

10. How does Malachi 3 relate to the concept of spiritual integrity?

A) It emphasizes the importance of wealth

B) It highlights the need for outward rituals

C) It stresses the significance of inner purity and faithfulness

D) It focuses on social justice issues

Answers: B, B, B, B, B, B, B, B, B, C

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Observe, Interpret & Apply

Fill in the Blank

1. Malachi 3 prophesies the coming of a _____ who will prepare the way for the Lord.
2. The chapter uses the imagery of a _____'s fire and a launderer's soap to describe purification.
3. Malachi calls for the people to bring the whole _____ into the storehouse.
4. The promise for those who are faithful is that the _____ of heaven will be opened, and blessings will overflow.
5. The chapter warns of _____ for those who do not heed the call to repentance.

Answers: messenger, refiner, tithe, floodgates, judgment

Vocabulary Words

1. **Messenger (מַלְאָךְ)** - A person sent to deliver a message or to prepare the way for someone important.
2. **Refiner (צִרְיָה)** - Someone who purifies metal by removing impurities through heating and melting.
3. **Tithe (מַעֲשֵׂר)** - A tenth part of one's income given as an offering to God.
4. **Purification (טְהוּרָה)** - The process of making something clean and pure, often through spiritual or moral means.
5. **Judgment (מִשְׁפָּט)** - The act of assessing and deciding on the merits of actions or behaviors, often resulting in consequences.