

Faithful Relationships

Malachi 2:10-16 / January 5, 2018

Introduction to the Book of Malachi: Preparation for the Birth of Jesus

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Linguistic Argument

A) UNITY OF GOD—HE IS FAITHFUL: Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? (10a)

B) THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT: Why then are we **faithless** to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers? (10b)

C) JUDAH'S BROKEN COVENANT: Judah has been **faithless**, and 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. (11)

D) RESULT: ISRAEL CUT OFF: May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts! (12)

D¹) RESULT: OFFERINGS REJECTED: And this second thing you do. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. (13)

C¹) HUSBANDS' BROKEN COVENANT: But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been **faithless**, (14a)

B¹) THE MARRIAGE COVENANT: though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. (14b)

A¹) UNITY OF GOD—HE IS FAITHFUL: Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. (15a)

B²) REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE COVENANT: So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be **faithless** to the wife of your youth. "For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be **faithless**." (15b-16)

Literary Argument

God's Truth: God is Faithful

Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?

God's Rebuke: Judah is Unfaithful

Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?

1. Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem.
2. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god.
3. May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!

And this second thing you do.

1. You cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.

Israel's Complaint: God is Unfaithful

But you say, "Why does he not?"

God's Rebuttal: Judah is Unfaithful

- Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.
- Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring.

God's Warning: Remain Faithful

- So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. "For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts.
- So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."

NATION OF ISRAEL: Be Faithful to God's Covenant

TO ISRAEL AFTER LEAVING EGYPT:

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

1. "You shall have no other gods before me.
2. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
3. "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:1-11)

TO ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS AFTER WORSHIPPING THE GOLDEN CALF:

"Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. **Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst.** You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, and **you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods.** (Exodus 34:11-16)

TO ISRAEL BEFORE ENTERING THE PROMISE LAND:

"If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which neither you nor your fathers have known, some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him. But you shall kill him. (Deut 13:6-11)

TO ISRAEL AFTER ENTERING THE PROMISE LAND:

Be very careful, therefore, to love the LORD your God. **For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations remaining among you and make marriages with them, so that you associate with them and they with you, know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations before you, but they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good ground that the LORD your God has given you.** (Joshua 23:1-13)

TO ISRAEL AFTER RETURNING FROM CAPTIVITY TO THE PROMISE LAND:

After these things had been done, the officials approached me and said, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands with their abominations, from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken some of their daughters to be wives for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has mixed itself with the peoples of the lands. And in this faithlessness the hand of the officials and chief men has been foremost." (Ezra 9:1-2)

BIRTH OF JESUS: Faithfulness of Joseph to Take Mary as his Wife

Matthew 1:18-25

MARY'S HOLY SPIRIT PREGNANCY

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

JOSEPH'S DIVORCE PLANS

And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

LORD'S ANGEL: REMAIN FAITHFUL TO MARY:

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

SCRIPTURES: REMAIN FAITHFUL TO MARY:

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

JOSEPH'S FAITHFULNESS:

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him;

he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25)

THE CHURCH: Faithfulness of the Bride of Christ

Ephesians 5:17-33

ONE GOD:

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,** who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph 4:1-6)

ONE CHURCH:

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until **we all attain to the unity of the faith** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Eph 4:11-16)

DO NOT BE FAITHFUL TO THE WORLD:

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that **you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do**, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:17-24)

BE FAITHFUL TO ONE ANOTHER:

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Eph 4:25-32)

WALK IN LOVE, NOT IMMORALITY:

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Eph 5:1-5)

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT:

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,
Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
Singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart,
Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

BE FAITHFUL IN MARRIAGE:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Eph 5:18-33)