



**Doing Treachery  
When You Think God Winks at Sin,  
Then Nothing is Out of Bounds  
Malachi 2:10-16**

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Malachi 2:10–16

“Do we not all have one Father? Is it not one God who has created us? Why do we deal treacherously, each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers? Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD which He loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. As for the man who does this, may the LORD eliminate from the tents of Jacob everyone who is awake and answers, or who presents an offering to the LORD of armies. And this is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and sighing, because He no longer gives attention to the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. Yet you say, “For what reason?” Because the LORD has been a witness between



you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your marriage companion and your wife by covenant. But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And why the one? He was seeking a godly offspring. Be careful then about your spirit, and see that none of you deals treacherously against the wife of your youth. “For I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with violence,” says the LORD of armies. “So be careful about your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.” (NASB 2020)

Based on what we have seen thus far in Malachi, with Nehemiah out of town, the situation spiritually and civilly has begun to experience entropy and to do so rather rapidly. The culture is indeed moving towards disorder and away from the Lord.

We would say to ourselves today that as citizens of the 21st century, a backwards move towards apostasy as rapidly as we see it here in Malachi, just cannot take place. But the reality is, we are moving at an even faster pace than they were.

In mid-2023, Dr. George Barna published the results of a survey conducted in a report from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. The findings and shifts seen among believers in only 3 years is alarming.

“At the start of the pandemic 39% of adults attended a Christian church service at least once a week. The 2023 statistics indicate a notable decline in such attendance, dipping to 33%. More significant, however, is the rapid growth among adults who attend church services infrequently (i.e., less than once a month) or never. That segment has jumped from 35% to 56% in the past six years, with most of the growth since the start of the pandemic. In 2020, 41% of adults attended services infrequently or not at all; by 2023, that figure rose to 56%—a majority of the nation. (Barna 2023)

That alone is enough to send us to prayer, but just like was seen in Judah where a Biblical world view was disappearing, we see the same in our culture today, on an accelerated basis.

The Shift in Biblical Worldview Incidence			
		National Incidence of Adults with a Biblical Worldview	
Worldview Segment	Segment Description	2020	2023
Integrated Disciples	Possess a biblical worldview based on scores related to beliefs and behavior	6%	4%
Emergent Followers	Possess a significant portion of a biblical worldview based on scores related to beliefs and behaviors, but not enough to qualify as having a biblical worldview	25%	14%
World Citizens	Possess a worldview other than a biblical worldview, but might have a few beliefs and behaviors that are consistent with biblical principles	69%	82%

Source: American Worldview Inventory, conducted in 2020 and 2023, by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. Each study is based on a national sample of 2,000 adults, interviewed by telephone and online in January.

[https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CRC\\_AWVI2023\\_Release1.pdf](https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CRC_AWVI2023_Release1.pdf)

(Barna, American Worldview Inventory 2023 Release #1: Incidence of Biblical Worldview Shows Significant Change Since the Start of the Pandemic 2023)



Clearly, we have not just walked away from the Lord, our culture has run away and in the process is dragging as many followers of Jesus Christ as possible. Revival is not simply needed, it is imperative. All the pandemic did was show us how tenuous the faith of many of those who say they follow Jesus, really is. The need starts with Senior Pastors, the shepherds and then down to the flock. Our situation today is no different than the situation being addressed by Malachi.

Dr. Michael Brown, in his recent book, *Revival or We Die*, says the following of our desperate need for revival.

John Knox prayed, "Give me Scotland or I die!" George Whitefield prayed, "Give me souls, or take my soul!" Today, tens of millions of Americans Christians need to pray, "God, give us revival or we die!" There is no hyperbole in that prayer. Without a national awakening, America as we know it is doomed. (Brown 2021, 15)

The people of Judah had experienced political and social upheaval and there was external pressure being applied to force change on them.

We have also experienced political and social upheaval, just as Judea did. For Jerusalem, they have seen outstanding leadership followed by poor leadership to be followed up with outstanding leadership again. The Temple has been rebuilt. The walls are up. The Sabbath was being followed. Revival has been engaged and there has been a purifying of the priesthood.

But Nehemiah had to go back and report to the King. With him gone, the reversal began. It began with the priests as they begin to walk back some of the standards.

YAHWEH though accused them of actively working to destroy the covenant. They have determined that being faithful to what the Torah said about how they were to conduct ministry, well, it was just tiresome. Surely in this modern day and age God will "wink" at our indiscretions.

The problem though, is when those who are supposed to be the shepherds of the people cease effectively operating in that role, the flock does what it always will do when there is no leadership, wander. Here in Malachi, we are about to discover just how bad things have become.

For us here in the 21st century, we know better. But then there was a pandemic, forced closings, in some places, of churches, business, and schools. With it, those who named the name of Christ, most who did not have a Biblical worldview to begin with, just like the Jerusalem, started looking at non-negotiable items in the scriptures, just like the priests did, as negotiable.

We have reshaped God in our own image. Many now believe God winks at sin, obedience, offerings, and sacrifice. We live in a modern age, and He will understand what we must do to get along in the culture.

For Malachi, the discussion will center on treachery.

Treachery – also known as treason, disloyalty, faithlessness, perfidiousness, perfidy. All the ideas connected to it also include deceit, deceitfulness, duplicity and breach of faith.

You would think this is a discussion here in Malachi about the problems taking place in the government of Judea, it isn't. Malachi is discussing commonly held attitudes in the culture of his day about doing Temple, having a Biblical worldview and the impact this all has on family relationships.

Here is the bad news, we all tend to be really good at treachery. That is something I am sure none of us want to be good at. But we follow in a long line of traitors beginning with Adam and Eve.



Why are we so good at this? Well, we took a lesson from the master traitor, Lucifer, in Genesis 3. Treason and treachery is now a natural for us. It is a basic part of the sin nature.

This is why the prophets were constantly talking to the people about being faithful. We all tend towards being unfaithful.

Earlier, we studied the book of Obadiah which is all about the treachery of Edom against Israel. We see that playing out in current events taking place today in Israel and their dealings with a group of people who value lying, perfidy and murder as exemplary traits.

Besides the fall, there are numerous examples of treachery in the Bible. One classic example involves David and Uriah (2 Samuel 11:1-25). Uriah, a Hittite, was a fiercely loyal member of David's mighty men. He stood for honor and loyalty to his King.

David knowingly commits adultery with Uriah's wife while he is out of town fighting a war for David; that is a form of treachery x3. David was being a traitor to YAHWEH, his wives, and to Uriah.

It's bad but gets much worse when Bathsheba winds up pregnant. David lies to Uriah and gets him to come home on leave. Uriah though is fiercely loyal and refuses to go home but rather remains in a combat mode guarding the King. David finally sends instructions, via Uriah, to his general in the field, Joab, to make sure that Uriah is left abandoned in a combat situation resulting in his death.

Eventually David is confronted by Nathan the prophet over his sin, and things did indeed change for him as a result. But David repented and was forgiven by the Lord.

This shows there is still hope for all of us. In fact, the version of this history that reflects God's perspective, 1 and 2 Chronicles, doesn't even have the incident in it. David was forgiven because he repented.

Then of course there is the treachery of Judas. He didn't repent even though Jesus reached out to him multiple times before he set his mind and Satan entered him (John 12:1-30).

Treachery is the one crime that our culture today holds there is no penalty too severe to deal with it. But we have also winked at it.

For those who engage in it in the criminal justice system, we have a witness protection program to protect them from the object of their treachery. We reward those who turn states evidence, with a new life, but it is still treachery.

Why do we have law dealing with contracts? Treachery. Why do we have laws dealing with fraud? Treachery.

If you have a phone, you probably average at least one call daily where someone you have never met is trying to convince you they have a really good deal in exchange for everything you own. Yes, we all deal with treachery almost on a daily basis.

We also see treachery in the church today, it is called apostasy.

The culture of Malachi's time had adopted and accepted treachery as acceptable when it pertained to family relationships.

But before Genesis 3, we read this in Genesis 1:26.



Genesis 1:26–28

“Then God said, **“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.** And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”” (ESV)

We were made in God’s image. This is where Malachi picks up the discussion with the people of Jerusalem. God is the one who created us. Being created means accountability to the one who made us. We really don’t like that idea since pre-Jesus, we all held our fists up in God’s face and said we know better than He does as we rebelled against Him. One reason why evolution is so attractive to many.

But when we come to Christ, He changes all of that through the power of the Holy Spirit now inside of us. Now we begin to learn of Him and desire to be more like Jesus, we truly want to image Him and be like Him

Because God created us in His image, He expects us, as His creation, to deal equitably with one another. All of mankind, not just believers. This is one of the reasons why we dislike traitors so much.

It gets worse too. Yeah, we need to love our neighbor as ourself, but in our dealings with other brothers and sisters in Christ, we are to love them unconditionally just like Christ loves us (John 13:34). This means that our lives, as believers, should be completely void of treachery.

He had this same expectation of His people there in Jerusalem.

Malachi 2:10–11

“Do we not all have one Father? Is it not one God who has created us? Why do we deal treacherously, each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers? Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD which He loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god.” (NASB 2020)

In Jerusalem, treachery, basically reneging on prior deals and contracts, was once again becoming a major problem. It has reached the point where God says you are profaning the covenant.

The manner in which they were treating each other also reflected on what they thought about the covenant with God. Negotiable. They are God’s chosen people, but they are not living like it.

When someone isn’t right with God, there is no way they can be right with anyone else. The Priests led the way on this. Since they were winking and acting treacherously towards the covenant by allowing substandard offerings and sacrifices to be made, the people had taken this to be the norm for their dealings with each other.

Do we see this as a problem in the culture today?

There are many in the business world I trust, and there are many I do not trust and work hard to never be involved in any kind of business relationship with. This is not only certain individuals who have proven to be untrustworthy, but corporations as well. We tend to accept that as normal these days in business. But the problem also shows up in the church.



Unfortunately, as an insurance adjuster, I have dealt with many churches and church leaders on their worst days as the result of an insurance claim. Once again, there are some I would trust, but there are also way too many I would not.

Paul wound up having to deal with this in the church addressing it head on in 1 Corinthians. Even though they were saved, and had been taught to love each other, some still operated as if they were dealing with the world and not brothers and sisters. Shades of Malachi.

1 Corinthians 6:1–8

“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!” (NKJV)

The world is supposed to look at the church and see that we love each other unconditionally. This attracts those who do not know the Lord to want to know more about how people could act that way since they know they don't.

Unconfessed sin in the life of a believer results in a disruption of the relationship. Sin must be dealt with to remain in communion with the Lord. To come back into relationship, we simply need to avail ourselves of 1 John 1:9. If we don't, then the sense of fellowship we had through the Holy Spirit is withdrawn. We are grieving the Holy Spirit, something we are commanded not to do. “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (Ephesians 4:30, ESV)

Refusing to confess our sin is nothing less than toleration of the sin.

If Christians tolerate and cover up for their sins instead of coming out into the open with God, cutting the excuses, confessing and repenting, then the knowledge of the Spirit's presence is withdrawn from us, we become powerless in prayer and fruitless in service. That is the price-tag on sin for the Christian! (Benton 1985, 56)

Remember, sin, at its very basic level, is treachery against our Lord. Malachi will expand his thoughts on treachery.

Since most born again believers no longer have a Biblical worldview, we see confusion instead of an assertion of what the scriptures clearly teach. The church, which has been drifting away from the truth for some time now, has arrived at the point where a Biblical view of sex and marriage is considered to be illogical by many who say they are born again.

We see treachery in the movement of believers away from the gathering of ourselves together in the church on a regular basis.

But when the church acts like the world, like Paul outlined in 1 Corinthians, then we are damaging the cause of Christ. The world looks on and sees there is no difference in the way the business world operates and the way those in the church treat each other.



There is nothing that hurts the cause of Christ more than a church fight, conflicts in the church, and leaders who are at each other's throats. Regardless of how evangelistic a church may be, its witness is nil when those conditions exist. (McGee 1997, 1004)

Malachi tells those in Judea that act that way, that they are profaning the covenant with YAHWEH. By profaning the covenant, they have also profaned the Temple. When they act this way with each other, then it is the same as if they desecrated the Temple. The weight is the same and the impact on the community is the same.

In fact, we are told the treachery taking place with each other and the covenant is an abomination. Reneging on that business deal is an abomination? Yes. Promising the prize bull and bringing a sick one instead is an abomination? Yes. What are we talking about. What is an abomination?

From the biblical perspective an abomination callously disregards and actively disdains the values God has established. It affronts God's holiness, sovereignty as Creator and purposes expressed in the Law. There is an irony in the image of abomination. It is not chosen in brazen rebellion against God, but is perceived within the values of the offender as the good and right thing to do. Thus the sacrifice of the wicked (Prov 15:8), the prayer of the lawbreaker (Prov 28:9) and blemished sacrifice (Deut 17:1) are abominations, although their practitioners do not perceive themselves as committing an abomination. (Ryken, et al. 2000, 2)

An abomination is literally something detestable and hated by God (e.g., Prov. 6:16; 11:1). (Wenham 1979, 259)

The culture of Judah had become one of embracing acts which were to God, an abomination. The people were actively disregarding Torah and the law in favor of their own cultural values. Unconfessed sin resulted in a broken relationship and soon, the silence became comfortable.

We could say the same about what we see in the west today. Our nation has become the purveyor of all that God holds to be an abomination and has gone as far as holding some of those abominable acts up as acts to be emulated and celebrated.

What follows is a partial, politically incorrect list of some of the things which God says are an abomination to Him. He hates them.

There are some in the church who no longer agree with some of the items on the partial list.

### **Abominations**

- Adultery Leviticus 18:20
- Child sacrifice (abortion) Leviticus 18:21
- Same sex sexual relationships Leviticus 18:22
- Images of false gods Deuteronomy 7:25-26
- Encouraging others to worship false gods Deuteronomy 13:14
- Imperfect sacrifices Deuteronomy 17:1
- Cross dressing/LGBTQ+ Deuteronomy 22:5
- Operating unjustly in business Deuteronomy 25:13-16

Proverbs 6:16–19

"These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren." (NKJV)



Luke 16:15

“And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” (ESV)

Abominations separate men from God. But there is good news.

Jesus took our abominations upon Himself and gave us the gift of His righteousness in return. All who put their trust in Him will be saved. (Got Questions Ministries 2014-2021)

This is bad, but the men of Judah are doing even more that falls into the category of treachery and abomination. They married the daughter of a foreign god.

The men of Judah are finding wives among the non-Jewish women outside of Judah, and they are remaining idol worshippers.

Judah’s broken faith is more precisely defined as a detestable thing. The Hebrew word *tô`ēbâ* signifies things and acts which are abominable in the sight of God, such as idolatry, impurity, etc. In Deut. 18:9–13 Israel is admonished, when entering the promised land, “do not learn to imitate the detestable ways [*tô`abōt*] of the nations there” (NIV). These “ways” or “things” concerned the sacrificing of children in the fire and various mantic practices. By using this significant word Malachi equates Judah’s faithlessness with the defection into paganism. (Verhoef 1987, 268)

The problem is bad. YAHWEH tells us that. But how does this apply for us today? Simple, when we decide, as believers, that we can no longer wait on the Lord and the one He has for us, and we begin dating potential partners in the world, we have also crossed that line.

But Ken, I am doing this intentionally in order to bring the gospel to them. Missionary dating is not a thing. You are consorting with someone who does not have anything in common with you, nothing.

But their good looking. I know God can do anything and save them.

Yes, He can. But that potential life partner still has free will. Having grown up in a home that was divided between light and dark, let me tell you my thoughts on this. Don’t do it. Ever.

That is what YAHWEH is telling the men of Judah here and He even goes as far as saying that when they do marry an unbeliever, they are defiling the Temple. They begin cutting corners. The offering is less than what the law calls for. They have a high maintenance pagan wife who loves Baal, not YAHWEH. Soon the men skip Temple or throw a diseased animal out there for a sacrifice.

But how does this apply today. Walk with me on this. When we give our life to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit comes in to dwell forever.

John 14:16–17

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” (ESV)

Paul put it this way in his comment on all potential dealings with unbelievers.

2 Corinthians 6:14–16

“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a





believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (ESV)

The Holy Spirit, the same person who was in Holy of Holies in the 1st Temple, now lives in us.

The warning from Paul is something we must listen to, for business dealings and all other relationships with those who do not know Jesus. For those in Jerusalem, they are under the law, this is a non-negotiable for them, it is for us too. God knows what is best for us and He is warning us of the downside if we continue to rebel.

God loves us and He wants to be number one on a list of one. If we marry someone who is not a believer, they will never have that as the goal for their life...ever, unless they come to Christ. They will not understand why you even consider doing it.

For the believer in Malachi's day as well as in our day, the Lord wants our home to be something that will point our children, friends and neighbors to Him. To do something intentionally against what the Lord says is rebellion, it is treachery. It means that the one doing it has decided that they will no longer fully represent the Lord and are, in fact, indifferent to the Lord. Trust me when I say this, it is the kids who are impacted by this the most. That is not book learning speaking, that is practical experience growing up in a divided home.

If you are dating a non-believer, repent and stop doing so immediately.

If you are engaged to a non-believer, repent and call it off today.

If you are living together, move out today.

If you are married to an unbeliever, repent and pray for your spouse.

If you and your spouse were both pagans when you married, such as was the case with my parents, and you have become a believer. Pray for your spouse and pray for your children. The Lord understands that situation and has tender words for you. He will indeed give you extra strength and grace to cope with the situation and love your partner.

1 Corinthians 7:12–16

"But I (not the Lord) say to the rest: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce her husband. For the unbelieving husband is made holy by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to live in peace. Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife." (CSB)

1 Peter 3:1–2

"In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by the way their wives live when they observe your pure, reverent lives." (CSB)

When my parents were married, they were both unbelievers. Mom found the Lord, then my sister and then me. My little brother still needs the Lord and dad, as far as I know, he never came to the Lord. But what Paul says is indeed true.



But back to the one who has decided, I am in love and nothing you can tell me will change my mind. I am going to marry a non-believer.

Let me be clear. No one from Calvary Chapel will be conducting your marriage. To do so would be us asking God's blessing on what He has commanded not to take place.

We love you and your soon to be spouse and desire to see them saved. We would love to see both of you in church and your children as well. But that is not usually what winds up being the case.

When we rebel and make the decision to go ahead and do what we want rather than what the Lord wants and marry an unbeliever, we are indeed defiling the sanctuary. Again, the Holy Spirit lives inside of us.

Here is something else I have observed over the years as well.

When the decision is made to disobey the clear word of God and marry an unbeliever takes place. It isn't long before other things in the Bible make no sense to you either and they too get rejected. Since your spouse isn't interested in church, soon, you aren't interested either and by your actions, you effectively make cut yourself off from other believers and are no longer part of what the Lord is doing through His church.

If you are a believer, the Lord will be dealing with you in His own way to bring you back to Him.

The sanctuary which the Lord loves is your heart. He is to be pre-eminent there. He is to sit on the throne there. He is to rule there. That is what the heart of man was made for. Now, God, who is our gracious Creator and Redeemer and who knows us better than we know ourselves, has made it very clear that he does not want us to marry outside the family of his people. He has said this for his own glory and for our good. (Benton 1985, 65)

In Malachi's community, there are to be consequences for the one who intentionally does this. Again, the Lord considers this to be sin, rebellion, and treachery.

Malachi 2:12

"As for the man who does this, may the LORD eliminate from the tents of Jacob everyone who is awake and answers, or who presents an offering to the LORD of armies." (NASB 2020)

Those men who make this decision to marry a non-believer, in Judah, were to be removed from the community.

Malachi 2:13-16

"And this is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and sighing, because He no longer gives attention to the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your marriage companion and your wife by covenant. But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And why the one? He was seeking a godly offspring. Be careful then about your spirit, and see that none of you deals treacherously against the wife of your youth. 'For I hate divorce,' says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'and him who covers his garment with violence,' says the LORD of armies. 'So be careful about your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.'" (NASB 2020)

But let's talk about how to make the situation worse. How about marrying an unbeliever after divorcing a believing wife. Yes, we are indeed talking about the "other woman" just like in some cases today. The one



who has intentionally set her eyes upon taking something that was never hers in the first place. This is not as new a problem as we would like to think.

In Malachi's day, the situation was not that different, other than in Judah, there were some laws in place that would drive philandering husbands out of town to a more amenable location.

This is one of the reasons for the foreign wife problem. In neighboring non-Jewish communities, they had a different view of relationships. In some cases, worship, for them, included a trip to see the temple prostitute.

In Judah, being caught in an adulterous affair could mean the death penalty for both parties (Leviticus 20:10). But these were more modern times, it is the 5th century BC after all, and the neighboring communities had a more relaxed view on these things.

God did not change His mind about Exodus 20:14 though. Adultery was still a no no.

Divorce was accepted as an unfortunate event but was allowed by the Jewish community and always remained an option for men. A woman could not sue for divorce, but she could appeal to the Jewish court to force her husband to grant a divorce if the court felt she had legitimate grounds. (Taitz, Henry and Tallan 2003, 229)

Perhaps some men were divorcing the wife whom they married when they were young in order to marry a rich foreign women. In this case their unfaithfulness would consist of abandoning their wives by divorcing them without proper grounds. They would, in effect, be breaking their vows to sustain their wives with food, clothing, and oil (love). (Instone-Brewer 2002, 55)

We start off here though with men showing up at the Temple to worship and their prayers are not being answered. God is not paying attention even to their offerings. So, the question, why?

In counseling, I have heard just about everything. Most of the time, the answer was simple, repent and get right with the Lord. Our culture though has really messed with the minds of some who have strayed away from the word of God and begin to take their direction from the world. Many of the men of Judah were looking for direction in the same place.

I will never forget the man who showed up saying he needed some help financially to pay the rent for his house. I always asked about their relationship with the Lord, and he told me he and the Lord were tight. Ok, so why the rent problem, what happened to cause this to pop up. Job loss, no. Unseen shock bill, no not that either. It was actually an issue involving treachery, along the lines Malachi is addressing.

The man I was talking with was married, and happily so, at least so he said. But the rent problem was for the house he kept for his mistress.

He was a little short this month and needed some help to keep his mistress in the house. God was not blessing as He was in the past.

Now remember, he came to a church to ask for help on this. The Holy Spirit was clear on an answer to give him. No. We will not help you. You need to repent immediately, tell your wife and dump the mistress today.

His response, "I thought you were a church and would help me."

I told we were indeed a church, and I am helping him, repent. To which he stormed out.



Was he being treacherous to his wife. Yes indeed. Is this weird, yes but no stranger than running to the next town that has different laws and picking up a younger wife there then throwing out the one you had.

Malachi, who is counseling someone in a similar situation, is talking with someone who just can't seem to understand why God is no longer blessing. Well, it has to do with the vows of your marriage covenant. You have violated them. You asked God to be a witness in the marriage, He is, and He is saying you are acting treacherously against your wife.

The wife of your youth is the one who gave you your children, but now you want someone younger. A trophy wife perhaps. One who is not from around here.

God is the witness to the unfaithfulness of those men who are acting this way. God wants to see Godly children from the marriage, but marrying a foreigner who does not know YAHWEH prevents that from happening.

The marriage covenant is simple and faithfulness to each other is required.

The thought is that these men have spent years of mutual companionship with their spouses—building their homes, raising their children, facing life's vicissitudes together—and then they have abandoned their wives for the sake of other women. It is little wonder that the act is called "violence" (v. 16), for it violently injures the well-being, the dreams, the securities of all involved. (Achtemeier 1986, 182-183)

Divorce, per Malachi, is treachery. It is a symptom of a deeper treachery taking place involving the covenant and the people following the leadership of the Priests into apostasy.

That was the problem then, apostasy in the Temple leads to poor teaching and an acceptance in the culture of less than what God's standard is. We have already seen that with the acceptance of substandard offerings and sacrifices.

As the nation drifted away from Him, marriages began to suffer, and in that, the men practiced treason.

Yes, there is a comparative to our culture today as we see more and more in the church beginning to embrace the cultures definitions of sexuality, marriage, and love. All which are in direct antithesis to the Bible. "Advocates of the new sexuality demand a complete rewriting of Scripture's metanarrative, a complete reordering of theology, and a fundamental change to how we think about the church's ministry." (Mohler 2015, 4)

Why is divorce rampant, because for someone who believes even things of the Bible are negotiable, the marriage covenant is also negotiable. In our culture, just like in Malachi's, it is all about me and my happiness.

So, for your happiness, you decide to throw away your wife and kids. Treachery. Until it happens to you, you simply don't get how much truth there is to that statement. God hates divorce. Why? Because it is taking a promise which He is a witness to and one party saying, I changed my mind.

"The constantly reiterated theme of these verses is faithfulness to the terms of the marriage covenant. Criticism is not directed at the person who carries out the divorce but at the person who causes the divorce by not being faithful to the marriage covenant." That is the one who is committing treachery. (Instone-Brewer 2002, 57)



A partner who is involved in an adulterous relationship is the one who killed the marriage, not the spouse who divorced them. Why divorce, because the innocent spouse received the gift of an STD as part of the discovery process of the adultery that was taking place.

Treachery indeed.

A man's covering himself ... with his garment symbolizes marriage (cf. Ruth 3:9; Ezek. 16:8). But covering himself with violence describes violating the marriage relationship, which is what divorce does. The fact that this is the Lord's view is repeated for emphasis (says the LORD Almighty). (Blaising 1985, 1582)

God is telling us that the spouse who does this, sins against God and against their spouse.

Don't get me wrong, there are reasons why a divorce should take place. In the Old Testament, a spouse caught cheating on another wasn't divorced, they were stoned along with their partner. There are other reasons as well in the scriptures, but God still hates what it does to all involved.

Malachi's condemnation of divorce is therefore directed at the person who breaks the marriage covenant. (Instone-Brewer 2002, 58)

In the scriptures, God never presents divorce as a good thing. He created us and because of that, He knows what divorce does to us and to our families. He loves us and desires the best for us. That being said, we live in a fallen world and there are those who decide to wander.

God loves us, Jesus died on the cross for us and His blood is sufficient to cover all our sins. If we have come to Christ, He has forgiven us, we are now in Christ. His grace is indeed sufficient for all for us.

1 John 1:6–10

"So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts." (NLT)



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