

MALACHI
CHAPTER TWO – 8-21-16

A MESSAGE TO THE PASTORS OF THE NATION

Malachi 2:1 And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.

*Malachi 2:2 If ye will not **hear**, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.*

Malachi 2:3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.

Malachi 2:4 And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:5 My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.

Malachi 2:6 The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

Malachi 2:7 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:8 But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:9 Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

Malachi 2:10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

Malachi 2:11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

Malachi 2:12 The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:13 And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

Malachi 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

Malachi 2:15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Malachi 2:16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

Malachi 2:17 Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

I. Malachi's Address - Rebukes the Religious Pastors of Israel

Malachi 2:1 And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.

Malachi 2:2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.

1. Consider: A higher standard is held before the Lord for those He calls to lead.

In Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, the Lord addressed the pastors first.

So too, now in Malachi, He now addresses the priests as the Pastors of Israel.

Our Lord's greatest rebuke was to the priests.

Who did the Lord go harder on—the harlots, or the Pharisees?

Jesus came to seek and save the lost, but He strongly rebuked the religious leaders. Note what He said to them in Matthew 23:13-16 ...

Matthew 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

Matthew 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Matthew 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Matthew 23:16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides ...

But to the woman taken in adultery we read -

John 8:10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

John 8:11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

2. A Greater Condemnation Is Given To These Leaders:

Notice how those who will not hear the rebuke of the Lord will receive to themselves a curse:

Malachi 2:2 If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.

Notice what the Lord says to the N.T. pastors:

James 3:1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

You would wonder—why is it that these who are the religious leaders would be the ones who slide so far away from the Lord?

The reason why that may happen is that people who are around sacred things constantly can become too familiar with the things of the Lord and then lose the sense of awe and respect for the things of God. Also, the Bible teaches that they can fall victim to Satan's attacks. Many times the church puts a man (or worse yet, a woman) into the position of pastor who is not biblically qualified to be in that position and the Bible says they fall into the **CONDEMNATION OF THE DEVIL ...**

1TI 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

1TI 3:3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

1TI 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

1TI 3:5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

1TI 3:6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

God had a special standard for His ministers of God in the Old Testament.

He had a standard of dress.
He had a standard of cleanliness.
Not to drink fermented wine.
Not to wear certain garments.
Not to marry outside of the levitical tribe.
Not to marry a divorced woman.
They were not to have certain physical deformities.

So it is to whom much is given, much is required.

The Lord also delegates to His leaders authority over His vineyard, but He will come some day and reckon with them.

Our Lord gave an illustration of this in the following parable. Some of the pastors became neglectful because they forgot that the Lord will reckon with them as stewards.

Mark 13:34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Mark 13:35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

Mark 13:36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

Mark 13:37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

So the leaders of his church are given stewardship over his church. Those who are leaders need to be faithful.

But in this parable we see that these stewards are pretty much given freedom. As stewards we need to believe that the Lord is going to hold us accountable for the things we do. When God's servants forget this, it is then that they become vulnerable. You can think of multiple reasons why they could slip ...

Here is a list of reasons why these leaders may become neglectful of their service:

- A. THEY COULD FORGET THEY ARE BUT STEWARDS—AND NOT LORD—OVER GOD'S HERITAGE.
- B. THEY COULD LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THERE WILL BE A RECKONING DAY.
- C. THEY COULD BECOME WEARY AND FALL INTO A SPIRITUAL SLUMBER, SO TO SPEAK.
- D. THEY COULD LOSE FAITH IN HIS RETURN AND BECOME WORLDLY MINDED.

Now this really says something -

Why did these religious leaders fall into this state of spiritual darkness?

HERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBLE REASON:

3. A POSSIBLE REASON THEY FELL IS BECAUSE THEY SUFFERED FROM NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF BAD PEER PRESSURE FROM OTHER RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

It has become an age-old sin that we all can be influenced wrongly by our associations. IT HAPPENED TO THE APOSTLE PETER, AND PAUL HAD TO REBUKE HIM FOR IT:

Galatians 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

Galatians 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

Galatians 2:13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Galatians 2:15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

PAUL HAD TO REBUKE PETER.

How did Peter get off track?

He got off track because he was hobnobbing with Jews who, by way of peer pressure, tried to get him to regress into a formalistic righteousness which brought confusion about the true nature of the gospel and salvation.

Galatians 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

The salvation we enjoy in Christ is **not** by the letter of the law, but **by the Spirit** of the law.

How did Peter get carried away with what Paul called "PHARISAICAL DISSIMULATIONS?"

The word for dissimulation is -

hupokrisis, hoop-ok'-ree-sis; from 5271; acting under a feigned part.
i.e. (fig.) deceit ("hypocrisy"):-condemnation, dissimulation,
hypocrisy.

----- Dictionary Trace -----

hupokrinomai, hoop-ok-rin'-om ahee; mid. from 5259 and 2919; to decide
(speak or act) under a false part, i.e. (fig.) dissemble (pretend):-
feign.

The Greek word for DISSIMULATION is the word "hupokrisis" from which we get the word Hypocrisy. Dissimulation has the idea of pretending to be something you are not, to dissemble.

In essence it means:

To give a false or misleading appearance to; conceal the truth or real nature of: to dissemble one's incompetence in business. 2. to put on the appearance of; feign: to dissemble innocence.

Literally: Paul was saying that Peter started to get enamored with the high-minded, pseudo-spirituality of the Pharisaical Christians.

And here is the reason that the Lord was so hard on the Pharisees: it was because of their own DISSIMULATION and hypocrisy—pretending to be something they were not!!

In Malachi.. the Priests were, in heart, lackadaisical about their service for the Lord, which started to become evident in their actions.

So often we have people that claim that those who have standards are Pharisaical. But think about it—the Lord was rebuking these priests for having a bad attitude, which became evident in their offering which was not their best to the Lord. In essence they lowered their standards! Paul rebuked Peter for being influenced by these Judaizers who thought themselves too holy to eat with the Gentile believers. They had standards, but their standards were unbiblical and pseudo-spiritual. In both cases the problem was a heart problem which manifested itself in their actions—how they lived and what they did.

The Lord knows our hearts.

Notice He says -

Malachi 1:14 But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.

If a person has in his flock a male, and yet he sacrifices something less.
If the something less is all he has, that is one thing.

The Lord accepted two turtledoves instead of a lamb for those who could not bring a lamb. Lev. 12:8 But the Lord knows those who pretend to be too poor and bring the lesser only because they are not willing to give their best to the Lord. Did not Mary the mother of Jesus bring two turtledoves when she presented Jesus before the Lord? (Luke 2:24)

In the case mentioned in the book of Malachi, the Lord is rebuking those who cry “poor” and are not poor!

But the issue was not what was given; the issue was the heart and intent of the heart. Does the Lord need anything we have?

It is no different in the New Testament, as is in the Old Testament.

Our actions expose what is in our heart.

Consider in our day, when we come to worship before the Lord, how do we present ourselves before the Lord?

If all we have are two turtledoves that is fine; but if we have a lamb, and we bring two turtledoves, who are we fooling? God knows if we are giving Him our best or not!

Colossians 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

II. THE LORD REMINDS THESE PRIESTS OF THEIR CALLING & HISTORY

The religious customs and ceremonies of those who are not sincere become an abomination in the sight of the Lord.

Malachi 2:3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.

Malachi 2:4 And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:5 My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.

Malachi 2:6 The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

Malachi 2:7 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

God chose Levi and his seed to minister in the office of the priesthood.

That was a glorious privilege and calling for Levi, Aaron, and all his children when they were given this ministry.

BUT MANY OF THEM CORRUPTED THE PRIESTHOOD.

NOTE: Today God has chosen us to be His spokesmen in this wicked world. Notice how God calls us to be priests for Him.

Revelation 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

We now have a ministry, a priesthood whereby we represent Jesus to an unbelieving world. WE ARE CALLED KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD.

DO we corrupt that image? We too will receive rebuke.

Sometimes I think that we as Christians present the Old Testament image of God as different from the New Testament. It is as if the Lord is two different LORDS!

The God of the Old Testament we think is a God of wrath, anger, etc. We think God in the New Testament is a God of mercy, love, and kindness.

We think the God of the Old Testament is a God of chastening and judgment. The God of the New Testament we think is a God of long suffering, and tolerance.

This is not the case at all.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

He was the same person in Genesis 1 as He is in Revelation 22! He is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

He manifests at times the attributes of a lion:

Revelation 5:5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

At other times He manifests the attributes of a sacrificial lamb:

Revelation 5:12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

All in all, He is the same person. To only preach and understand Him as the suffering servant—and not to reverence Him as the One who will rule with a rod of iron—is to not preach Christ as we should.

LIKE THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTS, WE TOO CAN CORRUPT HIS IMAGE AND BRING HIM DISHONOR.

Eli's sons were grand examples of how the priesthood can be corrupted.

I Samuel 2:12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

I Samuel 2:13 And the priests' custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;

I Samuel 2:14 And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

I Samuel 2:15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

I Samuel 2:16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.

I Samuel 2:17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

I Samuel 2:22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

I Samuel 2:23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

I Samuel 2:24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress.

I Samuel 2:25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

THEY WERE STEALING THE OFFERINGS.

THEY WERE IMMORAL and WICKED.

Years ago I was talking to my grandparents who told me how their priest got in trouble for stealing bingo money from the church. I said how did they catch him? They said he got in a motorcycle accident in Bermuda with his girlfriend. (He took off with the money from Bingo Night and went away with his girlfriend to Bermuda.) He would have gotten away with it except he and his girlfriend wound up in the hospital and got caught. At least it was a girl he was with and not a boyfriend or some young boy.

How many scandals there are in the quote "CHURCH" today of all denominations? Just the other day we received a letter addressed to our church and to: The Reverend Elaine Bissol. It was from a mainline denomination that assumed every church in the area would have a woman pastor.

I think the rebuke that Isaiah gave to his nation is appropriate for our nation today:

Isaiah 3:12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

Also Jeremiah cries out

Jeremiah 5:31 The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?

I think if Jesus were to visit His church today, He would have to clean house like He did with the money changers.

Years ago I was installing an organ in a church in New York, and the priest came in with his boyfriend and introduced himself. It was common knowledge that the pastor was an open homosexual.

How many pedophiles run freely in the church?
How many scandals of immorality are reported?

Just yesterday I was visiting a brother in a hospital who told me that he lost his wife to immorality—and this sin did not occur in the secular workplace. No! She was working in the Bible college he was attending. One of the staff had violated her, and this affair continued for some time before he found out about it!

I believe that what is wrong with America is the churches of America.

Trump is campaigning and saying, “Let’s make America Great Again.”
I think we should have a campaign, “Let’s make Christ’s church great again!”

In the book of Malachi the Lord rebukes and exposes the sins of the religious leaders of the nation. If Jesus were to come back and visit His church today, I think He would start by straightening out the leadership of His church.

Listen to what the Lord said to the religious leaders in the day of Malachi:

Malachi 2:3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.

Malachi 2:4 And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:5 My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.

Malachi 2:6 The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

Malachi 2:7 For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

People want pastors who are always nice.

People want to hear soft messages—messages of love, peace, and positive themes.

Look, when things are bad, it is time to get angry.

Sounds like the Lord was angry.

I mean, how nicely can you say this:

Malachi 2:3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.

Now we all are to be priests for the Lord. We need to represent Him to an unbelieving world. How well of a job are we doing?

Do we think God has changed or will change His tone if we dishonor Him?

Malachi 2:3 Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.

Malachi 2:4 And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:5 My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.

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Malachi 2:7 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

Vs. 4 Notice how the Lord says, when I chasten you ... you shall know I have commanded this.

2:4 My covenant was with Levi ... remember your roots.

2:5 This covenant was of life and peace.

2:5 Levi was a man who feared the Lord and was afraid and trembled before the Lord. What is wrong with the church today? We have lost our fear. God is not to be feared anymore, nor do we reverence His name anymore.

2:6 The law of truth was in his mouth and iniquity was not found in his lips. We have come a long way the wrong way. Let us consider what we were when God blessed us also. When did our nation receive the blessings? What did we do? What did we believe? Go back to these roots, and we will receive the same reward.

2:7 For the priests lips should keep knowledge.. What is the main ministry of the man of God but to preach and teach the Word of God? Is there anything else we can do but preach the Word? I care little for anything else.

If we sing ... it is to sing the Word of God.

If we speak ... it is to speak the Word of God.

If we preach ... we should but preach the Word of God.

THIS IS WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT.

Why would we change this?

III. WHEN SALT HAS LOST ITS SAVOUR, WHAT GOOD IS IT?

Malachi 2:8 But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:9 Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

Doesn't this sound a lot like Matt. 5:13?

Matthew 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

When we hold the biblical standards that set us apart from the world as Kings and Priests unto God, THE WORLD WILL DESPISE US.

We are called to be different from the world; the world does not like it when we try to be like the world.

We should dress differently.

We should talk differently.

We should have different music.

We should have different standards.

BE YE SEPARATE SAITH THE LORD.

IV. GOD COMMANDS US TO LOVE THE BRETHREN.

1. OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WILL AFFECT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS.

Malachi 2:10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

Malachi 2:11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

Matthew Henry says:

How corrupt their practices were. In general, they dealt treacherously every man against his brother, v. 10. It cannot be expected that he who is false to his God should be true to his friend. They had dealt treacherously with God in his tithes and offerings, and had defrauded him, and thus conscience was debauched, its bonds and cords were broken, a door was opened to all manner of injustice and dishonesty, and the bonds of relation and natural affection are broken through likewise and no difficulty made of it. Some think that the treacherous dealings here reproved are the same with those instances of oppression and extortion which we find complained of to Nehemiah about this time, Neh. 5:3-7. Therein they forgot the God of their fathers, and the covenant of their fathers, and rendered their offerings unacceptable, Isa. 1:11.

He that is faithful in least will be faithful in much.

If we would have no fear of God in the matter of our sacred services, sacrifices, and finances, what makes us think we would will have respect for our fellow man?

Our attitude and service to God our Creator will affect our service and relationships with our fellow men.

The first and great commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart!

The second command is to love your neighbour as yourself!

By obeying the first command, you will automatically want to obey the second.

***Malachi 2:10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?
Malachi 2:11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.***

2:11 An abomination is committed in Jerusalem ? What is it?

- A. THEY PROFANED THE HOLINESS OF THE LORD, WHICH HE LOVED.
What is the Holiness of the Lord which He loves today?
Christ loved His church that He might present it to Himself.

Ephesians 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

CONSIDER THIS -

Ephesians 5:25 Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.

The job of God's leaders is to present the church to Christ—holy and without blemish!

- B. Notice how the Lord condemns these leaders for allowing God's
COVENANT PEOPLE TO MARRY THE DAUGHTER OF A STRANGE GOD!

Malachi 2:11 Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

2. GOD IS NOT RESPECTER OF PERSONS.

Malachi 2:12 The LORD will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:13 And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

Some think they are above being punished.

Those who have no human authority over them often forget the power of the Divine.

THE WICKEDNESS OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS IS DEMONSTRATED IN THESE VERSES:

Matthew 28:11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

Matthew 28:12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

Matthew 28:13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

Matthew 28:14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

Matthew 28:15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

3. THE GREATEST CORRUPTION IS TO BE HARDENED AGAINST YOUR SPOUSE.

Malachi 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

Malachi 2:15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Malachi 2:16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

Divorce is a great corruption.

The degree of hardening it causes in a person's heart is an amazing thing.

When we have no fear of God, this leads to corruption in our dealings with men.

The closest person to us should be our wife or husband.

To corrupt this covenant of marriage is to corrupt the greatest covenant God has given us apart from the New Covenant..

Malachi 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

Malachi 2:15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Malachi 2:16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

4. MEN WHO ULTIMATELY HAVE NO FEAR OF GOD CORRUPT GOOD JUDGEMENT.

Malachi 2:17 Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

Good becomes evil; and evil, good.

How wicked men become.

CONSIDER MATTHEW HENRY'S COMMENTARY ON THIS PASSAGE:

But it seems rather to refer to what was amiss in their marriages, which was likewise complained of, Neh. 13:23. Two things they are here charged with, as very provoking to God in this matter taking strange wives of heathen nations, and abusing and putting away the wives they had of their own nation; in both these they dealt treacherously and violated a sacred

covenant; the former was in contempt of the covenant of peculiarity, the latter of the marriage-covenant.

1. In contempt of the covenant God made with Israel, as a peculiar people to himself, they married strange wives, which was expressly prohibited, and provided against, in that covenant, Deu. 7:3. Observe here,

(1.) What good reason they had to deal faithfully with God and one another in this covenant, and not to make marriages with the heathen.

1. They were expressly bound out from such marriages by covenant. God engaged to do them good upon this condition, that they should not mingle with the heathen; this was the covenant of their fathers, the covenant made with their fathers, denoting the antiquity and the authority of it, and its being the great charter by which that nation was incorporated. They lay under all possible obligations to observe it strictly, yet they profaned it, as if they were not bound by it. Those profane the covenant of their fathers who live in disobedience to the command of the God of their fathers.

2. They were a peculiar people, united in one body, and therefore ought to have united for the preserving of the honour of their peculiarity: Have we not all one Father? Yes, we have, for has not one God created us? Are we not all his offspring? And are we not made of one blood? Yes, certainly we are. God is a common Father to all mankind, and, upon that account, all we are brethren, members one of another, and therefore ought to put away lying (Eph. 4:25), and not to deal treacherously, no, not any man against his brother. But here it seems to refer to the Jewish nation: Have we not all one father, Abraham, or Jacob? This they prided themselves in, We have Abraham to our father; but here it is turned upon them as an aggravation of their sin in betraying the honour of their nation by intermarrying with heathens: "Has not one God created us, that is, formed us into a people, made us a nation by ourselves, and put a life into us, distinct from that of other nations? And should not this oblige us to maintain the dignity of our character?" Note, The consideration of the unity of the church in Christ, its founder and Father, should engage us carefully to preserve the purity of the church and to guard against all corruptions.

3. They were dedicated to God, as well as distinguished from the neighbouring nations. Israel was holiness to the Lord (Jer. 2:3), taken into covenant with him, set apart by him for himself, to be to him for a name and a praise, and upon this account he loved them and delighted in them; the sanctuary set up among them was the holiness of the Lord, which he loved, of which he said, It is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it; but by marrying strange wives they profaned this holiness, and laid the honour of it in the dust. Note, Those who are devoted to God, and beloved of him, are concerned to preserve their integrity, that they may not throw themselves out of his love, nor lose the honour, or defeat the end, of their dedication to him.

(2.) How treacherously they dealt, notwithstanding, They profaned themselves in that very thing which was prescribed to them for the preserving of the honour of their singularity: Judah has married the daughter of a strange god. The harm was not so much that she was the daughter of a strange nation (God has made all nations of men, and is himself King of nations), but that she was the daughter of a strange god, trained up in the service and worship of false gods, at their disposal, as a daughter at her father's disposal, and having a dependence upon them; hence some of the rabbin (quoted by Dr. Pocock) say, He that marries a heathen woman is as if he made himself son-in-law to an idol.

The corruption of the old world began with the intermarriages of the sons of God with the daughters of men, Gen. 6:2. It is the same thing that is here complained of, but as it is expressed it sounds worse: The sons of God married the daughters of a strange god.

Herein Judah is said to have dealt treacherously, for they basely betrayed their own honour and profaned that holiness of the Lord which they should have loved (so some read it); and it is said to be an abomination committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; it was hateful to God, and very unbecoming those that were called by his name. Note, it is an abominable thing for those who profess the holiness of the Lord to profane it, particularly by yoking themselves unequally with unbelievers.

(3.) How severely God would reckon with them for it (v. 12): The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, that marries the daughter of a strange god. He has, in effect, cut himself off from the holy nation, and joined in with foreigners and aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, and so shall his doom be; God will cut him off, him and all that belongs to him; so the original intimates. He shall be cut off from Israel and from Jerusalem, and not be written among the living there. The Lord will cut off both the master and the scholar, that are guilty of this sin, both the teachers and the taught. The blind leaders and the blind followers shall fall together into the ditch, both him that wakeneth and him that answereth (so it is in the margin), for the master calls up his scholar to his business, and stirs him up in it. They shall be cut off together out of the tabernacles of Jacob. God will no more own them as belonging to his nation; nay, and the priest that offers an offering to the Lord, if he marry a strange wife (as we find many of the priests did, Ezra 10:18), shall not escape; the offering he offers shall not atone for him, but he shall be cut off from the temple of the Lord, as others from the tabernacles of Jacob. Nehemiah chased away from him, and from the priesthood, one of the sons of the high priest, whom he found guilty of this sin, Neh. 13:28.

2. In contempt of the marriage-covenant, which God instituted for the common benefit of mankind, they abused and put away the wives they had of their own nation, probably to make room for those strange wives, when it was all the fashion to marry such (v. 13): This also have you done; this is the second article of the charge. For the way of sin is down-hill, and one violation of the covenant is an inlet to another.

(1.) Let us see what it is that is complained of here: they did not behave as they ought toward their wives.

1. They were cross with them, froward and peevish, and made their lives bitter to them, so that when they came with their wives and families to worship God at the solemn feasts, which they should have done with rejoicing, they were all out of humour; the poor wives were ready to break their hearts, and, not daring to make their case known to any other, they complained to God, and covered the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying. This is illustrated by the instance of Hannah, who, upon the account of her husband's having another wife (though otherwise a kind husband), and the discontent thence arising, whenever they went up to the house of the Lord to worship fretted and wept, and was in bitterness of soul, and would not eat, 1 Sa. 1:6, 7, 10. So it was with these wives here; and this was so contrary to the cheerfulness

V. Consider in closing the final verses in this chapter and message to the pastors -

Malachi 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.

Malachi 2:15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Malachi 2:16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

Malachi 2:17 Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

2:14 Yet ye say Wherefore? People would say, "Wherefore—why would God be upset at us? Wherefore—what have we done?"

You have dealt treacherously with your wives. Marriages are a mess.

Immorality abounds.

Homosexuality accepted.

Perversion prevails.

And you say, "WHEREFORE—IS THE LORD ANGRY?"

2:15 DID HE NOT MAKE ONE? One man and One Woman make a marriage.

Does this not define what a marriage is? Will we change and expect God's blessing?

HARTFORD, Conn. - Members of the clergy are just as likely to get divorced as the men and women who stand before them at the altar and solemnly promise to stay together until death do them part.

A national survey of Protestant clergy, conducted in 1993 and 1994 by the Hartford Seminary, found that 25% of clergywomen and 20% of clergymen have been divorced at least once.

The study showed that the women were more likely to have been divorced before they were ordained, while the clergymen more often split from their spouses after taking the pulpit.

The researchers covered the Protestant spectrum, from liberal Unitarian-Universalists to conservative Southern Baptists.

"It is not that we take marriage any less seriously than other people do, but perhaps when problems arise, our ministers are less likely to stay with problematic marriages," Miller said.

She also noted that a significant percentage of Unitarian-Universalist ministers are gay or lesbian, and many of them had previously been married.

After the Unitarian-Universalists, Episcopalians were the most-divorced clergy. The survey showed 30% of the Episcopal female clergy and 25% of the males had been divorced.

Among Presbyterians, 25% of women and 19% of men had been divorced; among Methodists the rate was 26% for women and 19% for men; among Lutherans 19% of women and 9% of men had been divorced; the rate for American Baptists was 19% for women and 13% for men; for the Brethren, 15% of the women and 12% of the men had been divorced; among Disciples of Christ, 26% of women and 24% of men, and for the United Church of Christ, the rate was 26% of women, 20% of men.

"There hasn't been a lot of adverse reaction" since the statistics were released, said seminary president Barbara Brown Zikmund. "Actually, our findings ring true to what the world is really like."

The fact is that there is no difference between statistics of the so-called clergy than the rest of the nation because the rest of the nation is being led spiritually by those who are in the pulpit!

Malachi 2:15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Malachi 2:16 For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

Malachi 2:17 Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

2:15 Did he not make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit.

Did God run out of spiritual gas when He created the first marriage?

Maybe He should have been more tolerant and diversified.

Maybe He placed Adam in a man's body when it should have been a woman's—and Eve in a woman's body when it should have been a man's.

2:16 Note what God's opinion of divorce and remarriage is ...

He hates putting away.

These Jews were practicing wickedness.

2:17 Here is the bottom line: we are calling good evil, and evil good. The Lord is tired of it!

Ye have wearied the Lord!

PEOPLE WHOLESALÉ CALL EVIL GOOD AND GOOD EVIL.

Young people are being told to explore alternative lifestyles.

We promote promiscuity and immorality as the norm.

We are wearying the Lord with our wickedness.

In the days of Noah we read -

Genesis 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

WOE...

God is grieved by what is going on.
God will intervene! He will judge!

The foundation of our society is the family.
The start of every family is a marriage.
A marriage must start out with a couple who are committed to each other.
God calls marriage a covenant.