

God's Covenant Disregarded

Malachi 2:10-16

January 10th, 2021

1. First charge: ***Communal*** betrayal and its judgment (2:10-12)
 - a. Judah has dealt treacherously (betrayed) each other, each against his brother
 - i. What great reason for unity is given in v 10?***
 1. They have great reason for covenant unity.
 2. They all have one Father (God) and were created by Him
 - ii. How have they betrayed each other?***
 1. Marrying women who aren't followers of the God of Israel.
 - iii. How is that a betrayal against each other though?***
 - b. These marriages were forbidden not because of xenophobia or racism but because of the different spiritual commitments and the tendency for that to lead the people away from the Lord.
 - i. Deut. 7:3-4 ³ "Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. ⁴ "For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.
 - ii. Ruth was an exception that helps understand this. She was a Moabite but clung to the God of Israel, so we see it isn't an issue of national borders or race but devotion to the Lord or not.
 - iii. A spouse with a different God has a different spiritual father.
 - iv. Expository Commentary: The phrase further binds the covenant community together: under one divine father, generations of Israelites have been keeping covenant with God. Thus mixed marriages damage the community's relationship not only with its God and its present members but also with its past. Spiritually faithless marriages have far-reaching consequences that Malachi's audience had probably not considered.
 - c. Using "we" doesn't mean that Malachi is personally guilty, but he is a member of the community and views this as a community issue.
 - i. See Ezra 9:1-4
 - d. In judgment, the person who does this will be cut off (v. 12)
 - i. "everyone who wakes and answers" is probably a merism, a figure of speech expressing totality using contrasting parts – like "working night and day") to show the broadness of this – every last man who does this will be cut off in judgment by the Lord, even if they try to proceed with offerings.
 - ii. We've already seen that they were tainting the sacrificial system by offering inferior items (ch 1). Now they are further tainting it by making offerings in spite of persistent, clear, unrepentant sin.
2. Second charge: Useless ***grief*** (2:13)
 - a. ***Why does he confront them on their weeping and groaning?***
 - i. Apparently insincere –

- ii. They thought their pious weeping would fix the problem but God is saying, you know the problem! It must be repented of not merely wept over.

b. ***Why are tears alone insufficient for repentance?***

- i. Article – The Unrepenting Repenter, point 2 – experiencing the emotion of repentance without the effect of it.

3. Question and answer: Betrayal of **wives** (2:14)

a. Here is where our pattern of accusation, question, explanation comes in

b. For what reason? When have we done this?

i. ***How does the charge change slightly?***

- 1. Moves from spiritually mixed marriages to divorce
- 2. Could be that believing wives were abandoned for unbelieving, foreign wives, but that isn't clear. It's just another aspect of them not taking the covenant of marriage seriously – either with whom they marry or with whom they stay married.

ii. ***What terms or phrases are used to describe the wife here? Why?***

- 1. Wife of your youth, your companion, your wife by covenant

iii. Furthermore, the Lord was a witness of this covenant.

4. Application: God's intentions for **marriage** and a final warning (2:15-16)

a. V. 15 is a little confusing in the Hebrew and is translated differently with different versions:

- i. ^{NAU} **Malachi 2:15** "But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did *that* one *do* while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth.
- ii. ^{CSB17} **Malachi 2:15** Didn't God make them one and give them a portion of spirit? What is the one seeking? Godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, so that no one acts treacherously against the wife of his youth.
- iii. ^{ESV} **Malachi 2:15** Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.
- iv. ^{NIV} **Malachi 2:15** Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

b. I think the Expository commentary explains this well:

- i. Although the first clause might be saying that no one with a portion of God's spirit (or understanding) would act in this way regarding marriage, the ESV correctly interprets God as the subject of each clause: just as God's people as a whole are bound together by their one God and Father, so God makes a human couple one and seals their unity by giving a portion of his Spirit to "it," i.e., their oneness in marriage. God's intention is godly seed, a new generation of covenant believers. Marriage is defined by the one God in covenant with his (ideally) unified people, who (ideally) produce many offspring who continue in the spiritually unified covenant community. Divorce betrays this.

c. Verse 16 also confusing – does God hate divorce or is the person who divorces his wife acting hatefully toward her? Both are true, both show the seriousness of divorce.

- i. The Hebrew is “quite clipped” as one commentary put it, so we need to supply some words when translating so there are judgment calls made.
- ii. The ESV translate it as the one who does this “covers his garment with violence,” NASB says “covers his garment with wrong” although the term for “wrong” is translated as “violence” the majority of the time in the NASB
- iii. ***Why do you think violence is used of this offence?***