

## Malachi 2:13-16

I have been asked to respond to the use of Malachi 2:13-16 as a proof text to justify divorce for spousal abuse. The key verse is v14, but let's first understand the context. Malachi 2 begins with God's command for the "priests," those He has lifted up to be instruments of instruction and obedience on behalf of the congregation under Mosaic Law. Not taking seriously the truths of God or perverting His truths in a manner that gives honor to God and His name will result in great cursing of that which the Lord has proclaimed to be a blessing. Those God lifts up are under obligation to respect and awe Him AND His covenants. God disclosed His standard for leadership in verse 6:

Malachi 2:6

"True instruction was in his mouth and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many back from iniquity.

God holds His ministry accountable to speak and teach His words TRUTHFULLY ... to have a WALK worthy of His blessing, to walk with God in peace and in truth. The ministry walks with God when they proclaim God's truth as He grants them understanding. It is the primary task of ministers to TURN PEOPLE AWAY FROM SIN. The ministry accomplish this by honoring their covenant with God to speak and teach God's mind to the people in sincerity and truth.

Malachi 2:7

"For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

The ministry that God lifts up are MESSENGERS of His truth and His ways. Now God in verse 8 begins to call His ministers on the carpet from turning aside from "The Way" (does this term sound familiar to some of you?)

Malachi 2:8

"But as for you, you have turned aside from the way; you have caused many to stumble by the instruction; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi," says the LORD of hosts.

God's ministry have abandoned His truth and began to teach other things "not" of HIS teachings and that are "not" HIS ways. They have corrupted the covenant of Levi and are therefore despised and abased.

Malachi 2:9

"So I also have made you despised and abased before all the people, just as you are not keeping My ways but are showing partiality in the instruction.

They were showing "partiality" of teaching by yielding to the people what THEY WANTED TO HEAR. They were having double standards by not applying to all the truth of His Word. God is no respecter of persons yet His servants were becoming respecters of different classes of people.

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Malachi 2:10

"Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers?"

God's law is to be applied to all equitably by all those under His law. Inequitable application of the law of God He refers to as TREACHERY and PROFANITY of the covenant and promises God has made with the fathers like Moses and Abraham.

In verse 11 Judah has engaged in idolatry ... engaging in or accepting a form or means of worship that is not from God. God calls this "marriage" or joining of His truth with the lies that come from a foreign god as an "abomination" a "treachery" and the "profaning of His sanctuary." To those who have engaged in this practice and have married or joined believers (truth) with non-believers (lies) is a serious offense to God. For what fellowship does light have with darkness?

In verse 12 God declares that man will be cut off and the gifts he presents to God will be rejected. In verse 13, God states He also does not regard the tears and weeping upon His altar for His rejection of the profaned offerings. The good things the ministers do are not acknowledged by God or acceptable to God regardless of the tears shed and apparent "false repentance."

The treacherous ministers begin to defend themselves as one innocent. God here uses the marriage contract as an analogy for what the priests have engaged upon spiritually. His servants were intent upon serving strange gods which is akin their rejection of the Son of God, (God of the Old Covenant) and His Word, ordinances, and forms of worship. We see how they did not recognize the true Messiah for they profaned Him long before He became flesh. They had not the true God, nor did they worship him, but became guilty of idolatry. Understanding how the analogy of marriage is being used to illustrate a spiritual and physical truth is very significant here.

Malachi 2:14

"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 companion and your wife by covenant."

The physical and spiritual realities are uniform. One is used to help explain the other. The ministry was notoriously guilty of breach of covenant with God. The term wife of your youth is symbolic of the days when the love between the two was very strong. The covenant was between the Lord and His people much in the same way that the marriage contract is between God and each of the parties.

Side Note: The marriage contract is lost and misunderstood. God is not the witness but the principal to the contract. The man covenants with God to provide and fulfill the terms of his contract with God with the wife as beneficiary and so too the woman contracts with God to fulfill her obligation to the man with God. There are two separate contracts, one is the man

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with God for the wife and the other is the woman with God for her husband. What "God has joined" let no man put asunder." God is not the witness to the contract but the party to the contract.

The defilement is having another enter into the sacred contract that was neither a party to nor a circumstance or duty for. What sexual immorality is to a marriage ... idolatry is to our relationship with God. Not honoring the terms of the contract in marriage is akin to the servants of our God not honoring their duties to teach His truth and His laws, His ways and His mind to the congregation. The wives of the Israelites had not behaved properly towards their husbands, and husbands have dealt treacherously with their wives. They were no longer acting in love **THOUGH THEY ARE BOUND BY CONTRACT**, "she is your companion and your wife by contract speaks to the bindedness to the contract, not the release from it.

The penalty for divorce under Mosaic law is physical death much in the same way that idolatry is spiritual death. The priests were not applying this penalty equally among the people and they were perverting the sanctity of the physical and spiritual contracts. They were not honoring God nor were they teaching this sin of hating and divorcing their wives, or of marrying others besides them, which prevailed even into our Lord's time. The treachery was through divorce or polygamy which arose from hatred and contempt of the wife of their youth. This is analogous to the priests not fulfilling their obligation which results in the hatred of God and his laws. A joining creates a oneness ... one flesh ... much in the same manner that we are joined spiritually to our God.

Mark 10:8

AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh.

1 Corinthians 6:16

Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body [with her?] For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."

John 14:20

"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

John 17:21

that they may all be one; even as You, Father, [are] in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

Now I hope you understand my passion against the cults and why I speak to those with a sense of urgency and conviction against embracing the doctrines of demons which pervert the truth of God.

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and today and forever.

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Conclusion: These verses in no way justify a teaching that divorce for spousal abuse is permissible. To teach these verses do is an abomination and a treachery to our living God. If abuse is permissible reason for divorce, these verses are not the justification for it.