

## Malachi 2:4-16 – Ungodly Marriages

After God declared his love for Jacob, God rebuked the priests for despising his name. They disregarded God's law and offered blemished and lame sacrifices. God preferred that they didn't bring any sacrifices as opposed to bringing sacrifices that showed that the priests had no fear of God. God's rebuke of the priests continued. They broke the covenant that he made with Levi. After God finished with the priests, God rebuked the people who despised God's institution of marriage by marrying foreign women and divorcing their Jewish wives.

### Read Malachi 2:4-9.

In verse 3, God said that he would rebuke the priests' offspring. He would treat the priests as the waste of the sacrifices were treated. In verse 4, what did God require the priests to preserve?

In verse 5, was God talking about Levi, the son of Jacob, or was he talking about the priests who were descendants of Levi? What was God's covenant with Levi? See Numbers 25:11-13 and Numbers 18:7-8. What did God give to Levi as part of the covenant? For the priests' part, what did God require them to do?

Based on verse 6, what was true of the model priest? In verse 7, what was required of the priests? If the priests did what God required, how would the people respond to them?

How are priests and prophets similar? How are they different? (2:7)

In verse 8, what were God's three charges against the priests?

God found the priests guilty of breaking his covenant. What was the punishment for their crimes against God? (2:9)

Sometimes people say that doctrine is not important. Why is doctrine important? What is the result of false doctrine?

**Read Malachi 2:10-16.**

This section starts out differently from the rest. Instead of starting with an assertion by God, the section starts with some questions. In verse 10, who is asking the questions? God, Malachi or the people? What are the three questions? What is the purpose of the questions?

Based on verse 11, what is God's charge against Judah?

In verse 12, what is the sentence for their crime against God?

Who are some famous Israelites, from the Old Testament, who married foreign women? What happened as a result?

What is God's assertion against Judah in verse 13?

What was the people's question in response to God's charge? How did God respond to their question? (2:14)

What is taught about marriage in verse 15? As a result of God's design for marriage, what were the people exhorted to do at the end of verse 15?

Verse 16 has two main translations that produce very different meanings. The ESV has "For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says Yahweh". NASB and many other translations have something like "For I hate divorce, says Yahweh". Which translation do you think is best? How do the different translations change the interpretation?

Compare God's teaching on marriage and divorce with our current culture's laws and beliefs on marriage and divorce.