

Message #5

Malachi 2:10-17

When Malachi was written, the Temple was up and in full operation. The religious system was in full swing. The Jewish people had been back in the city for 70-80 years. People were traveling to Jerusalem and going to worship services. Jewish religion was bustling. But it was all a sham. It was religious ritual and God held the priests, the leaders and the people responsible and accountable for what they were doing and not doing. He raised up Malachi as His messenger to address the problem.

So far, God has come up with a list of charges against them:

- 1) They were questioning God's love. **1:2**
- 2) They did not honor God. **1:6**
- 3) They did not respect God. **1:6**
- 4) They despised the name of God. **1:6**
- 5) They gave defiled offerings to God. **1:7-8**
- 6) They did not realize the worship meant nothing and should be shut down. **1:10**
- 7) They were weary of giving God worship and offerings. **1:13**
- 8) They gave God blemished offerings they didn't want. **1:14**
- 9) They did not reverence God. **2:5**
- 10) They did not stand in awe of God. **2:5**
- 11) They did not want true Biblical instruction. **2:6-7**
- 12) They did not respond to true Biblical instruction. **2:8**
- 13) They corrupted the priestly covenant by not pointing the people in true ways of God. **2:8**

They didn't walk with God. What was happening was a religious formalism that was not based on a serious commitment to God and His word. These leaders were following a bunch of religious rituals. God is blasting them for their religious charades. Their hearts were not right with Him and God is proving that. He adds more to the list in this next section.

GOD'S PRIESTS AND PEOPLE ARE WARNED THAT IF THEY DO NOT TAKE TO HEART THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OBEYING GOD'S WORD AND IF THEY PERSIST IN DOING TREACHEROUS AND PROFANE THINGS, GOD WILL CURSE THEM AND NOT BLESS THEM.

The message given here goes beyond just the priests to the people, although the priests are certainly included.

God can actually get to the place where He despises His own people and the priests and leaders can lead them to that happening. So far, God has given a list of 13 things these people were doing and not doing that caused Him to stop blessing His people.

In this section there is an additional list of more things that the priests and people were doing that God considered to be treacherous acts of treason. These things were an abomination to God and He hated them and was repulsed by them:

Treacherous Act #1 - They were dealing treacherously with their Jewish brothers. **2:10-11a**

The pronouns “we” and “us” seem to have in mind specifically all Israel and all Jewish people. Israel was located in the north and Judah was located in the south and all Israel was in a covenant relationship with God. There is One God who is the Father of all.

This concept of God the Father is a concept used by prophets to refer to the special relationship Israel has with God and the special connection the nation has to Abraham and the covenant that brought them out of Egypt (Ex. 4:22-23; Is. 44:1-2; 63:16; Hos. 11:1; John 8:41).

In the New Testament, the sons of God, who can call God their Father, are believers in Jesus Christ (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:26-4:7; Eph. 1:5; Heb. 2:10-12; I John 3:1).

The difference between believers in the O.T. versus believers in the N.T. is this: **We, who are believers today, are sons of God by spiritual adoption, not by physical Jewish pedigree.** Our son-ship comes from our relationship with Jesus Christ. Israel is a unique nation with a unique relationship with God, because of her physical lineage.

What was apparently happening is there was mistreatment of covenant members of the family of God. We know from Malachi 2:9 that there were cases of partiality being shown in instruction and application of the word of God.

According to **verse 11**, Judah from the south was not dealing right with Israel in the north and vice versa. Apparently, when some of the Jewish people from the north came to the Temple, those in Judah were treating them with contempt or treating them treacherously.

The word “treacherously” (bagad) is a word that means to treat and afflict someone in a fraudulent, oppressive way (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 101-102). People were going to worship and there were people taking advantage of the people going to worship.

Malachi wanted all to know that God was the father of all in the nation Israel, both Israel and Judah. That certainly should be motivation for treating each other with respect and not treacherously.

Treacherous Act #2 - They were profaning God’s sanctuary. **2:11b**

God’s people were profaning God’s sanctuary, which He loved. That word “profane” (halal) means to wound the sanctuary, to so pierce it and destroy it to the point that God does not consider it to be holy (*Ibid.*, p. 281).

The people were going to this place of worship and were taking their offerings and they were very religious, and God viewed this thing as a phony, worthless, empty building. There were bad things happening at the sanctuary in the mind and sight of God. The place was corrupt. There was no honesty or integrity.

Just because a church is physically beautiful and people flock to the church every Sunday and take offerings does not automatically mean this pleases God and will have His blessings.

Treacherous Act #3 - They were marrying the daughter of a foreign god. **2:11c-12**

The daughter of a foreign god refers to women who were not committed to God and His word. They were outside the faith. They were women dedicated to false religion. What was actually taking place here was Jewish men were going to this Temple and marrying women who were worshipping and dedicated to false foreign gods.

The description of what was happening is given in Ezra 9:13-14.

“After all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and our great guilt, since You our God have requited us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us an escaped remnant as this, shall we again break your commandments and intermarry with the peoples who commit these abominations? Would you not be angry with us to the point of destruction until there is no remnant nor any who escape?”

Some of these people were blatantly disobeying God and marrying those who worshipped a false god. God says any man who does this will be cut off by Me.

The idea of being cut off from God can mean many things:

- 1) Being childless until one dies.
- 2) Early death at early age.
- 3) Complete termination of one's lineage and family.
- 4) Loss of eternity with God.
- 5) Human execution.

Now the N.T. application is obvious. It does not please God when one of His children is unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. That is not a formula for the blessings of God.

Treacherous Act #4 - They were emotionally bringing unacceptable offerings to the altar. **2:13**

They would come to the worship services all emotional and weeping as if that changes anything. God says I am fed up with that emotional stuff. These people were not interested in developing a sound mind that is based on careful understanding of God's word.

When they went to worship they were emotional. They would weep and cry and mourn and carry on and God says that means nothing. He says I no longer accept your emotional nonsense.

There are people who go to services and walk aisles and cry before an entire congregation as if it means something to God. God looks at the heart.

Treacherous Act #5 - They were divorcing their Jewish wives to marry foreign wives. **2:14-16**

This was a clear violation of the word of God and law of God. These people were divorcing their wives and marrying women who were worshipping false gods (Ezra 9:10-14; 10:18).

Just imagine this. They were going to the Temple and divorcing their Jewish wives and marrying women who worshipped a foreign god. Then they were going to worship as if God thought it was great. God says I hate that and I will not bless you for that.

Now when it comes to the subject of divorce, we want to be as tender and as tough as God's word is. It is clear that marriage is from God. This is not a passage that covers all the Biblical details on the subject of marriage and divorce and remarriage.

I say that because many quickly come to this text to say God hates divorce, which He does. But they don't work their way through the other 17 things that He has already mentioned in this book. Furthermore, they don't consider all the things in the word of God that God hates.

There are those ministers who look at these words "God hates divorce" and take the position that no matter what is happening in a relationship, there should never be a divorce. God's word does not teach that. Certainly no divorce is the ideal, but there are things that happen in real life that don't hit the ideal.

We specifically know of two clearly stated things in which a divorce is a Biblical possibility and, based on other Biblical principles, we conclude principally there are at least four things:

- 1) Adultery - Matt. 19:9
- 2) Abandonment - I Cor. 7:15
- 3) Abuse - Matt. 18:6; Luke 17:2 - if a child were abused, a parent must protect the child
- 4) Addiction - I Cor. 5:11; 15:33; II Thess. 3:6; Prov. 13:20

God hates divorce and all the things that caused it. In any divorce someone has a hard heart against God and His word. God divorced Himself from Israel (Jeremiah 3:1, 8) and He hated having to do it. But she was so vile and evil that He could not put up with her anymore. So presently He is divorced from Israel and has remarried a new bride, the Church.

Now what was happening here in Malachi is that these men were divorcing their godly Jewish wives to marry godless, heathen women who were non-Israelite and who worshipped foreign gods.

They were going to the Temple thinking this is just fine, and God says I hate that.

Treacherous Act #6 - They were doing evil and saying it was good. **2:17**

These people were actually saying that God delighted in people who were doing evil. They were calling good evil and evil good.

The reason why God has this book of Malachi in existence is because He is trying to get the people back on track. They had been guilty of the 19 things He has already mentioned in this book.

What God wanted was for them to make a decision to do what was right. They could not do too much about the past failures, but they could start obeying God's word in the present situation.