

THE BOOK OF MALACHI

Lesson 6, Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of Malachai gets even more focused, and the accusations against the Levite Priesthood more sharply severe, than in chapter 1. There is a fine line between teaching and preaching; and I suspect that due to the nature of the material in Malachai, we'll wind up exploring both sides of that fine line today. But, one other thing emerges as well: in Malachai's day, God was destroying any hope of a middle ground that the Priesthood and the people always seemed to gravitate toward. A person either stood 100% with Yehoveh, His Prophets, and His Torah, or He saw it as unfaithfulness and rebellion. This radical stance is, and has always been, at the core of the biblical teachings. That means that despite the sometimes painful, offensive nature of God's truth versus the contrived religious doctrines, Believers are given no choice but to be all-in for the truth. So, I'll say upfront that what will be said today is going to strike some as too frank. So be it.

We'll read all of chapter 2 shortly, but I want to begin by presenting a couple of verses to give you the tone of it.

CJB Malachi 2:1-2 ***"Now, cohanim, this command is for you. ² If you won't listen, if you won't pay attention to honoring my name," says Yehoveh-Tzva'ot, "then I will send the curse on you; I will turn your blessings into curses. Yes, I will curse them, because you pay no attention.***

Then a few verses later:

CJB Malachi 2:8 ***But you turned away from the path, you caused many to fail in the Torah, you corrupted the covenant of Levi," says Yehoveh-Tzva'ot.***

The problem is that the Priesthood refused to listen to God. How were they to go about listening to Him? First, through the Torah, and second, through the Prophets God sent with divine messages to the Priests. What did the Priesthood do with the Torah? They substituted their own doctrines and failed

to teach the real Torah to the people. What did they do with those messages from the Prophets? Either they killed the Prophet, or they ignored the message, or they denied that what God told them was actually the case. The result was (according to Yehoveh) that the Priesthood, who was given the responsibility to follow the Torah especially as it pertained to the Levite religious leadership, and to teach the Torah to the Israelite people, failed to do so. They corrupted the Torah; they edited it; they instilled manmade doctrines to either replace Scripture or to so twist its meaning as to have had virtually the same effect.

This matters to us not just because we find this problem repeatedly in our Bibles, but also because we face the same issue in our day, just as we did yesterday and will tomorrow. The formation of the Constantinian Church of the 4th century did more than to corrupt the Torah: the leaders abolished it. Emperor Constantine's Bishops unashamedly denounced and renounced the biblical Hebrew faith, and created a new faith for gentiles only.

In the biblical era, right through Yeshua's time, those Jews who (like Yeshua) challenged the religious establishment of the Priesthood and the Synagogue concerning the faith institutions that ruled over the Jewish people, were called blasphemers and heretics. It should surprise no one that once the Constantinian Church was born, all who sought to belong to it but challenged some of the institution's premises and doctrines were also called blasphemers and heretics. It got so bad that by the era of the Inquisition, challenging the Church didn't just bring one a bad reputation, acquiring the label of heretic meant the death sentence. The Inquisition was not just one; it was ongoing and several and took place not over decades but centuries. The era of the Christian Inquisition spanned from the late 12th century to the 19th century, with the main period of activity concentrated between the 12th and 15th centuries. It involved various named inquisitions, including the Medieval Inquisition (1184-14th century), the Spanish Inquisition (1478-1834), and the Roman Inquisition (1542-18th century). In other words, from the 1100's A.D. through much of the 1800's A.D., Christendom was very determined to root out Jews who Believed in Yeshua but did not want to become gentiles, and to punish or execute anyone in the Church who dared to challenge any Church doctrine. The Pilgrims who came to America were but one of countless

thousands who were persecuted by the Church as heretics and blasphemers and had to escape to save their lives.

Let me make me this historic reality and living truth highly personal for you. Because of the Church's stance, what does this make you? Are you a heretic according to Christendom? If not, why not? Just as we're told by Yeshua and the Apostles that a true Believer is to be a pariah to the world... Believers as non-conformers to the world systems... how are we to view a manmade faith created in the mold of the Greco-Roman world that is meant for gentiles only, and was immediately commanded by a Roman Emperor to be the designated State Religion for the Roman Empire, of which there can be no greater representative of the world at that time than it?

I have been accused for many years of being a heretic for what I teach, which is God's Word from Genesis to Revelation as being a thoroughly Hebrew document laying out a thoroughly Hebrew faith. I used to try to defend myself until I came to a stark realization: my accusers are indeed right. I am a heretic! I am a heretic to Christendom, but not to God or to His Word. It was a most terrible and depressing discovery. I was raised in the Church. I was saved in the Church. And I can see the good it has done. But, now I can also see just how off path and counter to God's Word it actually was from its birth, with its only real fundamental truth as teaching that Yeshua of Nazareth is Lord and Savior. I have learned that just as we cannot be conformed to both God and the world (because they are, by nature, diametrically opposed), neither can we be conformed to both God and a faith institution that corrupts His Word, which denies the faith that Yeshua taught and practiced, and denies the Torah, which God gave to Moses and Yeshua said would be in force and applies to His followers until the current Heavens and Earth physically pass away only to be replaced by the new.

I know many of you wrestle with this. Many run from it, and only some towards it. It *is* hard. It *is* our nature to want there to be a middle ground... a common ground... a comfortable place between Christendom and the Hebrew faith (the faith explicitly laid out for us in the Bible), so that we can all be at peace. Yeshua had a firm answer to those who seek, and adopt, that peaceful and more comfortable middle ground:

CJB Revelation 3:15-16 ***¹⁵ "I know what you are doing: you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were either one or the other! ¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth!***

None of what I have described is new. It has happened not for centuries but for millennia. The results are always predictable and the same. So, Malachai is both a warning and a history lesson that is timeless; the warning is to not repeat the past. The message is that there is no spiritual Switzerland. You must choose to whom you will be a heretic because depending on which side you elect to stand with and give your allegiance to, the other side will always brand you as one.

Open your Bibles to Malachai chapter 2.

READ MALACHAI CHAPTER 2 all

At the end of chapter 1, there was a brief moment when Malachai included the culpability of the common folks of Israel, even though most of God's ire is towards the Priests. There is always a dual responsibility of the religious leaders and those whom they lead to obey God and follow in His ways. What we see in the more ancient times is that the leaders had, proportionately, a very high responsibility to know, teach and live out truth, compared to the common people because they had no choice but to rely on their leaders and teachers for what God's Word said. As time passed, and the Synagogue system arose a century or so before Yeshua's birth, a brand-new religious system administered by lay leaders and taught by itinerate teachers who, somehow, had obtained one book or another of the Holy Scriptures from which it was read verbatim to the congregations, then the proportionality of responsibility grew for the common folks. Today, that proportionality (while still leaning more towards leadership) now puts greater responsibility and accountability than in any prior time in history on the individual Believer because God's Word is so easily and cheaply available to all.

So, after that brief moment of making sure that the common Israelites understood that they, too, carried responsibility for their beliefs, thoughts, and

actions, it now returns in verse 1 as unambiguously directed toward the Priesthood. Verse 2 begins with the word “if”... which though a very small word, is one of the most impactful in the Bible. “If” automatically implies making a choice, and an outcome depending on that choice. The opening words in Hebrew are **im-lo** (which, most literally translated, is “if not”). Thus, “if” in this case leads to an announcement or warning of the punishments for making the wrong choice. What action, specifically, does the “if” apply to? It is whether the Priesthood will do what they already know they are to do... or they won’t. They are to honor and glorify and uphold God’s name. “Name” (**shem** in Hebrew) refers to sum total of all that a person is: their character, their reputation, their doctrine, their essential nature. This means, the teaching of the Priests must be to correctly characterize Yehoveh. That only happens when the Torah is presented to the people as given, and not watered down or distorted with human doctrines. Every new humanly devised doctrine about God only leads to distortion, because all that *can* be known about God is contained in Holy Scriptures. The mere fact that God offers us choices, followed up with an “if”, means that that choice can bring either His mercy or His wrath. Therefore, for anyone to teach that God’s essence is love and only love (which is generally the teaching of the 21st century Church) is in conflict with the biblical and Hebrew meaning of “if”.

If the Priests won’t harken, or listen, to God’s rebuke then there will be serious consequences. The Hebrew word that is translated as harken or listen is **shema**, which means to hear and to do. That is, it is like a soldier receiving an order to do thus and so. It is much less about receiving the order than carrying out the order. Thus, inherent in the word **shema** is for the Priests to accept God’s rebuke, change and apply it in their actions. It is not about changing some fuzzy notions of what right or wrong is, but rather they are to change substantively from not teaching the truth to actively teaching the truth. They are to give up adding to, subtracting from, or substituting their own doctrines and rules for God’s. I suppose I could once again pause and make application for us, but goodness, is this not transparent enough? If you are not seeking the truth, or you are not teaching the truth taken directly from the Scriptures, then you can expect God’s wrath. Yet, even that is only half the equation. The other necessary part is to *do* whatever we learn from the Scriptures, as opposed to only knowing it.

The punishment for this disobedience of not showing honor and not glorifying His name by not teaching His truth, is that God will send the curse upon the person or persons or institution (in this case, the Priesthood) who is doing it. We read about the “if” or better “if not”, *im-lo*, so now this is the “then”. It is not “a” curse but rather “the” curse (*hamme-era*). The reason it is “the” curse, and not “a” curse is that the Law of Moses has specific curses... particular maledictions...not just any curse taken from a bag of curses... each tied to the breaking of specific laws. That is, neither is the nature of the trespass nor its proper punishment subjective. It is all directly connected to the Covenant of Moses... the covenant that Israel has with God, which lists laws along with their corresponding punishments for breaking them. There is even a nuance to that, which we’ll get to regarding the Priesthood. So, this is all about God’s covenant-based relationship with Israel. In the Torah we read:

CJB Deuteronomy 28:15 ***"But if you refuse to pay attention to what Yehoveh your God says, and do not observe and obey all his mitzvot and regulations which I am giving you today, then all the following curses will be yours in abundance:***

Turning the promised blessings into curses is a basic premise of the Law. Blessings that come from obedience can be turned into curses for disobedience. When the final few words of verse 1 says: “yes, I will curse them” it means He will curse the blessings. Seems simple enough, but there is a complex understanding of how this works just beneath the surface. Biblically speaking, as concerns the Priests, it is that blessings (here) refer to the priests’ material recompense for serving the people of Israel by means of the several tasks God assigned to the Priesthood to do on Israel’s behalf. They are given housing, food, and even some money for their service, and this comes from the various offerings and portions of the altar sacrifices that the people bring to the priests at the Temple. So, the curse, then, has much to do with things like insufficient rain, pestilence, poor harvests, lack of fertility of the flocks and herds, and disease among both the people and the domestic animals. That is, if the people are suffering because the Priesthood has been lax in their duties, then the people have little to offer, so, the Priesthood also receives little. The underlying assumption is that had the Priests taught the truth, judged fairly, and performed

their tasks properly, then the people would have had a constant abundance from which to lavish the priests with offerings to the Temple. So, here we see this proportionality and relationship between the leadership and the led, played out in one aspect... how the blessings and curses of one group greatly affects the other.

At this point there was no forgone conclusion of punishment. Malachai's prophecy was not that it was too late for the Priesthood to repent... so the onslaught of consequences is yet to be set in stone. Rather, it is that ***if*** they do not accept God's reproach and change their ways, then all these bad things (the curses) will happen to them. This prophecy laid out the very real possibility of the punishment being avoided. Yet, a moment comes when the opportunity to repent and change is terminated by God... it is too late. The Priests and the people of Israel were warned before Babylon, didn't heed it, and so the Temple was destroyed and the Priesthood and the people sent off into exile. I don't know when that moment was that God's offer of forgiveness was revoked. It certainly had to be before Nebuchadnezzar's army approached Jerusalem. So, leaders of our faith... yes, especially us... pay attention. Failure to teach the people God's Word and not our opinions, and to serve the people faithfully instead of when we feel like it, and to judge the people properly and not according to our personal ideas and preferences about mercy and compassion, will indeed cause them to stumble and fall, but the same will come back upon us in an even greater measure. A biblical principle is that after the many warnings we have already received, there is no way to know exactly when God ends the opportunity to repent, and the catastrophe becomes assured. This ought to be a sufficiently terrorizing thought for us all, leaders and congregation, to do some deep soul searching, but even more importantly, to take appropriate action.

Vs. 3 is: ^{CJB} **Malachi 2:3** ***I will reject your seed; I will throw dung in your faces, the dung from your festival offerings; and you will be carted off with it.***

Here the nature of "the curses" that will be sent against the Priesthood for their laxities and failures to protect God's honor and glory, if they don't repent, are laid out. For some reason the CJB leaves out the first word of this verse, which is ***hinneh***. This word of exclamation that is usually translated as indeed or

behold is necessary to reveal the strong level of emotion behind the following words. These are severe things being said, and they are intended to cause alarm.

What is this “seed” that is being rejected? Two possibilities are present, but I think only one has any real credibility. The first is that it is talking about grain seeds such that God will not allow abundant harvests. A large number of commentators believe this is the case. The second is that it is talking about human seed... offspring. In this case the offspring of the Priests. This must be the right choice. The idea is that should God have to act against the Priesthood, it will also involve the rejection of these Priests’ offspring, meaning that they too are rebuked.

The words that come next, “I will throw dung in your faces”, is an expression and is not literal. It means that God will spiritually desecrate the priests. It is directly akin to another but different expression of desecration found in Ezekiel:

CJB Ezekiel 6:5 *I will lay the corpses of the people of Isra'el in front of their idols and scatter your bones all around your altars.*

That is, the presence of death or the presence of filth (dung) makes those objects and places and people unfit for sacred rituals. The result is that the Priests cannot fulfill their duties and thus they are publicly humiliated as they become unclean at the hand of God. The mention of the festival offerings is speaking specifically about the 3 **chag**...pilgrimage... feasts in which all Hebrew males are ordered to come to Jerusalem to sacrifice and observe those holy days (the feasts of Matza, Shavuot, and Sukkot). This is when the most people will be witness to the priests’ public humiliation. It would be like God waiting for a Pastor to lead a Christmas or Easter celebration and there they are humiliated so that the effect of it is all the greater.

The mention of the priests being “carted off with it” continues the idiomatic use of “dung”. That is, dung is carted off outside the city and thrown into a garbage pit. And, the priests, too, are envisioned as assuming the value and status of “dung” for their failures and lack of faithfulness to their duties, and so there is

nothing left to do with them but to, figuratively, be thrown into that same garbage pit alongside the dung.

What all this ultimately amounts to from a spiritual level is that the priests will be removed from the presence of God, because nothing unclean can be allowed into His presence. This brings us to an important moment that has to do with the near unanimous Christian view that is best expressed in a quote from Charles L. Feinberg in his short commentary on the Book of Malachai.

“The implication is that there will be obedience or the Levitical covenant could scarcely remain in force. By their giving heed to the declaration of judgment, God could continue His covenant, which He made with Levi in the beginning.”

In other words, if the Levites didn't repent, then the covenant with Levi becomes abolished. This “covenant with Levi” is but an allusion to that part of the Law of Moses that applied specifically to the Priesthood and the Levites. Of course, if that part of the Law of Moses is abolished, then so is it all because the remainder is dependent upon the Priesthood doing their duties. I am glad Mr. Feinberg at least uses the term “the implication” to admit that nothing in these passages overtly mentions any such thing, and nowhere in the Bible do we find his conclusion of abolishment of the covenant. For a member of Christendom, it is “implied” and by consensus must be so, because this represents the second most fundamental pillar of this gentile faith. So, that there can be no ambiguity in what I'm saying, it is that this conclusion of his is dead wrong, just as that 2nd most foundational pillar of Christendom is wrong.

A covenant is not dissolved by disobedience to its terms. Rather, covenants (like the Covenant of Moses) lay out terms and obligations for each party, and punishments for violations of its terms. Just like in civil law, when to break a law does not lead to that law or the law code it is part of being terminated, rather it merely activates the particular punishment for that particular offense. And, so it does here in Malachai with God accusing the Priests of law violations, and then pronouncing ONLY the appropriate punishments... NOT the termination of the covenant itself.

Verse 4 continues with:

CJB Malachi 2:4 *Then you will know that I sent you this command to affirm my covenant with Levi," says Yehoveh-Tzva'ot.*

This verse, depending on how you translate it, is why Christendom says that God abolished the Law of Moses. Look at how this is translated in the KJV.

KJV Malachi 2:4 *And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.*

The sense of the KJV is that if the Priesthood obeys and repents, then the covenant stays intact. Of course, suggesting that if not, then the covenant is no longer intact. The YLT version puts it this way:

YLT Malachi 2:4 *And ye have known that I have sent unto you this charge, For My covenant being with Levi, Said Jehovah of Hosts.*

There is no whiff of the covenant itself being in jeopardy in this translation that is the most word—for-word literal of all the translations. While the CJB makes this statement stronger concerning the ongoing nature of the covenant than it ought to be (turning it into an affirmation), nonetheless the result is the same. The covenant is not in jeopardy; only the status of the priests who are party to the covenant are in danger. What is being contemplated is nothing less than a rehabilitation of the Levite Priesthood, which is based on the so-called covenant of Levi. That is, God is going to enforce the terms of the covenant by turning to activating the curses contained within it because the Priesthood has so severely failed in their duties. By punishing the Priests, even going so far as to sideline them entirely, is intended to bring about compliance to the covenant in the future. Again, just like in a civil law system, the punishments for law breaking are to apply justice to the offender, and hopefully that offender or others that see what has happened to him will be deterred from committing infractions. This strengthens the covenant in the sense that it is better functioning as intended. In Malachai's day, the covenant was NOT functioning as it should because the Priesthood was not functioning as it should.

Moving on to verse 5:

CJB Malachi 2:5 *"My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave him these things. It was also one of fear, and he feared me; he was in awe of my name."*

The opening word is **beriti**. **Berith** means covenant, changing the form slightly to **beriti** makes it **my** covenant. From the ancient Hebrew perspective, there were two kinds of covenants, but both kinds established a reciprocal relationship between the covenanting parties. One kind brings certain obligations; the other kind establishes a commitment. Both kinds are conditional. The Abrahamic Covenant was the commitment kind, while the Covenant of Moses was the obligatory kind. In the Abrahamic Covenant, God committed to Abraham that he would be the first of a great and new nation, that he would have a land of his own, and that all the families of the world would be blessed by what God would bring about through Abraham. In the Mosaic Covenant, God laid down a series of obligations on Israel towards Him and among themselves as one another's neighbors, in exchange for Yehoveh being their God and Israel being His one and only people. Yet, Abraham's covenant was on the condition of Abraham separating from his father and most of his family, and then journeying to where God would take him, as well as Yehoveh being Abraham's only god. Moses's covenant was on the condition of all the people of Israel accepting its terms (which they did, and it is recorded in the Torah).

Nowhere in the Torah do we find the establishment of a separate covenant called the Covenant of Levi. So, in this verse since we're essentially speaking of a covenant within a covenant (the covenant with Levi is part and parcel with the covenant of Moses), then it helps us to grasp this better when we remember that Yehoveh elected and set-apart the tribe of Levi from all other Israelite tribes. So much so that Levi was no longer to be considered (on any earthly basis) as remaining as part of Israel. The covenant of Levi, then, is to be understood as a subset of the Covenant of Moses, and that subset applies nearly exclusively to the Levites. Not the easiest concept to grasp, but there it is.

So, when it says "My covenant with him", the "him" is the tribe of Levi, particularly the Priesthood. This covenant is said to be one of "life and peace".

In Hebrew that is **chayim** and **shalom**. Together these terms express wholeness, prosperity, good health, a purposeful existence, protection, a long and full life-span, and nothing but good prospects. And, each one of these definitions is based on God's definitions of **chayim** and **shalom**, as opposed to the wants and desires of the pagan or godless. Further, Yehoveh says "I gave him these things". That is, God is the source of true life and peace... it is available from nowhere else.

And yet, this covenant was also dependent on the fear of the Priests. **Mora** means fear in the sense of awe and reverence. Here's the thing: if someone approaches God in sincere awe and reverence, then the last thing that sincere person would do would be to give to Him offerings and sacrifices that were known to be cheap or defective. So, at first, Levi responded as they should: with fear and awe. But, now, they are corrupted and claim fear and awe but their actions prove the opposite.

Once again, I must point out that Christendom has taken this truth and twisted it. Our claim of sincere awe and reverence in God is no longer thought to be in need of tangible proof. What we actually do, is separated from what we claim. Nowhere in the Bible are claiming and actions de-linked. Rather, in more modern times, our actions become suspicious if they appear to be following any written laws and commands. The rationale for this is that since we are saved by Grace, then we now have this private relationship with the Holy Spirit who tells us what is right and wrong for us, and each individually. Thus, no one is allowed to judge us by what we do. In fact, to even attempt to obey God's laws and commands is tantamount to trying to earn our salvation.

I cannot say that either the Levites or the Israelite people thought in such a way (in fact, I'm confident they didn't), but the point is God tells us how to demonstrate sincerity and authentic worship of Him, and it is by DOING what He has commanded in His Word. Not subjectively, but objectively. This is what Yehoveh was demanding of the Priests. They were to scrupulously follow that part of the Law of Moses that was designed specifically to address their duties, and they were to teach the Torah to the people of Israel so that they knew their duties and obligations before God.

Verse 6 continues with:

CJB Malachi 2:6 *The true Torah was in his mouth, and no dishonesty was found on his lips; he walked with me in peace and uprightness and turned many away from sin.*

What a difference a translation can make. The CJB has it correct. The adjective “true” modifies the word “Torah”. So, this is “true Torah” meaning it is possible to teach a false Torah. And what else is that but false doctrines? It is interesting how other translations treat this verse.

KJV Malachi 2:6 *The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.*

This issue is quite simple. While in a number of the most widely distributed English Bible translations we will find the opening words “the law of truth”, that is not what the Hebrew says. It says **torat emet**.... literally, “true Torah”. Most English translations opt to change the word Torah to law, which is incorrect. Thus, something called “a Law of Truth” emerges as a doctrine, as though God had created a new law concerning truth. True Torah is the proper sense. Next, the phrase “In his mouth” is referring to Levi’s mouth meaning what comes out it. The thought is that what comes out of the mouth reveals what is buried deep within us, but is not hidden from God.

Saying that “iniquity was not found on his lips” refers to the speech, itself... the words. That is, they were **not** deviating from God’s written word nor encouraging people to follow manmade doctrines. To “walk with me in peace” means to follow God. Biblically, to “walk” with God describes a close relationship with Him, and theologically it also means to be obedient to God in the sense of a covenant relationship. All this was Levi’s former, and intended, state.

The attributes of Levi’s former state continue with them following God in **shalom**, meaning to have peace with God. Peace with God manifests itself in the sense of a right fellowship. Levi also walked with God in **misor**. I think using the word “equity” to translate **misor** is weak. It actually comes closer to the

English meaning of “fairness” and is not far away from being synonymous with ***tzedek***, meaning righteousness. In fact, we occasionally find those two words ***misor*** and ***tzedek*** used together in the Old Testament to speak of the highly valued virtue of being fair in one’s dealings with fellow humans, while also being righteous before God. And, as the final stanza of this verse says, the result of the Priests behaving in such a faithful way led to turning the people away from lies and deceit. In fact, this was the job of the Priesthood to produce just such an outcome.

Bringing this into modern times, the jobs, and therefore the common goal, of Pastors, Rabbis and Bible Teachers ought to be to produce sound, faithful biblical truth to present to their audience in order to turn sinners away from what comes naturally to us all: sin. So, while part of the Priests’ jobs was to properly observe and perform the rituals required by the Torah, the other part was to impart God’s will and Word to the people. This is something they can’t do if they don’t know it. And they can’t know it if they don’t seek God’s Word. Many years ago, I was startled to learn that in most Christian seminaries of almost every denomination, the Bible was nearly an afterthought. This is not new. A close and dear departed friend of mine was a well-known Pastor, Teacher and radio personality. He went to seminary in the early 1940’s. He informed me that the total amount of Bible taught was one semester of Old Testament survey to go with one semester of New Testament survey. It is still generally that way today. Any further knowledge of God’s Word for Pastors (and only a relative few ever pursue this additional knowledge) takes place in Theological Schools for advanced degrees. How can we expect a typically trained Pastor to properly teach God’s Word when the amount of Bible knowledge he has is less than what a lay person will receive at a good Bible college? His tool box for preaching contains only doctrines and apologetics for his denomination’s beliefs.

The priests of Malachai’s era weren’t something much different from the 2 or 3 previous generations of priests that returned from Babylon. What they knew of the Torah was what they had learned from those recent generations, and so more and more it became a matter of doctrine and tradition over Scripture. Yet, they didn’t realize it. The same thing has happened not over a few generations, but over centuries in Christendom. Those in the modern era who aren’t accurately preaching what the Bible teaches, honestly think what they are

saying is the truth. And yet, when confronted with the facts of God's written Word that say otherwise, just like the priests in our Malachai episode they usually react in firm denial. Let us pray that we are, or become, moldable and teachable enough to humble ourselves and respond to God's **true** Word with submissiveness and not denial. We'll continue in chapter 2 next time.