

## Malachi – Giving God Your Best #4 “Covenant Breakers!” Malachi 2:10-16

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God relates to us through the medium of covenant. Malachi was a prophet under the Old Covenant. When Israel adhered to the parameters of the covenant, they positioned themselves to receive all the covenant blessings. However, in Malachi's day this wasn't happening. They were breaking the covenant, profaning the covenant, being unfaithful to the covenant thereby positioning themselves to receive the covenant curses. Malachi challenged them to repent and be covenant keepers, rather than covenant breakers. Today's teaching will expose several areas in which God's people were covenant breakers, which will challenge us to look at our covenant faithfulness.

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### #1. COVENANT BREAKING OCCURS BY MISTREATING ONE ANOTHER, v. 10

- A. God is the spiritual Father of His chosen people, 1:6
- B. God is the Creator of His chosen people, Ex 4:22-23
- C. God initiated the covenant with the patriarchs, Ex 19:5-6
- D. God's people were profaning the covenant
- E. God people were breaking faith with one another

### #2. COVENANT BREAKING OCCURS BY SELECTING UNBELIEVING MARRIAGE PARTNERS, vv. 11-12

- A. This resulted in blending other religions into Judah's worship experience, vv. 11-12
- B. This is breaking faith with God, v. 11
- C. This is detestable (an abomination), v. 11
- D. This is a desecration of the sanctuary, v. 11
- E. This happened several times in their history, Ezra 9:2-6, Neh 10:30, 13:23-29, 2 Cor 6:15-16
- F. The example of King Solomon, 1 Kings 11:1-11
- G. The man who does this should be cut off, v. 12
- H. The offerings he brings are rejected, v. 12

### #3. COVENANT BREAKING OCCURS BY FRIVOLOUS DIVORCE, vv. 13-16

- A. They unsuccessfully try to placate God, v. 13
- B. The men were divorcing their wives for unacceptable reasons, v. 14
- C. They were remarrying women who worshiped other gods, v. 14
- D. The Lord is witness of a marriage, v. 14
- E. They were violating the marriage covenant, v. 14
- F. The Lord made them one (flesh), v. 15 (Gen 2:24, Eph 5:22-33)
- G. The Lord's purpose for the family is producing godly offspring, v. 15 (Deu 4:9-10, 6:6-7)
- H. Guard yourself in spirit, don't break faith, vv. 15-16
- I. God hates divorce, v. 16
- J. God hates a man covering himself with violence, v. 16

### #4. WHY WAS THERE A PROVISION FOR DIVORCE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- A. Divorce was permitted if a man found something indecent (*ervah*) in his wife, Deu 24:1-5
- B. The view of divorce in Jesus day, Mat 19:3-9
  - 1. Rabbi Shammai: understood "indecent" to mean adultery as the only grounds for divorce.
  - 2. Rabbi Hillel: understood "indecent" to mean anything the husband doesn't like about his wife's behavior.
- C. Jesus advocated Rabbi Shammai's view, Mat 19:9
- D. Jesus identified the problem that leads to marital breakups as hardness of heart, Mat 19:8

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### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE Malachi 2:10-16

Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another? <sup>11</sup>Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god. <sup>12</sup>As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD cut him off from the tents

of Jacob--even though he brings offerings to the LORD Almighty.

<sup>13</sup>Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. <sup>14</sup>You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. <sup>15</sup>Has not *the LORD* made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. <sup>16</sup>"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.

**Genesis 2:24-25:** For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

**Deuteronomy 24:1-4:** If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, <sup>2</sup>and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, <sup>3</sup>and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, <sup>4</sup>then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

**Matthew 19:3-10:** Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" <sup>4</sup>"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' <sup>5</sup>and

said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup>So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." <sup>7</sup>"Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" <sup>8</sup>Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. <sup>9</sup>I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." <sup>10</sup>The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

**Deuteronomy 6:6-7:** These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. <sup>7</sup>Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

**2 Corinthians 6:14-15:** Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? <sup>15</sup>What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

**Ephesians 5:25-30:** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup>to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup>and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup>In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--<sup>30</sup>for we are members of his body.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- #1. In what way(s) did marrying foreign women who worshiped other gods threaten the existence of Israel?
  - #2. Discuss the concept of oneness in Genesis 2:24-25.
  - #3. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 and discuss why is it important to select a believer as your marriage partner?
  - #4. What happened to King Solomon's relationship with God toward the end of his life? (1 Kings 11:1-11)
  - #5. One purpose of marriage is to raise godly children. Read Deuteronomy 6:6-7 and discuss how this should be applied in a Christian home.
  - #6. What did Jesus say about divorce in Matthew 19:2-10?
  - #7. What was the view of rabbi Hillel regarding divorce?
  - #8. What was the view of rabbi Shammai regarding divorce?
  - #9. Read Ephesians 5:22-33 and discuss the role of the husband. Then discuss the role of the wife.
  - #10. What is your takeaway from this teaching?
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