

Malachi 2**6-13-03****“Triple Covenants!”****1. Intro:**

- 1.1. Triple Covenants: [1] Cov. w/Levi [2] Cov. w/Israel [3] Cov. of Marriage.

2. COVENANT WITH LEVI! (1-9)

- 2.1. Q: Have you ever served God with a **religious veneer**?
- 2.1.1. Look **religious** on the outside, but **corrupt** on the inside!
- 2.1.2. Q: Any areas where your Christianity is fake? – Well it was with the priests. (& we are a kingdom of priests)
- 2.2. Of course God gave the priesthood to Levi.
- 2.2.1. He & his sons were to **teach & obey** the law of the Lord.
- 2.3. (1) “**This...is for you**” – What a great label to paste on the front of your bible!
- 2.4. (2) God can turn our curses into blessings!
- 2.4.1. Remember when Balak “**hired Balaam against Israel to curse them. However, our God turned the curse into a blessing.**”
- 2.4.2. Here he reverses that, & turns blessings into curses.
- 2.4.3. It’s bad enough when God **takes a blessing away**. But then when He then **turns** the blessing into a curse, the pain is awful!
- 2.4.3.1. **Cheat** on God, you’ll find yourself **cursed** by Him!
- 2.5. (3) **Spread refuse on your faces** - Ewe, talk about a facial/mud-pack!
- 2.5.1. A startling symbol of his rejection.
- 2.5.2. **Toxic priests defiling everything they touch!**
- 2.5.3. This would mean that they were unclean & would have to leave the camp!
- 2.5.4. Interesting, that **unbelievers** have proved that when a religious scandal appears on TV, they expect church leaders to **practice what they preach!**

- 2.6. (6) “An **honest** man is someone you can play checkers with over the telephone.”
- 2.7. (7) **Q: What are your lips doing?** – Are they keeping knowledge?
 - 2.7.1. Their main role was instruction! – Not shaking hands, not kissing babies, but instruction!
 - 2.7.1.1. Their **lips & lives** were to be a treasure trove of truth!
- 2.8. (8) **Caused many to stumble** - When we step out of line with truth, we trip up others.

3. **COVENANT WITH ISRAEL! (10-12)**

- 3.1. This was made at Sinai when the nation was married to Yahweh.
 - 3.1.1. But his bride was not faithful to Him(idolatry w/false gods).
- 3.2. (10) **Have we not all one Father?** – This isn't referring to universal salvation.
 - 3.2.1. Context is Jewish: Referring to the nation of Israel.
- 3.3. (11) Men were divorcing their wives & marrying foreign women.
 - 3.3.1. A sin that even led their king into idolatry(i.e. Solomon).
- 3.4. (11b) This was not **racial** reasons but **religious!** (*race pure for the Messiah*)

4. **COVENANT OF MARRIAGE! (13-16)**

- 4.1. We serve a very gracious God.
 - 4.1.1. Some of you didn't have an option in getting divorced. Some have made the mistake in obtaining one. Others have obtained a biblical divorce (sexual immorality or abandonment).
- 4.2. (13) The unfaithful husbands could weep & bring sacrifices, but God would not accept them.
 - 4.2.1. God doesn't seek **contrition** but **conformity to truth!**
 - 4.2.1.1. “godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”
 - 4.2.2. Or some think the wives being divorced are weeping here.
 - 4.2.3. If so, “You number my wanderings; Put my **tears** into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book? When I cry out to You, Then my enemies will turn back; This I know, because **God is for me.**”¹

¹ Ps.56:8,9

- 4.3. (14) A marriage covenant involves the husband, the wife, & God.
- 4.3.1. We expect **God** to be faithful...Why do we think **we** have the privilege of not keeping our promises?
- 4.4. (14b) **Treacherously** – “willful betrayal of fidelity, confidence, or trust.”
- 4.4.1. The whole nation seemed to go through a **mid-life crisis!** (11b)
- 4.4.2. They seem to have been trying out the younger, new, more sportier models!
- 4.4.2.1. How foolish, especially if you have one that is proved, road-tested, & running great!
- 4.4.2.2. **Men, watch out for those “foxes in sheep’s clothing”!**
- 4.4.2.3. Often times it starts when you wake up one day & realize, “you weren’t voted to be **most likely to succeed**, but **most likely to be average!**”
- 4.4.2.4. Agatha Christy said, “**Women, marry an archeologist, because the older you get the more interested they become in you!**”
- 4.5. (14c) **Your wife by covenant!** – many say, “**Love** keeps a marriage alive”...**Wrong! - Marriage keeps love alive!**
- 4.5.1. You say, “but I’ve seen Love Boat(with Gofer & Captain Stubbing); I’ve read the novels; & seen the movies.”
- 4.5.2. **Marriage goes through its seasons.**
- 4.5.2.1. **At your wedding its Spring time, all things start new & fresh!**
- 4.5.2.2. **Summer will come in your marriage, & things get a little hotter!**
- 4.5.2.3. **Fall comes & you start to notice some leaves falling!**
- 4.5.2.4. **Winter hits & you’re hibernating a little more!**
- 4.5.2.5. **But God is faithful!...Spring always returns – love revives!**
- 4.5.2.5.1. Which proves(not the value of **love**) but the value of **covenant** itself, as a container for love to go through its seasons!²
- 4.5.2.5.2. It is more than feelings!
- 4.6. (16) Clearly, our relationships w/**others** are tied directly to our relationship w/**God**. (i.e. Mt.5:23,24)

² Joe Focht tape.

- 4.6.1. **He hates divorce** – not, I hate the divorced!
- 4.6.1.1. We should be happy he hates divorce, otherwise we'd have been divorced from him long ago!
- 4.6.1.2. He hates drunkenness, he hates lewdness, he hates them for what they **produce!**
- 4.6.1.2.1. Ruined lives, loss of faithfulness, collapse of hopes!
- 4.6.2. Malachi is a prophet speaking w/absolute clarity the **divine displeasure** when divorce has become run-of-the-mill routine in a declining society.
- 4.6.2.1. Bus bench → "Divorce \$99".
- 4.6.2.2. Blynn de Moss "Scotty" Wolfe holds the record as the world's most divorced man. First married in 1931, by 1986 he had experienced twenty-six divorces and paid more than one million dollars in alimony.
- 4.6.3. A divorce reform movement took place in the **early 1970s** in Great Britain and the United States. The movement was initiated by a group, assembled by the archbishop of Canterbury, who proposed a single, **no-fault** (*blame is assigned to neither party*) ground that required a judge to grant divorce if he or she finds that the marriage is "irretrievably broken."
- 4.6.3.1. The notion of irretrievable breakdown was promulgated in the United States by the Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act.³
- 4.6.3.2. States offering no-fault divorce in 1957: **1**
States offering no-fault divorce in 1995: **50**⁴
- 4.6.3.3. **What this country needs is more, no-fault marriages!**
- 4.6.4. **Let's clear up one thing:** Pollster Louis Harris has written, "The idea that half of American marriages are doomed is one of the most specious pieces of statistical nonsense ever perpetuated in modern times." It all began when the Census Bureau noted that during one year, there were 2.4 million marriages and 1.2 million divorces. Someone did the math without calculating the 54 million marriages already in existence, and presto, a ridiculous but quotable statistic was born. Harris concludes, "**Only one out of eight marriages will end in divorce. In any single year, only about 2 percent of existing marriages will break up.**"⁵

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⁴ USA Today (1/25/96). "To Verify," Leadership.

⁵ J. Allan Petersen in Better Families. "To Verify," Leadership.

- 4.6.5. Those who **live together** before marriage, separate and divorce in significantly greater numbers than those who go directly to the altar.
- 4.7. **Cover one's garment with violence** – As we use a wedding ring, ancient Israel used their garment to cover whom they would marry (i.e. Boaz w/Ruth).
 - 4.7.1. If they divorced instead of having a garment that symbolized **love**, it would symbolize **violence!**