

Gleanings of Grace

Malachi 3

Lesson 44

Malachi spoke to the Jewish exiles some 100 years after their original return; after the days of Haggai and Zechariah. By this time, the temple had been rebuilt, the sacrifices and feasts had resumed, but the promises made by the prophets of a restored kingdom were still far from fulfillment. This seemed to leave the nation languishing in the disappointment of unfulfilled hopes and lulled them into a low regard for God. Malachi addressed both their need to be assured of God's love and to be challenged for their disobedience. May you glean from Malachi God's purposes for you.

OBSERVATION: Read Malachi 3

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to the *messenger* and the *LORD*.
Note: Malachi 3 introduces two *messengers*. The first *messenger* (the first reference in verse 1) refers to John the Baptist; the second *Messenger* (the second reference in verse 1 and in verses 2,3) refers to Jesus.
Key Words: *Messenger* (as it refers to Jesus), *LORD*, and *against*
3. Malachi 3 contains a series of questions posed both by the *LORD* and the people. List the questions asked, underlining or highlighting those asked by the *LORD*.

- a. Considering the questions asked, what is your impression of what this chapter might be about?
4. The contrasting words *yet* and *but* are used six times in this chapter. Mark the words. Choose one instance of their use and record what is being contrasted.
5. The term of conclusion *therefore* is used in Malachi 3:6. Mark the word. Record the conclusion and what it is based upon.

Background:

1. Ministering around the same time as Nehemiah, the problems addressed in Malachi are similar. Verify this by summarizing the following verses:

The priesthood was defiled:

Nehemiah 13:29

Malachi 2:1-9

Marriages were corrupt

Nehemiah 13:23-25

Malachi 2:14-15

The tithe was neglected:

Nehemiah 13:10,11

Malachi 3:8-9

- a. Summarize your understanding of the condition of the people.

- 1.) Why is it important to pay attention to these three things?

2. Before we move into Malachi 3, we must rest for a moment and remind ourselves of the heart of God. Record the first four words of Malachi 1:2.
 - a. Of what does God desire to remind His people?
 - b. How important are these words to you, when you are in a place of being rebuked or convicted by the LORD?

Read Malachi 3:1-5 The Messenger

1. Malachi 3 follows the question of the people in Malachi 2:17. What was their question?
2. God's response was that He was sending a messenger. What do we know about that messenger?
Malachi 3:1

Referring to John the Baptist:

Luke 1:76

Luke 7:26-28

Challenge: In what ways did John the Baptist *prepare the way* for Jesus?

3. The words regarding the *Messenger* who *is coming* refer to both the first and second comings of Jesus. According to Malachi 3:3, what will He do?
 - a. Using Malachi 3:5, list what *the LORD of hosts* will do.
 - b. Note and record the reason for His judgments at the end of verse 5.
 - 1.) Describe the kind of *fear* that pleases the LORD.
 - 2.) In what ways does having a *fear of the LORD* avert His judgment or discipline?
4. Why are these first five verses of Malachi 3 an answer to the question stated in Malachi 2:17?

Read Malachi 3:6-7 I Am the LORD

1. *I am the LORD.* Record the first sentence of Isaiah 45:5.
 - a. What about the LORD makes Him like no other?
2. *I do not change.* Why is it important for you to know that?
3. Notice the term of conclusion in Malachi 3:6. Why do you think God's immutability assures us that *we will not be consumed*?
4. Although God's people had *gone away from His ordinances and not kept them*, what did God say to them in verse 7?
 - a. Why do you think that promise can be so difficult for us to believe?
5. The people countered God's call to *return* with a question. What was it?
 - a. Either they were ignorant or they were obstinate. What is God looking for when He calls us to *return to Him*?

Read Malachi 3:8-12 You Have Robbed Me

1. In response to their question in verse 8, what did God say they had done?
 - a. The word *tithe* does not refer to an offering or a giving of time; it refers to the giving of a literal 10% of income. Reflect upon the following verses and record God's intent.

Leviticus 27:30

Deuteronomy 14:22

Matthew 23:23
 - b. What was the purpose of the *tithe*?

Numbers 18:21

Malachi 3:10

c. What is God's promise to those who *tithe*?

Proverbs 3:9,10

Malachi 3:10

d. Record the promises of Malachi 3:10-12 in your own words.

2. In what ways is not *tithing* an example of *robbing God*?

a. What do you think our giving says to the LORD?

3. After reading the above verses, what is your conclusion about your own responsibility regarding giving?

Read Malachi 3:13-15 The People Complain

1. The LORD accused the people of having *harsh words against Him*. According to verse 14, what had they been saying?

a. Scan Psalm 73:1-13. After considering the seeming *prosperity of the wicked*, what had the psalmist concluded in verse 13?

1.) According to verse 17, when was his *understanding* set a right?

b. The people claimed to have *walked as mourners before the LORD*. What does Isaiah 58:2-5 reveal about God's viewpoint of *fasting* without a pure heart?

c. What is your response when you consider that your incorrect view of God or questioning of His purposes comes across to Him as *harsh words against Him*?

1.) Read Malachi 2:17. What response does this verse reveal when God's people *speak harshly against Him*?

a.) Define the word *weary*.

Read Malachi 3:16-18 A Book of Remembrance

1. Write in large block letters the first word of Malachi 3:16.
 - a. What was different about this group of people?
 - 1.) Notice, like those who spoke *harsh words*, these people also *spoke to one another*. Describe the power of a conversation with others.
 - 2.) What was the LORD's response to them?
2. *A book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name*. What did God say about them? verse 17
 - a. The word *jewels* has been translated in Deuteronomy 7:6 as *special people*. What does it mean to you that God sees you in this way?
 - 1.) Ponder the joy it brings to the LORD when we *fear Him* and *speak to one another about Him* (positively). How does this encourage you to be more purposeful to bring joy to His heart?
3. Take note of the last verse of Malachi 3. One day, the distinction between the *righteous* and the *wicked, those who serve God and those who do not serve Him* will be evident. During the time of Malachi's writing, even the priests were behaving shamefully. What is the promise of Psalm 58:11?

REVIEW: Read Malachi 3

1. Malachi is a book about God's care for His people. In His care, He must rebuke. What have you gleaned from Malachi 3 that you will appropriate into your life?

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you
out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

- 1 Peter 2:9

Observation Worksheet

Malachi 3

¹ "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. ² "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderer's soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the LORD an offering in righteousness. ⁴ "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to the LORD, as in the days of old, as in former years. ⁵ And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurers, against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien-- because they do not fear Me," says the LORD of hosts. ⁶ "For I am the LORD, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. ⁷ Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?' ⁸ "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. ¹⁰ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. ¹¹ "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," says the LORD of hosts; ¹² "and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," says the LORD of hosts. ¹³ "Your words have been harsh against Me," says the LORD, "Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?' ¹⁴ You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the LORD of hosts? ¹⁵ So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; they even tempt God and go free.' " ¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. ¹⁷ "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." ¹⁸ Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.