

Recap of 9/4/16 (Malachi 2:15):

1. The NIV Bible Handbook summarizes Malachi 2:10-16 this way: “In the first place, Israelite men are marrying foreign women. By doing so they are introducing people with alien religious beliefs into Israel. To marry a foreign woman is to import her gods into the land of the Lord. Nehemiah had vigorously opposed this practice (Ne. 13:23-29), and enforced a strict policy that prohibited such intermarriage. In the second place, Israelite men are divorcing their wives, despite the solemn covenant of commitment that undergirds the marriage. Indeed, it is possible that these two issues are related: perhaps Israelite men are divorcing their Israelite wives in order to marry foreign women instead.”
2. Above all Mal. 2:13-16 is an affirmation of God’s original intention for marriage and a warning about prematurely ending it; not treating marriage with the seriousness it deserves.
3. Mal. 2:15 is the most difficult verse in the book when it comes to its proper translation and interpretation. Of the possibilities, two stand out: Malachi has reference to the one nation as God’s covenant nation, as such they should be faithful to each other (in the marriage covenant) as God has been faithful to them in the Abrahamic covenant. Alternately, Malachi could be referencing the “one flesh” relationship of marriage as God’s original intention (Genesis 2:24). In marriage, God had made them one flesh, by divorcing they were violating this “one flesh” relationship (a joining not just physically, but “totally united in life, purpose and pleasure,” a complete physical, spiritual and emotional union).
4. “In effect v. 15 says that God made monogamous marriage and intends unions to last. Apparently the Israelites not were marrying foreign women but were also divorcing their Israelite wives in the process. So they were guilty of two sins—divorce and intermarriage with foreigners.” (Robert Alden)