

WEEK 2 | *MALACHI 2:1-16*  
UNFAITHFUL  
PRIESTS & HUSBANDS

The case: God vs. Israel continues. As we make our way to chapter two, Israel's character is once again put on trial. However, the trial takes a very personal turn – Israel's faithfulness and family life are put under the microscope.



## **ALLEGATION 2: "UNFAITHFUL PRIESTS"**

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The second allegation God presents is directed against the priests of Israel. The priesthood were meant to be the guardians of God's promises with his people, facilitating the people's relationship with God, ensuring they remained faithful to God. And yet we'll see that's far from reality.

*Read Malachi 2:1-9*

1. What consequences will God mete out to the priests for not honouring him?
2. What did God give to his people when the priesthood (under Levi) was functioning to preserve God's honour? (v5)
3. What should the priests of Israel have been doing?
4. What has been happening instead?

One of the roles of the priest was to instruct Israel in how to live for God. But they're struggling to do the very things they were supposed to teach others, and worse, causing God's people to be unfaithful. In return for disgracing their God, God will disgrace the priests.

## **ALLEGATION 3: "UNFAITHFUL HUSBANDS"**

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Unfaithfulness is rampant in Israel, not only infecting the priesthood, but every other relationship too. God's third allegation is directed specifically against Israel's unfaithfulness in their family life.

*Read Malachi 2:10-16*

“Judah” is Malachi’s shorthand for the remaining two tribes of Israel after the 10 northern tribes were destroyed in 720 BC.

5. List the allegations being brought against Judah?
  
6. Which parties are being injured by the Israelites’ unfaithfulness?
  
7. What evidence does God present?
  
8. Read Deuteronomy 7:1-6 (sidebar). Why was it ‘unfaithful’ for Judah to marry women from outside the nation of Israel?
  
9. From Malachi 2:15, what is one of the purposes of marriage?
  
10. How has Judah failed in this?

*Do Not Intermarry*

When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you ... do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

**Deuteronomy 7:1-6**

It’s damning evidence. Just like their religious life, Israel’s family life is rife with unfaithfulness. The men don’t even try to appear faithful to their wives, women whom God made and loves. Worse, they’re marrying foreign women who are leading them to worship other gods—directly disobeying God—and they don’t even seem to be showing any sign of remorse. The evidence is undeniable, the nation of Israel has been unfaithful; unfaithful in their marriages and ultimately unfaithful to God. The two are undeniably linked.



## FOLLOW THE STORY

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Despite the warnings, the nation of Israel would continue in their unfaithfulness to God and to each other. God would soon bring his verdict of judgment on a guilty Israel (more on that next week). But in the midst of a faithless nation, God remains faithful. 400 years later, God sent his Son, Jesus, as the great High Priest who faithfully served God. He offered his own life as a perfect sacrifice, once for all, for the unfaithfulness of not only the nation of Israel, but for all people (Heb 7-10).

Jesus's faithfulness doesn't just extend to his priestly role, but also as a husband. Read *A Faithful Husband* to see how Jesus demonstrates this faithfulness, by offering up his life for the sake of his wife—the church.

1. Given that Jesus has shown us what faithfulness looks like, how should that affect our own marriage relationships?
2. If you're a husband, or hope to be one day, how will your husbanding be different to that of Israel's men?
3. If 'not breaking faith' is to be a characteristic of our Christian lives and our married lives, how will Christian marriages look different in our surrounding culture?
4. What will faithfulness in our other relationships look like?

### *A Faithful Husband*

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.

**Ephesians 5:25-29**