

# Malachi 2:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.

## Analysis

**My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.** God describes the original covenant with Levi: **of life and peace** (הַחִיּוֹת וַהֲשִׁלֹּוֹת) hahayyim vehashalom). **life** (hayyim, life) and **peace/wholeness** (shalom, shalom, peace/wholeness) characterized the covenant blessings. **I gave them to him** (נתַתִּי לוֹ, natatti lo)—God initiated and bestowed these gifts. The purpose: **for the fear wherewith he feared me** (מֹרָא, mora vayyira'eni). **fear/reverence** (mora, fear/reverence) describes proper covenant response. The original Levites feared God, showing reverent awe. **Was afraid before my name** (נִתְחַטֵּת הָאָהָן, nithat ha'an), and **mifenei shemi niyat hu** (niyat) means terrified, shattered, broken in reverent awe.

This contrasts sharply with the current priests who despise God's name (1:6). Where original Levites feared God, current priests treat Him with contempt. The covenant hasn't changed—the priests have.

## Historical Context

Phinehas received God's covenant of peace (Numbers 25:12-13) for his zealous defense of God's honor when Israel sinned at Baal-peor. His reverent fear of God's name contrasted with Israel's apostasy. Similarly, the tribe of Levi stood with Moses after the golden calf incident, executing judgment on idolaters (Exodus 32:25-29). This zealous reverence earned them priestly privileges. Yet by Malachi's

time, their descendants had abandoned that reverence. This pattern warns every generation: inherited covenant position doesn't guarantee personal faithfulness. Each generation must cultivate genuine fear of God.

## Related Passages

## **Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith**

## **John 3:16 — God's love and salvation**

## Study Questions

1. What does 'fear of the LORD' mean, and how does it differ from mere terror?
2. How do the original Levites' reverence contrast with the current priests' contempt?
3. What does covenant faithfulness require beyond inherited position or external ritual?

## Interlinear Text

נִמְתַּח שְׁמִי וְמִפְנֵי יְרָא נִי מִזְרָח אָמָר

הוּא:

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezekiel 37:26** (Covenant): Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

**Ezekiel 34:25** (Covenant): And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

**Numbers 8:15** (Parallel theme): And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering.

**Numbers 3:45** (Parallel theme): Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD.

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