

## THE BOOK OF MALACHI

### Lesson 7, Chapter 2 Continued

The final chapter of the Book of Daniel begins with these awesome and terror-filled words, for those who will hear and heed them.

**CJB Daniel 12:1-3** *"When that time comes, Mikha'el, the great prince who champions your people, will stand up; and there will be a time of distress unparalleled between the time they became a nation and that moment. At that time, your people will be delivered, everyone whose name is found written in the book. <sup>2</sup> Many of those sleeping in the dust of the earth will awaken, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting shame and abhorrence. <sup>3</sup> But those who can discern will shine like the brightness of heaven's dome, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars, forever and ever.*

Daniel, like Malachai, speaks of both present and future in his writings. As is typical of Old Testament writings, sometimes it can be challenging to separate which is future and which is present. Yet, as we encounter words like 'when that time comes' we can know it speaks of a future, and almost always in the Bible it is speaking of the last days... the end of the age.

Malachai has spent the bulk of his prophesying aimed squarely at Israel's (Judah's) religious leadership: the Priesthood. Even so, he makes it clear that the common people also bear culpability for their corrupted beliefs and immoral behaviors. Nonetheless, it is the leadership that bears the most accountability. Daniel makes that same distinction by saying that those who have died will be made alive again, but only some to everlasting life. The remainder will experience eternal shame. Of those who can discern (meaning, those who seek and know the truth and practice it versus those who accept and practice false beliefs), the discerning will shine like the night sky. But, those who turn many others to righteousness (the religious leadership) will be like the special brightness of the stars.

So, leaders of those who claim trust in Yeshua and His Father, I begin this next lesson in Malachai with this thought for you, which reflects Malachai 2:6

and Daniel 12:3. God has an expectation and demand of us to teach truth through speech, writings, and our personal behavior and to not teach manmade doctrines. This means to teach the Bible, as opposed to endless speeches about social topics and self-serving agendas. It involves work, study, and discipline. If we fail, we are going to bear great consequences. If we succeed, we are going to bear unbelievable blessings. The biggest blessing will be knowing that we had a part in leading many into a true faith and trust in God, as we turn those same many away from deceit and sin. This same thought continues and is expanded upon in Malachai 2:7. Let's start by opening our Bibles to Malachai chapter 2, and begin reading from verse 6 and onward.

### **READ MALACHAI 2:6 – end**

While I don't want to take the comparison too far, here in verse 7 when God says that the priests' (the **cohens'**) lips should safeguard knowledge, it equally applies in all ages and eras to Bible teachers, pastors, and Rabbis. The reason we can only take this similarity between Levite Priests versus teachers, pastors and rabbis so far is that the Priesthood was a specially God-ordained and set-apart group of Hebrews. They were not self-appointed nor were the occupations that you apply for, as are teachers, pastors, and rabbis. I realize that in parts of the New Testament epistles Believers are sometimes called "priests". But that is a metaphor and is not meaning to equate us with the Levite Priesthood along with all their functions and responsibilities, nor as its replacement.

The "lips of the priest" represent the words that come from him. The Hebrew word following that statement, which is **yishmeru**, means "they safeguard". The idea is that it is the priests' intended duty to preserve the knowledge of God's covenant (often called the Torah, but in many uses stands as a collective word for all the covenants taken together) and then faithfully transmit it to the people. In this way, the priests behave as agents speaking for their single client: Yehoveh. Much of what the priests had to do in teaching God's Word, was to interpret its meaning within the context of an infinite variety of circumstances, which of course changed naturally as the years went by. They had the advantage of knowing the Hebrew language and culture in

whose context it was written by and to. For us, it is considerably more challenging. Yet, at the end of the day, it is one thing to occasionally misunderstand how, exactly, to interpret a law or command for the purpose of application, and it is quite another to create a doctrine or tradition that essentially overrides a law of God.

The greatest Torah scholar who ever walked this earth, Yeshua of Nazareth, says this about that:

**CJB Mark 7:1-9**     ***The P'rushim and some of the Torah-teachers who had come from Yerushalayim gathered together with Yeshua <sup>2</sup> and saw that some of his talmidim ate with ritually unclean hands, that is, without doing n'tilat-yadayim. <sup>3</sup> (For the P'rushim, and indeed all the Judeans, holding fast to the Tradition of the Elders, do not eat unless they have given their hands a ceremonial washing. <sup>4</sup> Also, when they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they have rinsed their hands up to the wrist; and they adhere to many other traditions, such as washing cups, pots and bronze vessels.) <sup>5</sup> The P'rushim and the Torah-teachers asked him, "Why don't your talmidim live in accordance with the Tradition of the Elders, but instead eat with ritually unclean hands?" <sup>6</sup> Yeshua answered them, "Yesha'yahu was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites- as it is written, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me. <sup>7</sup> Their worship of me is useless, because they teach man-made rules as if they were doctrines.' <sup>8</sup> "You depart from God's command and hold onto human tradition. <sup>9</sup> Indeed," he said to them, "you have made a fine art of departing from God's command in order to keep your tradition!***

Yeshua was not telling His listeners that there were in trouble with His Father when they made the occasional error because of an innocent misunderstanding. He was saying that when they held up the written Torah against the rulings of Sages and Rabbis (Traditions and customs), invariably the choice of the Pharisees was to teach and follow the Traditions and customs. Like with the Levitical Priests of Malachai, the Pharisees had done this for so long that in their minds they were doing what was right and

teaching truth. It never occurred to them to regularly challenge themselves (or one another) to ensure that what they were teaching was biblical truth or not. I cannot say how often they may have consulted Holy Scripture as their reference as opposed to going by oral and written Traditions, or if they merely read and quoted Scripture in truth, but then lived out Tradition instead by twisting the Scripture's words to arrive at a desired conclusion. Yeshua referred to this practice of substituting traditions for Scripture as the Pharisees having made a fine art of it. That is, they did it so seamlessly well, that they deceived themselves as well as their congregations.

At this point in history, Judaism has never before attained such a high level of Tradition as their well of truth as we find it in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And it is also a fact that Christendom has never before attained such a high level of doctrines as their source of truth as it is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I have expressed before that while for 1600 years Christendom has officially shunned the Old Testament and looks only to the New, that even that shrinking source of biblical truth has only accelerated. Many decades ago, a bent against the Book of Matthew and the Book of Hebrews as being "too Jewish" took place and so Gospel study was reduced primarily to Luke, Mark, and John. Until 175 years ago, the Book of Hebrews had gone missing in Protestant Bibles, and still is missing in several denominations' Bibles. Today, however, the Gospels are becoming less popular and trusted because the new mantra is that only the words Yeshua spoke AFTER His resurrection have any bearing on Christians. His earlier words either confuse or were meant only for Jewish ears. So, now, it is primarily Paul's Epistles that are accepted and consulted within the mainstream Church. Most congregations don't really even notice it, but neither did the common folks of Malachai's day, and later Yeshua's day, notice these discrepancies. Traditions and doctrines are powerful things. It is not those that need to be safeguarded: it is biblical truth. And, today, Holy Scripture is not in much demand, nor does Church or Synagogue teach it more than a selective smattering of it to validate some social teaching or denominational agenda item.

Bottom line: we have arrived at the same place the Priesthood and Jewish society in general had arrived in Malachai's era; and so, what we read in Malachai can be easily and properly superimposed over all that we see

happening in Church and Synagogue. The result? People don't know truth, so they can't live truth. Worse yet, people and the leaders are certain they are secure in God's love and will regardless, when actually they are far away and in more danger than they have any idea of. This situation infuriates The Father, and so He finds those few who He can use (and are willing) to warn and cajole because what must be said is anything but popular. That is, despite the typical profession of ignorance or finger pointing by clergy and laymen should they be shown their error, the truth is that both the leaders and the people are practicing a kind of *willful* ignorance and finding out the truth is more a fly in the ointment than a reason to change their beliefs.

Turning to another Hebrew word that we find in the opening of verse 7, is **da'at**, which means knowledge. Yet, it is a word that in the Bible almost always means knowledge of God as we find in the Torah, as opposed to just a general acquisition of facts. So, it is a specific body of knowledge that the Priesthood is to hang onto and communicate, and that the people are obligated to learn and follow. In fact, verse 7 concludes with the reality that the Levitical Priesthood is to behave as, and been seen as, God's collective messenger to the people. It should not go unnoticed that the Hebrew term for messenger is the same as that for angel (**malak**). Even more, here in verse 7 is the only place in the Bible when the term "messenger (or angel) of **Yehoveh Tzva'ot**" is applied to the Priesthood. Usually, **malak** is a term reserved for the Prophets. So, here we see a most important notion begin to be developed.

Prophets as messengers of God had a different meaning in the Old Testament than it does in the New Testament. With Malachai, the end of the era of the Prophets arrived. Each Prophet had brought with them a new oracle from God to be added to the knowledge of God that came before that latest Prophet. Upon the New Testament era, a Prophet still had to do with a communicating a message from God, but now it was not *new* divine revelation but rather the divine revelation that already existed in written form that was to be taught and followed. Essentially a Prophet came to mean a Bible teacher.

It is interesting in this wordplay on the word **malak** (messenger) that we see that it is the root of Malachai's own name. It also highlights how the priests

were to be these messengers of truth. Once again we have a veiled allusion to Malachai likely having been a priest, himself, and only recently called to hold the office of Prophet. Malachai has such concerns and knowledge of the Priesthood and the Temple and the Torah that one normally wouldn't find outside of a small circle of the more senior priests.

After explaining what a priest should do in verse 7, verse 8 says "here is what you actually did". The priests knew what they were supposed to do, but they fell away from the path of truth and righteousness, and in doing so took many common folks with them. I can't help but remembering what we read in Revelation about something quite similar that happens in Heaven, because virtually the same dynamic is in play on earth and here in Malachai.

**CJB Revelation 12:7-9** ***<sup>7</sup> Next there was a battle in heaven- Mikha'el and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. <sup>8</sup> But it was not strong enough to win, so that there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup> The great dragon was thrown out, that ancient serpent, also known as the Devil and Satan [the Adversary], the deceiver of the whole world. He was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him.***

Here we see a leader in Heaven that became corrupt (Satan), and there were those heavenly beings that he held some sway over (called angels in this passage) who aligned with him. No doubt, it was Satan who enticed those angels to replace God's truth with the Adversary's agenda, and the result was they were all removed from the presence of God.

The strength of Yehoveh's accusation towards these Priests is made all the stronger when we look at the original Hebrew. Nearly all English Bibles open verse 8 with: "But you turned away from the path", or "But you departed out of the way". What it literally says is, "And you, yourselves, have turned from the way". "You, yourselves" is, biblically, a very emphatic term. It means that they can't consider themselves as the exempt part of a group or the exception to the rule. They can't say that they aren't who God is upset with; it's those other guys. This accusation is personal and intimate, and it exempts none.

Turning aside from the way, means to turn aside from the covenant. Here the covenant (which is grammatically singular) is a catch-word for the sum of all the covenants God has made with Israel, including the New Covenant that Jeremiah had pronounced only a century earlier. It is ironic that a substantial part of the modern Church has adopted the phrase "The Way" to refer to their New Testament Church attachments, thinking that it was Jesus who brought "the way" with Him. Yet, it is a much more ancient and Jewish cultural expression that means to be true to God's covenants with Israel. What makes it ironic is that Constantinian Christianity in general denounces and renounces all of God's covenants save for the newest one. What is often overlooked is that despite the Christian mantra that this one newest covenant was for gentiles, the fact is that where it appears in Jeremiah 31, it says explicitly that it is a covenant God is making between He and Israel and Judah.

The accusation is now repeated that the priests were the cause of many falling away from Torah. You might note that in your Bible, it usually says falling away from the law. That is a mistranslation. The original Hebrew word is specifically "Torah". And the Torah is a specific body of instruction that includes the Law of Moses. So, what the priests caused many to fall away from was not some hazy generalized morality or set of ethics, but rather the specific commandments of God. They were breaking the Law at every turn, and this because they either didn't know the Law or the priests had taught them something different than what the Law actually said.

Verse 9 expresses some of the consequences and issues about their falling away from Torah.

**CJB Malachi 2:9** ***"Therefore I have in turn made you contemptible and vile before all the people, because you did not keep my ways but were partial in applying the Torah."***

The divinely given punishment of the priests for what they did was that God put disgust and enmity in the hearts of the people toward them. The people lost respect for the Priesthood, and with the loss of respect came their loss of authority, and with their loss of authority came the loss of restraint placed upon the people by means of their former acceptance of the leadership of the



Tribe of Levi; it simply evaporated. It was replaced with derision and suspicion. When we lose faith in our religious leadership, it can be catastrophic for the body of Believers. No one cares what they have to say, any longer. Some folks will remain so shattered by it, that they will turn their backs on their faith and walk away from it (it happens every day). People react quite interestingly when they no longer have respect for their leaders. People find themselves angry but rudderless like a rebellious teen. They lose restraint in their behavior because they no longer fear the authority of the leadership. Each turn to anarchy, doing whatever they feel like they want to do, believing whatever seems good to them. In other words, what was a biblically-based society breaks down. So, the matter of a corrupt priesthood that has lost its way goes far deeper on a nation than only a loss of people knowing God's truth.

Some of what the people saw happen with the Priesthood is that they meted out privilege and justice with partiality. It is to be noticed that earlier in Malachai, God accused the Priests of despising Him, with the proof of it in their actions of offering Him faulty and unclean sacrifices on the Temple Altar. Here in verse 9, we find the same Hebrew word (***bazah***) that is now translated as contemptable but earlier was translated as despised. By using the same translation (despised) in both places (as it should be), then we see the point: God's justice is always proportional... measure for measure. Since the priests despised (***bazah***) God, then God caused the people to despise (***bazah***) the priests. Just another reminder of how translating any language into another will wind up obscuring its meaning at times, because language is always a product of, and organically connected to, its native culture.

Before we move on to verse 10, which begins a 3<sup>rd</sup> burden or oracle from God, I want to take a moment to sum up what the last 3 or 4 verses explain to us. First and foremost, the Levitical Priests had set God on the shelf, created a charade, and both trusted in and taught to the people a system of lies. Second, is that both the external and interior carry out of our faith are necessary to please Our Father. It is ironic that in Judaism, it is the outward external behaviors that are valued, rather than living out the spirit of their covenant with God. And in Christendom, it is the internal beliefs that are valued, making our outward behaviors nearly irrelevant. One group wants to



make a Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwich with only peanut butter, and the other group using only jam, but groups still insist on calling the results a Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwich.

These last few verses have shown, decisively, that both our outward behaviors and our inward sincerity and devotion, must be present. As regarded the Priesthood, it meant following through with all their duties properly. They had stopped sacrificing properly, and had stopped teaching truth. Yet, all that was because they had lost their inner sincerity and devotion to Yehoveh and to His Word of truth. As it applies to modern day Believers, our behaviors and deeds must reflect our inner trust in God's truth. If they do not, then God says we have no sincere inner trust towards Him. Remember what Yeshua's biological brother James said:

**CJB James 2:20 *But, foolish fellow, do you want to be shown that such "faith" apart from actions is barren?***

Third, everything we've been reading about has to do with our side of covenant obligations. Christendom long ago announced that Believers have no covenant obligations. It's all on God, and therefore outside of our belief in Christ as Savior, nothing else is expected of us. Our mainstream institutions bandy about the word "covenant" when convenient, but then turn around and neuter its meaning. There is no such thing as a covenant without both parties having obligations.

Fourth, God's stated goal was to drive the Priesthood and the people back to true truth and back to true worship of Him. The means was to remind them yet again of what they were doing wrong, punishing them for it proportionally (that is, doing justice), telling them what to do that is right, and making it clear that if they will repent and change His favor will once again fall upon them instead of His wrath.

Verses 10 through 16 form a 3<sup>rd</sup> oracle of Malachai. While all the things the priests have been accused of to this point are bad enough, now is added the grievous sin of corrupt and perverted behavior against their fellow Hebrews in general, and against their wives in particular. I'll begin by telling you that as

straightforward as Malachai generally is in understanding its words, this passage is a notoriously challenging one to interpret, and so one can imagine that there are various views of how to go about getting it right. Nearly every English Bible version has a slightly different set of words it uses for each one of these verses 10 – 16. So, let's see how we can unpack this important passage to get the most out of it that we are intended to. Verse 10 (according to the CJB) says this:

**CJB Malachi 2:10** *Don't we all have the same father? Didn't one God create us all? Then why do we break faith with each other, profaning the covenant of our ancestors?*

Asking, "don't we all have the same father" is a rhetorical question, with the only proper answer being "yes". Notice how Malachai injects himself into this equation by using the pronoun "we" rather than "you". Once again, the primary target is the Priesthood, and here Malachai includes himself by saying "we". Immediately, however, the question becomes: so, who, exactly, is Malachai assuming is the common father to all the priests and the Hebrew people? By Tradition that person is Abraham. That is, father here being taken to mean the Patriarch of the Hebrew people.

It is important that we grasp that the Hebrew people didn't think in terms of their common father as being God. Earlier in Malachai, however, we see the Prophet identify Yehoveh as the true father of the Hebrews. Naturally, as concerns God, Malachai means "father" somewhat figuratively on the physical, biological level. However, Malachai is looking at this from the spiritual level (whether the Hebrews at first understood this, I doubt). Yet, Malachai is but taking the same view as found in Deuteronomy 32:6. Further, the widest scope that Malachai is thinking in is the entire Hebrew people, and not all humanity.

The next clause in this verse is "Didn't one God create us all?" Again, he is speaking of the Hebrew community... really, at this point, reduced to all Israel...and is not being inclusive of gentiles. The Hebrew word used for one is **echad**. **Echad** can have a wide range of meanings and uses. But of them all, which is meant here? Is it speaking of God's substance? Is it meaning Israel's

only God? Is it speaking of God as being the only god in existence? **Echad** as used here is an adjective that relates to the term “father”. Thus, the idea is that Israel owes its entire existence to but one source: Yehoveh. And since every member of the community is Israel, they all equally share in this common source of their existence. Even more (although the words aren’t here) it was thoroughly understood as common knowledge to the people that it is the covenant that binds God to Israel. Israel’s entire identity is due to, and rests in, their common father... Yehoveh.

Now that Malachai has led his listeners to agree that they all come from the same source, and are subject to the same duties, and will share the same fate, he takes the next step and asks a really difficult, in your face, type of question that is pretty damning merely in the asking of it. ***Then why do we break faith with each other, profaning the covenant of our ancestors?***

So, here is a statement that positively connects God as creator of the Israelites (their father) with the covenant of their ancestors. We need to pause to consider something that can fly under the radar, but I have no doubt is the case. Malachai has picked some terms to use that clearly refer to the New Covenant pronounced by Jeremiah. He refers to God as father and creator. Remember; this thought is rare and unusual and not a normal part of Hebrew thinking in this era. We find in Jeremiah 31:9 the reference to God as father, and in Jeremiah 31:22 the reference to God as Creator. Part of what is being addressed here by Malachai is a lingering disillusionment among the Jewish returnees from Babylon. The New Covenant of Jeremiah, given a century earlier, promised abundance and peace for Israel. This had not only not happened, things were actually on a downward trend. The people had but 2 choices to determine why this prophecy of Jeremiah had not happened. 1) it wasn’t time, yet. 2) This was a failed prophecy. And if this was failed, how much confidence could they have in any past covenants, or in any prophetic utterances, including Malachai’s? History indicates that the predominate belief among the Jews was that the promises had failed and now they sit in limbo. With that background, let’s continue.

How is it that the Jews are breaking faith with one another, and this “breaking” is defined within the terms of the covenant? To be clear: here the

covenant is a general term for all the covenants God made with the Hebrews, but from a pragmatic viewpoint, it points mostly towards the Covenant of Moses with its careful rules about how Hebrews are to deal with one another. God had made Israel unique and set-apart from all other nations and peoples on earth, and He did this through the instrument of covenant. But, despite the great privilege that Israel had been granted, they are desecrating the covenant through their unfaithfulness. At this point, exactly what the unfaithfulness is we don't know. That question gets answered in verse 11.

**CJB Malachi 2:11** ***Y'hudah has broken faith; an abomination has been committed in Isra'el and Yerushalayim. For Y'hudah has profaned the sanctuary of Yehoveh, which he loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god.***

Goodness; so much to talk about, here. First, this is more narrowly directed to the restoration community of returned Jews. While it certainly can apply to all Israel (and not just those Jews) just as it can apply to us, it seems as though they have been singled out. Second, I don't think Judah is the proper translation. I think it ought to be Yehud... the name of the Persian province the returning Judeans are living in. I think this because of what follows when the terms Israel and Jerusalem are used.

All during the Persian Empire period, the term Yehud would represent the returned community of Jewish exiles who had come to restore their land and faith. Once the Persians finally lost their empire to the Greeks, then the Jewish residents of that same territory were called something else. This group of Jews have been accused of the highest level of sin against God. The Hebrew word is **to'ebah** (or **to'evah**) that denotes something that is about as terrible as it gets. As we look to the final clause of this verse, we find that the **to'ebah** thing they did is intermarriage of Jews with the heathen. As we'll soon see, the matter of divorce becomes part and parcel with this indictment.

The use of the words Israel and Jerusalem are meant to convey location. Thus, the meaning is that the Jews who are located in Israelite territory with Jerusalem as its capital are the offenders. It is a way of reminding Jews that they are still part of Israel, even though the other 10 tribes of Israel have

been gone for around 250 years and had not returned to their land (which was the northern kingdom of Ephraim/Israel that we read about earlier in the Bible). And, that the covenant and its rules, laws, and obligations apply to all Israelites no matter where they might be at the time, because the covenant was made with all Israel and not just part of it.

By committing this abomination of the Hebrew men taking on heathen women, they also profaned God's holiness. The words we'll look at right now are **qodesh Yehoveh**. Literally, they mean "the holiness of Yehoveh". Even so, the term **qodesh** can refer to the Temple as a symbol of God's holiness. It can even be used to speak about anything that is holy to Yehoveh. It can also be used to mean the character of Yehoveh (He is holy). So, which of these is the intent? I think we can eliminate the idea that it is speaking of the Temple since nothing in this passage would connect to that notion. Nor do I recognize any object or icon or symbol that it might be speaking of, so I am left with the choice of taking this phrase to speak of God's nature and character of holiness that is being offended.

The Covenant of Moses prohibits Hebrew men from marrying foreign women. Now, this can be allowed if we attach the word "formerly" to the term "foreign women". The issue is that especially throughout the biblical era, a person that belonged to a certain nation or people group automatically was dedicated to a certain god or set of gods. Thus, for a Hebrew man to marry a woman who was dedicated to a different god than Yehoveh, was committing spiritual adultery. The exception would be if a woman took the route of Ruth, in that she denounced her former gods and dedicated herself to the Hebrew god. From the standpoint of those ancient times, she had given up one nationality and identity for another, and in God's view she was no longer a foreigner.

What we need to remember is that this disputation is directed primarily at the priests. Yes, the priesthood led the way in this practice of marrying foreign heathen women. What would have been their motivation for doing such a thing? Studies from the last couple of decades seem to indicate no evidence for rampant idolatry happening in Yehud. So, what drove the priests (and then the Jewish population at large) to indulge in such an affair? Considering the bad economic situation of Yehud at this time, very likely the reasons were to

marry into some money. So, religious concerns were set aside in order to satisfy the need for better living conditions. As concerns the priests, since tithes and offerings were their only source of income, then with the poor economics of those who were to give in consideration, it is easy to see how the amount of tithes and offerings the priests would have received to divide up amongst themselves, would have decreased and put a strain on their home lives.

All this together means that since Yehoveh has loved His people like they were a wife in a marriage, then for the men to commit adultery by marrying foreign women, Yehoveh has no choice but to judge Yehud as guilty of adultery to God, and punish them.

**CJB Deuteronomy 7:3 *Don't intermarry with them- don't give your daughter to his son, and don't take his daughter for your son.***

Let's be clear: despite the regular commentaries that appear on this passage, and characterize this as God banning interracial marriage, that is not correct. It is an intellectually dishonest interpretation to think of it in this way. Never in the Bible does skin color or ethnicity play a role in marriage. The entire issue is over who the two parties in marriage worship as their god. Back in the ancient times, the ban on intermarriage was to be as a protection against importing idolatry into Israel. And, truly, it should be looked at as no differently in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I have had too many conversations with distraught husbands or wives whose spouses were either atheists, agnostics, or believed in another religion and another god. Usually, they knew this prior to marriage. But, something happened along the way in which the God-fearing partner suddenly realized the importance of their faith, and now they were in a fix. Thus, when we get to the New Testament, we find a number of cautions about a Believer in Yeshua marrying a non-Believer, even if that non-Believer believes in the God of Israel. It doesn't forbid it, but it makes it clear that real trouble, and likely heartache, lay ahead more likely than not.

The issue of mixed marriages was not new in Malachai's era. We read about that in excerpts from many years earlier during Ezra's time, and also

Nehemiah deals with it. We'll pause here and continue with Malachai chapter 2, next time.