

MALACHI: The Final Warning

Malachi 2

Introduction:

1. In chapter one, we learned God's distinguishing favor (1-5) and His worship requires the best (6-14).
2. Having identified Israel's lack of appreciation for blessings and their profane approach to worship, the prophet then pointed out specific errors in Israel that must be corrected to avoid God's judgment.
3. It is hard to imagine that these recovered Jews could backslide so far so fast against God, but unless God keeps you by His grace and you make good use of that grace, you will also (I Cor 10:6-12).

LESSON #3: God's Ministers Must Be Faithful In Conduct and Teaching (2:1-9).

- A. Some places in scripture are for God to address His ministers distinct from His people (2:1).
 1. In the O.T., there is Leviticus and various chapters (Jer 23; Ezekiel 13,14,34,44; etc.).
 2. In the N.T., the three books for ministers are the Pastoral Epistles (Timothy and Titus), which Paul wrote to individual bishops with specific instructions for pastoral ministry (I Tim 1:3-7,18-20; 2:1,8; 3:14-15; 4:6-9; 5:7,17-22; 6:3-5,11-14,17,20-21; II Tim 1:6,13-14; 2:1-7,15-18,24-26; 3:14-17; 4:1-5; Titus 1:5-9; 2:1,7-8,15; 3:1,8-9; etc, etc.).
 3. Every minister of God is duty bound to give sober and careful consideration to these instructions and warning for ministers, lest he depart out of the way of the Lord at all.
 - a. Nadab and Abihu were burned up by God's fire for their strange fire (Lev 10:1-7).
 - b. Uzzah thought he could drive the new ox cart carrying the ark, but died (II Sa 6:6-7).
 4. There is a horrible famine for God's words in America and the world due to wayward and wicked pastors (Hosea 4:6; Amos 8:11-13; II Tim 3:5-7,13; 4:3-4; II Peter 2:1-3,12-19).
 5. The decline of our nation may be traced to pulpits more than to politicians, parents or any other influence. Forget Hollywood and the NEA. Look at Joel Osteen (II Tim 3:1 – 4:4).
 6. It must constantly be on our hearts and in our lips for men like John, Timothy, and Titus.
 7. For more of perilous times ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/perilous-times/sermon.php>.
 8. For more about false teachers ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/they-promise-them-liberty.pdf.
- B. God promised judgment on the priests that had already commenced to punish them (2:2).
 1. He stated again the profaning of His name as He showed in the first chapter (1:6,11-14).
 - a. America's pastor, Joel Osteen in 2014, starts every sermon without fail with a joke.
 - b. It is called casual worship to wear beach clothes to church with a cup of Starbucks.
 2. Ministers usually speak and cause conviction, but they must also hear and be humbled, and here God warned them of dire consequences if they did not hear with conviction.
 3. It was their personal and public duty to give glory to His name, contrary to the profane way they had allowed the worship of God to deteriorate by their example and means.
 - a. The pew will follow the pulpit like a family the father (I Timothy 4:12,16; Titus 2:7).
 - b. Therefore, ministers bear the burden of their own sins and also those hearing them.
 4. God promised to curse the priests, and He would curse their blessings on others as well; it is a horrible state of affairs when God commits to not answer the prayers of His pastors.
 - a. God will curse ministers that compromise worship: Moses for striking a rock, Nadab and Abihu, Eli and his family tree, Uzzah, Judas Iscariot, Caiaphas and cohorts, etc.
 - b. God will curse them in everything and even those things that should have been for their welfare (Deut 28:16-18; Ps 69:22; 109:7-15; Hos 4:7-10; 9:11-14; Mal 3:7-12).

- c. God will curse blessings and prayers (Ps 109:7; Prov 15:8; 21:27; 28:9; Is 1:15; 66:3).
 - d. It can get so bad He will not hear the prayers of the very best (Jer 15:1; Ezek 14:14).
 - e. Even a great blessing like Numbers 6:23-27 would turn into a curse by ministerial sin.
 - f. There is harm from sinful ministers and politicians of a sinful nation to say or sing, “God Bless America,” after events like 9/11. They should read Luke 13:1-5 instead!
5. Notice the repetition – ministers must be convicted in heart by His words (Is 66:2,5).
 6. Pastors today have created a “Christianity” based on fables that promote pleasures more than God and has a form of godliness without any power or authority (II Tim 3:1-13).
 7. Paul warned N.T. ministers of judgment if they compromised the gospel (I Cor 3:10-17).
- C. God detailed His judgment to include their children and to abominate their worship (2:3).
1. He promised to corrupt the seed of unfaithful priests – a judgment on their children.
 - a. God warned similarly through Hosea that He would forget priests’ children (Hos 4:6).
 - b. Eli’s family was severely judged for not protecting the worship of God (I Sa 2:27-36).
 - c. A casual consideration of the reputation of PK’s (preachers’ kids) should help here.
 2. He called their hypocritical worship dung and promised to judge them as unclean filth.
 - a. The Lord does not mince words for correctness when dealing with such a profane sin.
 - b. Note how He mocks and ridicules hypocritical worship (Is 1:10-15; 66:3-4; Je 23:14).
 - c. Dung is an unclean thing, and covered with their dung, the priests were now unclean.
 - d. What is to be done with dung? Taken away and buried far off from the camp. Amen.
 - e. Consider the prophets warning to Eli about honoring God in this context (I Sa 2:30).
- D. God makes a difference among His ministers according to faithfulness to their calling (2:4).
1. Though they were the priests of Jehovah, the LORD would make His disapproval clear.
 - a. If you do not get the message by His word, you will get it by His judgment. Beware.
 - b. They would know, though too late for themselves, He only approved faithful priests.
 - c. Ezekiel had warned that it would be judgment that revealed the truth (Ezek 33:27-33).
 - d. Jesus prophesied that some of His murderers would see His judgment (Mat 26:62-64).
 2. The Lord made a covenant with Levi and Aaron for the priesthood, and these wicked priests had corrupted that covenant. His strong warning of judgment was due to terms of that covenant, which they had violated, and He was about to fulfill His part against them.
 - a. *Levi* here is a figure of speech for all faithful priests from him – Aaron, Phinehas, etc.
 - b. It is no different than tabernacles of *Jacob* used for Israel later in the chapter (2:12).
 - b. These here were unacceptable as Jehovah’s priests (1:6-14), and the coming judgment would confirm the message of Malachi and the terms of office of Levi’s true priests.
 - b. In the next chapter Malachi foretells the rise of purified sons of Levi (3:3-4). Glory!
 3. Take heed, man of God; He has not changed about His officers (I Co 3:10-17; I Ti 4:16).
- E. God had given Levi and the priests from him great benefits for his character and duties (2:5).
1. Levi in Aaron had been given the priesthood for his personal character and commitment.
 2. Though Aaron and any other priest had sins, they were many who were faithful and holy.
 3. The covenant terms of ministry were life and peace from God for true fear and reverence.
 - a. A recorded example of such a priest is Phinehas (Num 25:10-13; Psalm 106:30-31).
 - b. He and sons were promised an everlasting priesthood and justifying peace with God.
 - c. His great zeal for the glory of God was entirely contrary to the priests before Malachi.

- d. Faithful Levites and priests had a ministerial life supported financially to serve in God's presence without fear – what a good life (Num 16:8-10; 18:20-21; Deut 10:8).
 - e. Eli's house lost their lives (many by Doeg) and peace, and Zadok replaced him in it.
4. Priests were to fear and love God above their peers (Ex 18:21; II Sam 23:3; II Chr 19:9).
 5. Any candidate for ministry must have great fear of God, His word, His ordinances, etc.
- F. The exemplary priests of all generations in whom God delighted had great character (2:6).
1. Priests that had covenant blessings of ministry like Aaron and Phinehas were righteous.
 2. They were honest men without any deceit or iniquity in their speech (Ex 18:21; Acts 6:3), which Paul required of Titus and any ministers he was to ordain (Titus 2:7-8).
 3. They sanctified themselves and exalted holiness in fulfilling their office (Ezek 44:21-31).
 4. They were peacemakers, impartial and fair in all judgments, and always at soul-winning.
- G. God's priests were His chosen means then of communicating His words to His people (2:7).
1. God spoke to the patriarchs, then He ordained priests to teach (Le 10:8-11; De 33:10-11).
 2. The priests of God were the source of knowledge and law from God for the nation's life.
 3. If there was ever a class of men needing Solomon's advice, it was priests (Pr 22:17-21).
 4. It is still true today. Scripture is primarily for the minister to study diligently and use for his own perfection as pastor and teacher for men (I Tim 4:13-16; II Tim 2:15; 3:16-17).
 5. The phrase *man of God* occurs 72 times – twice for an angel; 70 times for His ministers; it is evil presumption for men to presume on the phrase as if it meant merely *godly man*.
 6. A terrible thing that can happen to a group of people is for the minister to lose this vision of representing God (Pr 29:18; I Sam 3:1; II Chr 15:3; Hosea 4:6; Amos 8:11-12).
 7. Conflicting duties must be delegated so he can focus on the word and prayer (Acts 6:1-4).
 8. Priesthood of believers applies more to prayer and spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ than ability or duty to interpret scripture (I Pet 2:5; Heb 10:19-22).
 9. Paul magnified his office, and pastors must often do so as well (Rom 11:13; Titus 2:15).
 10. All men should desire and covet to be the LORD's messenger (I Ti 3:1; I Cor 12:28-31).
 11. For some essays about being a good pastor ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/rules-for-ministers.pdf.
 12. For a Bible review of God's messengers ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/prophets-of-god.pdf.
- H. The priests in Malachi's time did not show this required character or fulfill these duties (2:8).
1. They were not the ambassadors of God and men of His word that they were called to be, and they were often, like Eli's sons, more profane in personal holiness than the nation.
 2. They had corrupted the covenant with Levi and Aaron by violating their required duties.
 3. Without due regard for God's law by and from the pulpit, the people will stumble over it.
 - a. Many stumbled at the law – many! Ministers make or break churches and nations.
 - b. Ministerial compromise in life or doctrine causes terrible consequences (I Tim 4:16).
 - c. Look at the evil effect that Eli's two sons had on worshippers in Israel (I Sam 2:17).
 - d. It does not matter what the people want, for they are carnal (Is 30:8-11; II Tim 4:1-4).
 4. Though the priests corrupted the covenant of Levi, other better priests are coming (3:3-4).
 5. Great men, like Ezra, grieve and pray intensely at ministerial compromise (Ezra 9:1-15).
 6. Great men, like Nehemiah, earnestly contend against ministerial sin (Neh 13:28-31).

- I. God had already exposed the priests' sinfulness and caused the nation to despise them (2:9).
 1. Due to their wickedness, God had made them base and contemptible before the people.
 - a. When a minister's ways please the Lord, He unites the people under him (Ps 144:2).
 - b. This is the judgment Paul foretold of false teachers in perilous times (II Tim 3:8-9).
 2. Partiality in God's law keeps a minister from God's ways, as this chapter reveals (2:17).
 - a. Duties were no respect of persons and dividing scripture (Deut 1:17; II Chr 19:8-11).
 - b. Partiality in rule or doctrine is a great offence against God (I Tim 5:21; II Tim 2:15).
 - c. There is so much blather today about God's love with hardly any place for other truth.
 - d. Conservative churches hardly leave the Great Commission for anything profitable.
 - e. Liberal churches preach nothing but a social gospel for minding earthly things more.
 - f. Mega churches create a nightclub atmosphere with a rock star as pastor for thrills.
 3. How many ministers faithfully, loudly teach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:17-35)?
 4. They have a form of godliness and only use sound bites from His word (II Tim 3:4-5).
 5. They dare not teach the Bible; sound doctrine would shrink their churches (II Tim 4:3-4).
 6. Pray the Lord of the harvest to send some mighty men like Elijah and John to preach.

LESSON #4: Marriage is a covenant before God that He examines carefully (2:10-16).

- A. The next lesson is introduced by appeal to conscience toward God and toward one another.
 1. Having rebuked priests for their wickedness, Malachi then rebuked Judah for their sins.
 2. This is a new lesson by its form, about every man, treachery, and a covenant of fathers.
 3. The paragraph mark you may have in a Bible at verse 11 just proves they are not inspired.
 4. The treachery here is pagan wives, divorce, and polygamy, not unfaithfulness of priests.
 5. Marrying a pagan in a case like this was an abomination for two reasons – it violated God's law about a godly seed, and it harmed the Jewish wife who suffered because of it.
 6. The error of the people follows the lead of the pulpit both by example and preaching.
 7. When the pulpits relax about marriage and divorce, there will be an increase in divorce.
 8. Notice how the prophet included himself in the charge here to make it more palatable.
- B. Marriage involves more people than just you two and reflects on God and His word (2:10).
 1. God was Father and Creator of Israel by His choice of them to be His people (Is 63:16).
 - a. If Israel had one Father, how could they abuse each other (Jas 3:9-10; I Jn 4:20 - 5:1)?
 - b. As children in God's family, Israel owed one another faithfulness in their marriages.
 - c. If God is your father – naturally and spiritually – how can you violate His children?
 - d. A mark of regeneration and proof of eternal life is to love and serve children of God.
 2. The treachery here is pagan wives, divorce, polygamy, and arrogant hypocrisy about it.
 - a. **Treachery.** Deceit, cheating, perfidy; violation of faith or betrayal of trust; perfidious conduct; disloyal, traitorous. **Perfidy.** The deceitful violation of faith or promise; base breach of faith or betrayal of the trust reposed in one; treachery; often the profession of faith or friendship in order to deceive or betray.
 - b. There are five uses of this condemning word in just seven verses (2:10,11,14,15,16).
 - c. It was treachery against brothers by not treating daughters and sisters as expected.
 - d. Fornication affects many – husbands, wives, fathers, siblings, children – little seen.
 - e. God identified this relational aspect of sexual sins before (Gen 49:4; Lev 18:8,16; 20:11,21; Deut 22:30; 27:20; II Sam 16:21-22; Ezek 22:10).
 - f. Paul condemned fornication for its defrauding of other men sexually (I Thess 4:1-8).
 - g. Sexual impropriety of all sorts is called a defrauding, even neglecting sex (I Cor 7:5).

3. Israel's covenant was to never marry pagans (Ex 34:10-16; Deut 7:1-11; Josh 23:11-13).
 4. For more about marriage in the Lord ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/marriage-in-the-lord.pdf.
- C. Israel's abominable treachery was taking pagan wives via divorce and/or polygamy (**2:11**).
1. It is treachery for its traitorous betrayal of trust; it is abominable for its profanity to God.
 2. The treachery was taking additional wives; the abomination was taking girls of the world.
 3. It is not a small matter for God's children to marry daughters of the world (Gen 6:1-3).
 - a. It is one of the strong signs of friendship with the world to marry their own (Jas 4:4).
 - b. Your love for God and Christ demands you avoid unbelievers for you and your sons.
 - c. Rounding off, there are 2 billion Christians in the world, and 2 billion do not qualify.
 4. Israel's covenant was to never marry pagans (Ex 34:10-16; Deut 7:1-11; Josh 23:11-13).
 5. The prophet referred to it as profaning the holiness of Jehovah God, which He loved.
 - a. The holiness of God is His church separated from the world (Ex 19:5-6; Lev 20:26; Deut 7:3-6; 14:2; 33:26-29; Ezra 9:2; Jer 2:3; Mal 1:2; II Cor 6:14-18).
 - b. While God Himself did love His separated people, so did Judah like Solomon before their pagan wives turned away their hearts (I Kgs 11:1-8; Hos 6:7; Neh 13:23-27).
 6. The Jews were marrying pagan wives at this time (Ezra 9:1 - 10:44; Nehemiah 13:23-27).
 7. The singular is used as collective nouns for the Jewish sinners, plural in number (2:10).
 8. For more about marriage in the Lord ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/marriage-in-the-lord.pdf.
- D. Regardless of position or performance, God judged those men that did such a thing (**2:12**).
1. What the world, priests, or judges think is innocent – God judges sexual sins (Heb 13:4).
 2. The prophet declared God would cut off such wicked men for their terrible marriage sins.
 - a. To *cut off a man* is to punish him with death (Lev 18:29; 20:3; Nu 15:30-31; Pr 2:22).
 - b. Canaanites indulged in sexual sins so that God said the land would vomit them out.
 - c. It does not matter what the laws or public opinion or even preachers say, for God Himself will enforce His righteousness and cut off the wicked out of the land.
 3. Even if a man were a master (one who teaches) or scholar (a student learning), no matter his position or status or knowledge in life, God would find him and take away his life.
 - a. Solomon described the sexual sinner's grief for being in the congregation (Prov 5:14).
 - b. Do not presume because you teach truth God thinks you of the truth (Ps 50:16-23).
 - c. Priests were involved in this heinous crime of marrying pagan wives (Ezra 10:18-29).
 - d. Grasp the significance of Solomon's horrible marriages (I Kgs 3:1; 11:1; Neh 13:26), for he had entered into these marriages before he became king (I Kings 3:1; 14:21).
 4. The tabernacles of Jacob refer to God's own people, His own city, and His own church.
 - a. No matter how much God loved His people in general, sexual sinners were doomed.
 - b. There is no protection for sexual sinners in the church of God, no matter how loved.
 - c. Joab once thought he could protect himself on the horns of the altar (I Sam 2:28-34).
 5. Even if a man were to give offerings, no matter his performance, God would cut him off.
 - a. Priests were involved in this heinous crime of marrying pagan wives (Ezra 10:18-29).
 - b. God hates the services and sacrifices of sinners (Pr 15:8; 28:9; Is 1:13; Am 5:21-24).
 - c. Saul thought offering the best to God could justify breaking His word (I Sa 15:13-23).
- E. A consequent sin was the offence against God created by the tormented Jewish wives (**2:13**).
1. Thus far the abominable treachery has been condemned mostly by its profaning of God.
 - a. Use of **again** in the text indicates it was a second fault for marrying the pagan wives.

- b. **Again.** In reaction or reciprocal action; in return, in reply, in response, back; either of an action returned, or one done in return for it. To sound in response or sympathy. To express sympathetic response to action, indicating the intensity of the action itself.
 - c. This is not *again* in the ordinary sense, for it was not their second time for this sin.
 - d. Though the men are the doers of what was done, it is because they had caused it.
 - e. The earth can ring again (echo) in response to an original cry (I Sam 4:5; I Kgs 1:45).
2. The victimized women wept and cried in great torment by this treacherous abomination.
 - a. This cannot be the tears of the men, for they were thrilled with their new pagan wives.
 - b. This cannot be the tears of the men, for the rejection of their sacrifices was due to it.
 - c. God knows marital situations like this can cause great grief (Gen 30:15; Lev 18:18).
 - d. Hannah, though loved by Elkanah, was provoked to fret unto crying (I Samuel 1:6-8).
 - e. With God's altar covered by wives' tears, God would not accept husbands' worship.
 - f. Worship or pray ever so well, God looks at your marriage before hearing your words.
 - g. This is no foreign or strange doctrine, for Peter taught it to N.T. believers (I Pet 3:7).
 - h. Your worship is acceptable only if you treat a spouse right, especially men to wives.
 3. God sees everything – and God sees tears whether cried literally or the grief of the heart.
 - a. God has all tears in His bottle and book – both good news and bad news (Ps 56:8).
 - b. It is good news for the one crying; God is for the oppressed and will save (Ps 56:9).
 - c. It is bad news for the one provoking; God will enjoy punishing them (Psalm 11:4-6).
 - d. If God sees the pain of a defrauded man, He will also reject that wife's worship.
 4. If your wife is unhappy, and what she says is quite irrelevant, your life will be unhappy!
 - a. Note the repeated use of "treachery" and the covering of violence in the home (2:16).
 - b. Here are some commands to know God cares: Deut 24:5; Pr 5:19; Col 3:19; I Pet 3:7.
 - c. "Staying together for 25 years" proves nothing, if the wife has suffered violently from emotional, verbal, sexual, or physical abuse. The Lord sees it all, for He is a witness of your marriage, even if no others are allowed into your home or your bedroom!
 - d. Consider how family relationships are emphasized again even in this book (4:6).
 6. For some godly grief and entertainment, see how modern translations corrupt this verse.
 - a. **NIV:** *Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands.*
 - b. **Jubilee Bible 2000:** *And once again ye shall cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, for I shall not even look at the offering any more to receive a free will offering from your hand.*
- F. God had witnessed the treacherous treatment of their wives and would not be placated (**2:14**).
1. These audacious and selfish men had the nerve to ask God why He was unhappy; such nerve about God and man follows the bad example and content of the pulpit (1:6 – 2:9).
 - a. They did not care about God's honor in the matter by neglect of reverent worship.
 - b. They did not care about the feelings of wives by neglect and partiality toward people.
 - c. They actually mocked the feelings of their wives as if they should just learn to like it!
 2. God is witness. He is judge. He is executioner. Combined, He is a lethal opponent to sin.
 - a. It is in a man's best interest to see God as the most protective father-in-law in history.
 - b. God sees your marriage in detail, even your spirit, so beware of Him (Gen 31:49-50).
 - c. Your wife is your Eve – your companion and friend – how can you possibly hurt her!
 - d. Note the plural *ye* to take in all the men ... and the nine singulars to make it personal!
 3. The young wives they had taken in their youth they were now replacing by pagan babes.
 - a. Twice in this passage are the words, *wife of thy youth* (2:14-15), to remind of teens!
 - b. You full well know what young men tell girls to entice them to give their lives away.

- c. Girls give up their lives to be wives; God demands and expects your lifelong love.
 - d. Girls had born the early cost and pain of marriage ... to be replaced by young babes.
 - e. God made but one companion for you – you vowed you needed and wanted only her.
4. The treachery was that the men were not living up to what they had promised their wives.
 - a. You committed your life to your spouse by covenant, so you are bound by an oath.
 - b. This is why we stress a marriage covenant; it is taught here and elsewhere (Pr 2:17).
 - c. Due to the singular second-person pronoun *thy*, we assume his marriage covenant.
 - d. The plural *ye* takes in all the men – the nine singulars defines marriage as one man and one woman committed in love to each other – against polygamy condemned next.
 5. For a detailed marriage covenant of Christians ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/marriage-covenant.pdf.
- G. God created one woman for Adam as the example marriage for all men to follow (**2:15**).
1. Remember the nine singular nouns and pronouns of the previous verse for monogamy.
 2. From the crime of 2:14, God condemned polygamy here and condemned divorce in 2:16.
 3. The *one* here is each man and the *one* wife of his youth he had chosen to marry (2:14).
 - a. Recall that this section of scripture and its marital lesson began with God as Creator.
 - b. This argument is taken from the creation ordinance and history record (Gen 2:18-24).
 - c. Creator God, giver of all human life, could easily have made two or more for Adam.
 - d. Only profane men without fear of God think positively of polygamy and many wives.
 - e. Jesus appealed to this creation ordinance when correcting the Pharisees (Matt 19:3-8).
 - f. He made only one woman for Adam, who had greater abilities than any modern man.
 - g. It is man that took God's creation sex ordinance and trampled it down (Eccl 7:25-29).
 4. Why did God make one woman for one man for one family? For a godly seed, as the problems of polygamy and divorce attest to with the slightest investigation (I Cor 7:14).
 - a. Polygamy confounds the wise design of a family originally chosen by a wise God.
 - b. One man and one woman loving each other in a lifelong union and loving their children together without others is the ultimate way to joy, success, and a godly seed.
 5. God allowing polygamy has no bearing. Should we also build high places (II Chr 15:17)?
 6. The source of all marriage problems begin with the spirit, and so here (Pr 5:19; Col 3:19).
 7. The single wife of the youth is the great blessing of God to be treasured (Pr 5:18; Ec 9:9).
 8. For some godly grief and entertainment, see how modern translations corrupt this verse.
 - a. **NIV:** *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.*
 - b. **NASB:** *"But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth.*
 - c. **NET Bible:** *No one who has even a small portion of the Spirit in him does this. What did our ancestor do when seeking a child from God? Be attentive, then, to your own spirit, for one should not be disloyal to the wife he took in his youth.*
 - d. **Douay-Rheims:** *Did not one make her, and she is the residue of his spirit? And what doth one seek, but the seed of God? Keep then your spirit, and despise not the wife of thy youth.*
 - e. **YLT:** *And He did not make one only, And He hath the remnant of the Spirit. And what is the one alone! He is seeking a godly seed. And ye have been watchful over your spirit, And with the wife of thy youth, None doth deal treacherously.*
- H. God hated treacherous divorces in this abominable context of marrying pagan wives (**2:16**).
1. The prophet brings to bear the glorious name and the unique relationship of God to Israel.
 2. From the crime of 2:14, God condemned polygamy in 2:15 and condemned divorce here.

- a. God does not hate all divorces, even with children (Genesis 21:9-13; Ezra 10:1-5).
 - b. God divorced Israel before and again and is divorced to this day (Isaiah 50:1; Jer 3:8).
 - c. This text does not condemn all divorces any more than these verses condemn all drinking: Leviticus 10:9; Numbers 6:1-4; Proverbs 20:1; Habbakuk 2:15; Luke 7:33.
 - d. This text does not condemn all divorces than this one condemns all women (Ec 7:26).
 - e. The NT allows divorce for fornication (Mat 5:32; 19:9) and desertion (I Cor 7:12-15).
 - f. The principles of mercy and intent could allow even more (Matt 12:1-7; Mark 2:27).
 - g. This agrees with any true justice, since it is unjust to punish the innocent for violence.
3. These men tried to cover their violent and treacherous divorces with a cloak of legality.
 - a. The context is violent and treacherous divorces that God considered an abomination.
 - b. Their cloak was to use Deut 24:1-4 and the Jewish tradition allowing easy divorces.
 - c. Jesus countered Pharisees who appealed to Moses in Deut 24:1-4 with Gen 2:18-25.
 - d. A cloak is used to cover a crime or object (I Thess 2:5; I Pet 2:16; Pr 17:23; 21:14).
 - e. Wicked men that creep into the church will pervert scripture (Mat 4:5-7; II Pet 2:1-3).
 - f. As Jesus condemned adultery hidden in thoughts and divorce proceedings (Matt 5:27-32), so Malachi condemned hiding marital violence under garments like divorce.
 4. The LORD of hosts, a glorious name of Israel's God, warned every man to rule his spirit.
 - a. The warning – repeated twice (2:15-16) – is to take heed to your spirits in this matter.
 - b. Man's spirit is proud, selfish, and wild when it comes to a wife (Prov 5:19; Col 3:19).
 5. For some godly grief and entertainment, see how modern translations corrupt this verse.
 - a. **Douay-Rheims:** *When thou shalt hate her put her away, saith the Lord the God of Israel: but iniquity shall cover his garment, saith the Lord of hosts, keep your spirit, and despise not.*
 - b. **YLT:** *For I hate sending away, said Jehovah, God of Israel, And He who hath covered violence with his clothing, said Jehovah of Hosts, And ye have been watchful over your spirit, And ye do not deal treacherously.*
 - c. **NASB:** *"For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."*
 - d. **NIV:** *"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.*
 - e. **ESV:** *For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."*
 - f. **HCSB:** *If he hates and divorces his wife," says the LORD God of Israel, "he covers his garment with injustice," says the LORD of Hosts. Therefore, watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously.*
 - g. **ISV:** *"Indeed, the LORD God of Israel says that he hates divorce, along with the one who conceals his violence by outward appearances," says the LORD of the Heavenly Armies. "So guard yourselves carefully, and don't be unfaithful."*
 - h. **GWT:** *"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel. "I hate the person who covers himself with violence," says the LORD of Armies. "Be careful not to be unfaithful."*
 - i. **NCT:** *The LORD God of Israel says, "I hate divorce. And I hate people who do cruel things as easily as they put on clothes," says the LORD All-Powerful. So be careful. And do not break your trust.*
- I. Wise men and women will humble themselves before this sober lesson and right any wrongs.
 1. If wives think they escape due to it being men condemned in this chapter and lesson, they were made for the man, so the reality of their own marital situation stresses their duty!
 2. Neglecting sex your spouse wants is defrauding, like fornication (I Cor 7:5; I Thess 4:6).
 3. What does your marriage covenant promise you will do in the name of Almighty God?
 4. It is far too late for you to go back? I gave you your chance. Eccl 5:1-7 cries for justice.
 5. A people ready for Jesus have righteous relationships (Mal 4:5-6). How is your marriage?
 6. Forget the abomination of marrying pagan wives, polygamy, and divorce. What of love, which is a commandment, not a luxury (Pr 5:19; Col 3:19; Num 5:11-31; Titus 2:4)?

7. Love can be restored, as taught in three steps in Revelation 2:5. Remember what it used to be like, repent for letting the relationship slip, and do again what you did while dating.
8. Note the details God sees, how He views marriage, how He reasons about marriage, how He considers your spouse, how severely He reprimands, how severely He judges, etc.
9. For more about the marriage covenant ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/marriage-covenant.pdf.

LESSON #5: God does not compromise His standards or forget judgment of men (2:17).

- A. False worshippers that exalt compromise are so ignorant they lose total sight of God's nature.
 1. The priests compromised in lifestyle and preaching, and the people craved worldly wives.
 2. The nature of God and the demands of His law in both testaments must be taught often.
 3. If they are not, the people will have a form of godliness without authority (II Tim 3:1-5).
 4. They will see circumstances and foolishly presume temporary prosperity is God's favor.
 5. God may not judge instantly or visibly, so they assume approval (Ps 37:34-38; 50:21-22).
- B. God condemns the heresy that wicked men are good and that He delights in them regardless.
 1. Such lies are true today: God loves everyone because they are lovable – they should love themselves as well – God is not as picky as Bible-thumpers say – we are all His children.
 2. Have you heard, “God hates the sin but loves the sinner”? Such heresy wearies our God!
 3. God is not a deistic being watching from a distance – He is at hand and ready to judge!
 4. Let pulpits ring out with the blasts of Psalm 5:4-6; 7:10-13; 9:15-20; 11:4-6; 58:6-11; Amos 4:12; Matt 23:29-33; Heb 10:26-31; 12:28-29; II Pet 3:10-14; Rev 20:11-15; etc.
 5. Moral degeneration as with these Jews brings compromising standards of God's nature.
 6. Previous sins were (a) missing God's differences, (b) lukewarm worship without zeal, (c) partial preaching by unfaithful men, and (d) selfish moral corruption even to wives.
 7. Men weary God with thinking and words as they compromise His standards downward.
 8. This is exalting God's universal love and acceptance of all men over any other concept.
 9. God's ministers should have a very different effect on good and wicked men (Eze 13:22).
 10. An absolute standard of righteousness that pleases God comes by full spiritual revival.
 11. The first of the “Four Spiritual Laws,” the world's most popular tract, declares heretically that “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life,” similar to these heretics.
 12. For more about God's love of men ... www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/does-god-love-everybody.pdf.
- C. God condemns the heresy that the God of judgment is just the tool of loud, zealous prophets.
 1. Consider what God said to those who thought He would do nothing (Zephaniah 1:12-13).
 2. Remember, God warned against letting silence deceive sinners into folly (Ps 50:21-22).
 3. Peter warned that such skeptical mocking would take place in the last days (II Pet 3:3-4).
 4. We live in a time when those who say they know God say He has changed from the O.T.
 5. They say God is watching from a distance, and they live like He does not see, hear, care.
 6. God may delay judgment to harden some (Eccl 8:11 cp Ex 8:15) or to soften others (II Peter 3:9; Romans 2:4) or to deceive yet others (Ps 50:21-22; Prov 1:32).
 7. When men appear to get away with sin, they are being fattened for slaughter (Gen 15:16; Dan 8:23; Matt 23:29-36; I Thess 2:16)!
 8. If doctrinal and practical compromise continue, universalism and no-hell will be chosen, as they are rapidly growing in popularity in this first part of the 21st century.
 9. The next lesson, a prophecy of John and Jesus, includes exact judgment they deny here.
 10. Think about the Sermon on the Mount and its concluding warnings (Matthew 7:21-27).

Conclusion:

1. We live in the perilous times of the last days; men no longer preach or endure sound doctrine.
2. Righteous relationships please God; let each consider his ways and correct his relationships.
3. The doctrine of God's universal love and favor is simply the Jews' heresy taught over again.
4. Let us tremble before the word of God and correct any or all of these sins as the case may be.