

Covenantal context

References to covenant in the book of Malachi:

- i. the Levitical covenant (Mal 2:4, 8),
- ii. the covenant of our fathers (Mal 2:10)
- iii. the marriage covenant (Mal 2:14)

The real issue is the **covenantal relationship between Israel and God**.

Kingdom context

God's universal kingship is to be recognized & acknowledged (1:5, 11, 14)

- i. His rule is over all ("Lord of armies")
- ii. His judgment and blessings apply beyond Israel (Mal 3, 4)
- iii. His name is feared among nations (1:14; cf 3:16, 4:2)

The message of Malachi is not confined to Israel and God's covenant people; **timeless and universal**.

Circumstantial setting

- Back from exile and in the land of Canaan for about 100 years.
- Prophecy: God's blessings would be given to the people in days to come, especially in "the day of the LORD."
- Decades had passed, the promises remained unrealised → disappointed, disillusionment, discouragement
- Faith eroding → daily lives bore evidence to that state.
- Hypercritical of God's ways

Malachi 2:1-9

Failure to honour God

- The priests were singled out
- A commandment was given
- The imperative: **Give honour to God**



Consequence of that failure

- Consequence: **the cursed**
 - Opposite – blessing
 - Priestly blessing – unique privilege to handle holy items
 - Curse – disqualification from temple tasks; loss of that unique privilege
 - Severe
 - affects generations
 - imagery of "dung" → breach of purity

The curse thus has devastating *implications*

- The priestly ministry is now unfit for ministry
- The entire worship system of Israel collapses

The purpose of a sever rebuke: *Restoration*

- Restorative purpose—that the priestly covenant may continue.
 1. covenant with the Levites (Jeremiah 33:19-22)
 2. “covenant of peace” and the “covenant of an everlasting priesthood” made with Phinehas (Numbers 25:10-13)

Evidence of Phinehas’s loyal compliance to the covenant:

- True instruction was in his mouth
 - Injustice was not found on his lips
 - Walked with Me in peace and justice
 - Turned many back from wrongdoing
- Central principle of the priests:
 - Priests should maintain knowledge
 - People should be able to seek knowledge from them



The temple **rituals become meaningless** and the **Law irrelevant** unless the people know and understand the God they worship!

- Judgment made of the priests (v.8,9)
- Punishment (v.9)

God is faithful to the covenant He made with Levi – He will ensure it continues

Conclusion

What does it mean then to honour God?

- Honour – to give highest regard

What does it mean to be disqualified from ministry?

- We all fail to truly honour God all the time

In *Jesus Christ*, our sins are forgiven that we may serve God.

- The New Covenant that is in the Lord Jesus Christ is an everlasting covenant and a more effective covenant than any of the old.
 - The curse that was meant for us was borne by Christ.
 - We serve God not only in the present but for eternity