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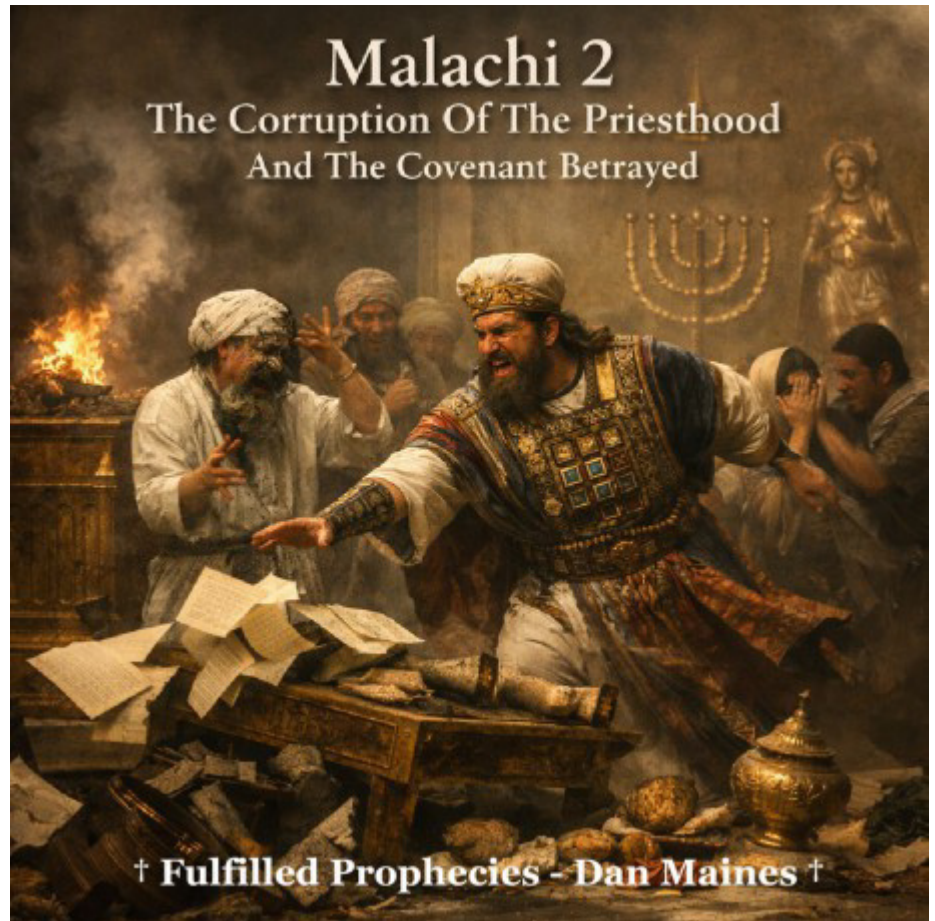
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Malachi 2 The Corruption Of The Priesthood And The Covenant Betrayed



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Malachi 2 continues the rebuke that began in chapter 1, but now it targets the priests directly, those who were supposed to guard the covenant and teach the people truth.

† The problem isn't just bad leadership, it's covenant unfaithfulness that has spread from the priests to the people.

† From the fulfilled perspective, this shows why judgment was necessary in that generation, the covenant had been corrupted from the inside.

Malachi 2:1-2

And now this commandment is for you, you priests. If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name, says the Lord of armies, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have already cursed them, because you are not taking it to heart.

† God is addressing the priests directly because they were responsible for honoring His name, but they refused to take it seriously (Malachi 2:1-2).

† Their blessings were being turned into curses, showing that covenant privilege without obedience brings judgment, not favor (Deuteronomy 28:15).

† This connects directly to Jesus rebuking the religious leaders in His day, because they continued this same pattern of corruption (Matthew 23:13).

Malachi 2:3

Behold, I am going to rebuke your descendants, and I will spread dung on your faces, the dung of your feasts; and you will be taken away with it.

† This is strong language showing complete rejection of their false worship, God is exposing their offerings as defiled (Malachi 2:3).

† The imagery of dung shows that what they thought was holy had become unclean in God's sight.

† Jesus echoed this when He declared the temple desolate, showing that their system had become corrupt beyond repair (Matthew 23:38).

Malachi 2:4-5

Then you will know that I have sent this commandment to you, so that My covenant may continue with Levi, says the Lord of armies. My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him as an object of reverence; so he revered Me and stood in awe of My name.

† God reminds them of the original covenant with Levi, which was based on life, peace, and reverence (Malachi 2:4-5).

† The priesthood was meant to reflect fear of God and faithfulness, not corruption.

† This shows how far they had fallen, they no longer stood in awe of God's name.

Malachi 2:6-7

True instruction was in his mouth and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many back from wrongdoing. For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of armies.

† The true role of a priest was to teach truth and turn people away from sin (Malachi 2:6-7).

† They were supposed to be messengers of God, not distorters of His law.

† By the first century, the leaders had become the opposite, leading people into hypocrisy instead of truth (Matthew 15:6-9).

Malachi 2:8-9

But as for you, you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by the instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of armies. So I also have made you despised and insignificant in the sight of all the people, just as you are not keeping My ways but are showing partiality in the instruction.

† The priests caused many to stumble, showing that false teaching has consequences for others, not just the teacher (Malachi 2:8).

† They showed partiality, twisting the law for personal gain.

† This is exactly what Jesus condemned when He exposed their hypocrisy and favoritism (James 2:1).

Malachi 2:10

Do we not all have one Father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously, each against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

† The people were betraying one another, showing that covenant unfaithfulness leads to relational breakdown (Malachi 2:10).

† When the covenant is ignored, unity is destroyed.

† This reflects the condition of Israel leading up to AD 70, division, corruption, and internal betrayal.

Malachi 2:11-12

Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord which He loves and has married the daughter of a foreign god. As for the man who does this, may the Lord eliminate him from the tents of Jacob, whoever he may

be, even though he presents an offering to the Lord of armies.

† They were mixing with pagan worship, corrupting the holiness God had set apart (Malachi 2:11).

† This wasn't just about marriage, it was about spiritual compromise and idolatry.

† God promises removal, showing that judgment would come upon those who continued in this corruption.

Malachi 2:13-14

And this is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. Yet you say, For what reason? Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

† Their worship was rejected because their lives were unfaithful (Malachi 2:13-14).

† God connects covenant faithfulness in marriage with faithfulness to Him.

† This shows that outward religion without inward obedience is worthless.

Malachi 2:15-16

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 do not let anyone deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel, and him who covers his garment with violence, says the Lord of armies. So take heed to

your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.

† God desired faithfulness and a godly lineage, but they were acting treacherously (Malachi 2:15).

† Divorce here represents covenant breaking, not just relational failure.

† This again ties to the larger covenant unfaithfulness of Israel.

Malachi 2:17

You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, How have we wearied Him? In that you say, Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delights in them, or, Where is the God of justice?

† They were calling evil good, completely reversing truth (Malachi 2:17).

† This shows how far their thinking had drifted from God's standard.

† This sets the stage for the coming judgment, where God would demonstrate His justice.

Historical References

† Flavius Josephus describes the corruption of the priesthood leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem, showing that the issues in Malachi continued into the first century.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls community also condemned the priesthood for corruption and false teaching, confirming this historical pattern.

† Jesus Christ Himself rebuked the priests and leaders as hypocrites, showing continuity between Malachi's audience and

His generation (Matthew 23).

How It Applies To Us Today

† God still cares about truth being taught accurately, we can't twist His word to fit our desires.

† Faithfulness matters, whether in leadership, relationships, or daily living, God sees it all.

† Outward worship means nothing if our lives contradict it, integrity matters.

† We need to guard against calling evil good, truth doesn't change just because culture does.

† Covenant faithfulness is still central, not in the old system, but in our relationship with Christ.

Q & A Appendix

Q Why was God so harsh toward the priests?

A Because they were responsible for teaching truth and leading the people, and they caused many to stumble (Malachi 2:8, James 3:1).

Q What does it mean that their blessings were cursed?

A It means their covenant privileges were turned into judgment because of disobedience (Malachi 2:2, Deuteronomy 28:15).

Q Why does God connect marriage to covenant faithfulness?

A Because marriage reflects covenant commitment, and breaking it shows a deeper spiritual unfaithfulness (Malachi 2:14-16, Ephesians 5:31-32).

Q What does it mean to call evil good?

A It means redefining sin as acceptable, which God condemns

(Malachi 2:17, Isaiah 5:20).

Q How does this connect to the first century?

A The same corruption continued into Jesus' time, leading to judgment on that generation (Matthew 23:36-38, Luke 21:22).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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† Malachi 2

† Flavius Josephus; Dead Sea Scrolls community

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