
MALACHI 2: 1 "Now, you priests, this commandment is for you.

The priests reprov'd for their unfaithfulness in their office, for which they are threatened to be deprived of their share of the sacrifice, (the shoulder), and rewarded only with ignominy and ordure, Mal 2:1-3. The degeneracy of the order is then complain'd of, and they are again threatened, Mal 2:4-9. The rest of the chapter reprov's the people for marrying strange and idolatrous women; and multiplying divorces, with all their consequent distress, in order to make way for such illicit alliances, Mal 2:10-17. See Neh 10:30; Neh 13:13, etc.

MALACHI 2: 2 If you will not listen, and if you will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name," says the LORD of Armies, "then will I send the curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart.

Verse 2

If ye will not hear - What I have spoken, lay it to heart, and let it sink down into your souls.

Give glory unto my name - That honor that is due to me as a Father, and that fear that belongs to me as a Master, Mal 1:6.

I will even send a curse upon you - I will dispense no more good.

I will curse your blessings - Even that which ye have already shall not profit you. When temporal blessings are not the means of leading us to God and heaven, they will infallibly lead us to hell. In speaking of the abuse of temporal blessings, one of our old poets, in his homely phrase, expresses himself thus: -

Thus God's best gifts, usurped by wicked ones,

To poison turn by their con-ta-gi-ons.

Yea, I have cursed them already - This may refer, generally, to unfruitful seasons; or, particularly, to a dearth that appears to have happened about this time. See Hag 1:6-11.

MALACHI 2: 3 Behold, I will rebuke your seed, and will spread dung on your faces, even the dung of your feasts; and you will be taken away with it.

Verse 3

Behold, I will corrupt your seed - So as to render it unfruitful. Newcome translates, - "I will take away from you the shoulder." This was the part that belonged to the priest, Lev 7:32; Deu 18:3.

Spread dung upon your faces - Instead of receiving a sacrifice at your hands, I will throw your offerings back into your faces. Here God shows his contempt for them and their offerings.

MALACHI 2: 4 You will know that I have sent this commandment to you, that my covenant may be with Levi," says the LORD of Armies.

Verse 4

This commandment - That in the first verse; to drive such priests from his presence and his service.

That my covenant might be with Levi - I gave the priesthood and the service of my altar to that tribe.

MALACHI 2: 5 "My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him that he might be reverent toward me; and he was reverent toward me, and stood in awe of my name.

Verse 5

My covenant was with him of life and peace - These are the two grand blessings given to men by the New Covenant, which was shadowed by the Old. To man, excluded from the favor of God, and sentenced to death because of sin, God gave ברית berith, a covenant sacrifice, and this secured life - exemption from the death deserved by transgressors; communication of that inward spiritual life given by Christ, and issuing in that eternal life promised to all his faithful disciples. And, as it secured life, so it gave peace, prosperity, and happiness; peace between God and man, between man and man, and between man and his own conscience.

MALACHI 2: 6 The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many away from iniquity.

Verse 6

The law of truth was in his mouth - See the qualifications of Levi:

1. "He feared me;" he was my sincere worshipper.
2. "He was afraid;" he acted as in the presence of a just and holy God, and acted conscientiously in all that he did.
3. "My law of truth was ever in his mouth;" by this he directed his own conduct and that of others.
4. "No iniquity;" nothing contrary to justice and equity ever proceeded "from his lips."
5. "He walked with me in peace;" he lived in such a way as to keep up union with me.
6. "He did turn many away from iniquity;" by his upright administration, faithful exhortations, and pious walk, he became the instrument of converting many sinners.

This character suits every genuine minister of God. And as the priest's lips should preserve knowledge, so the people should seek "the law at his mouth;" for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts, Mal 2:7.

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 Armies.

MALACHI 2: 8 But you have turned aside out of the way. You have caused many to stumble in the law. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi," says the LORD of Armies.

Verse 8

But ye are departed out of the way - Ye are become impure yourselves, and ye have led others into iniquity.

MALACHI 2: 9 "Therefore I have also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according to the way you have not kept my ways, but have had respect for persons in the law.

Verse 9

Therefore have I also made you contemptible - The people despised you because they saw that you acted contrary to your functions. This has happened repeatedly since, to several classes of priests. Not maintaining, by purity of life and soundness of doctrine, the dignity of the ministerial function, they became contemptible before the people; their meager preaching was disregarded, and their persons at last cast out as a general loathing to the universe! See what happened to the truly abominable priesthood of France and Rome 1796-8. They were the sole cause of that infidelity that brought about the revolution. They are now partially restored; and are endeavouring to supply by grimace, paltry superstition, and jesuitical cunning, what they want in purity of morals, soundness of doctrine, and unction from God. They must mend, or look for another revolution. Mankind will no longer put up with the chaff of puerile and fanatical ceremonies in place of the wheat of God's word and worship.

MALACHI 2: 10 Don't we all have one father? Hasn't one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?

Verse 10

Have we not all one Father? - From this to Mal 2:16 the prophet censures the marriages of Israelites with strange women, which the law had forbidden, Deu 7:3. And also divorces, which seem to have been multiplied for the purpose of contracting these prohibited marriages. - Newcome.

Why do we deal treacherously - Gain the affections of the daughter of a brother Jew, and then profane the covenant of marriage, held sacred among our fathers, by putting away this same wife and daughter! How wicked, cruel, and inhuman!

MALACHI 2: 11 Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god.

Verse 11

Daughter of a strange god - Of a man who worships an idol.

MALACHI 2: 12 The LORD will cut off, to the man who does this, him who wakes and him who answers, out of the tents of Jacob, and him who offers an offering to the LORD of Armies.

Verse 12

The master and the scholar - He who teachers such doctrine, and he who follows this teaching, the Lord will cut off both the one and the other.

MALACHI 2: 13 This again you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with sighing, because he doesn't regard the offering any more, neither receives it with good will at your hand.

Verse 13

Covering the altar of the Lord with tears - Of the poor women who, being divorced by cruel husbands, come to the priests, and make an appeal to God at the altar; and ye do not speak against this glaring injustice.

MALACHI 2: 14 Yet you say, 'Why?' Because the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion, and the wife of your covenant.

Verse 14

Ye say, Wherefore? - Is the Lord angry with us? Because ye have been witness of the contract made between the parties; and when the lawless husband divorced his wife, the wife of his youth, his companion, and the unite of his covenant, ye did not execute on him the discipline of the law. They kept their wives till they had passed their youth, and then put them away, that they might get young ones in their place.

MALACHI 2: 15 Did he not make you one, although he had the residue of the Spirit? Why one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

Verse 15

And did not he make one? - One of each kind, Adam and Eve. Yet had he the residue of the Spirit, he could have made millions of pairs, and inspired them all with living souls. Then wherefore one? He made one pair from whom all the rest might proceed, that he might have a holy offspring; that children being a marked property of one man and one woman, proper care might be taken that they should be brought up in the discipline of the Lord. Perhaps the holy or godly seed, זרע אלהים zera Elohim, a seed of God, may refer to the Messiah. God would have the whole human race to spring from one pair, that Christ, springing from the same family, might in his sufferings taste death for every man; because he had that nature that was common to the whole human race. Had there been several heads of families in the beginning, Jesus must have been incarnated from each of those heads, else his death could have availed for those only who belonged to the family of which he was incarnated.

Take heed to your spirit - Scrutinize the motives which induce you to put away your wives.

MALACHI 2: 16 For I hate divorce", says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with violence!" says the LORD of Armies. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you don't deal treacherously.

Verse 16

For the Lord - hateth putting away - He abominates all such divorces, and him that makes them.

Covereth violence with his garment - And he also notes those who frame idle excuses to cover the violence they have done to the wives of their youth, by putting them away, and taking others in their place, whom they now happen to like better, when their own wives have been worn down in domestic services.

MALACHI 2: 17 You have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet you say, 'How have we wearied him?' In that you say, 'Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them;' or 'Where is the God of justice?'

Verse 17

Ye have wearied the Lord - He has borne with you so long, and has been provoked so often, that he will bear it no longer. It is not fit that he should.

Every one that doeth evil - Ye say that it is right in the sight of the Lord to put away a wife, because she has no longer found favor in the sight of her husband. And because it has not been signally punished hitherto, ye blaspheme and cry out, "Where is the God of judgment?" Were he such as he is represented, would he not speak out? All these things show that this people were horribly corrupt. The priests were bad; the prophets were bad; the Levites were bad; and no wonder that the people were irreligious, profane, profligate, and cruel.