

Malachi 2:11-12
Tying the Knot with the Enemy's Daughter: Satan's Inroad to the House of God
Jimmy Snowden
Sovereign Grace Fellowship: 4-19-09

Introduction

What we have seen thus far in the book of Malachi is that Malachi is bringing a constant front against the Israelites because of their sin. He is doing everything he can to show them their need for repentance—to plead with them to turn from their sins, back to Yahweh. Two weeks ago I preached a sermon on Malachi 2:10 titled “Stabbing God Through Man’s Back.” In this sermon we first got a bird’s eye view of 2:10-16 and then we camped out at vs. 10 for a bit. I am going to take a few minutes to review what we learned two weeks ago.

What we see in *Malachi 2:10-16* is that *God is dealing primarily with one issue: namely, Israel’s rebellion against God in marrying foreign, idol-worshipping women and the consequent divorces that came about because of it.*

The key to understanding and following the flow of this section is the word “faithless.” Other translations translate this word as “dealing treacherously.” This phrase is used five times throughout these seven verses (vss. 10, 11, 14, 15, 16), and acts as bookends for this section. The section begins in vs. 10 which centers on the Israelite’s lack of faithfulness to one another, and ends in vs. 16 which centers on the Israelite men and their lack of faithfulness to their wives. What this should lead us to see is that God’s primary concern with the Israelites in these seven verses is their lack of faithfulness in their covenantal relationships, primarily in their marital relationships. And I would add this week that their lack of faithfulness to each other (and especially in regard to their wives) is the result of their lack of faithfulness to Yahweh in regard to the covenant he made with them.

Primarily we saw that Yahweh argues from general to specific in 2:10-16. In vs. 10 Malachi lays forth Israel’s sin in general, and then in vss. 11-16 he narrows his focus to the specific area in which Israel really struggled. What we saw in vs. 10 was that Yahweh chastised the Israelites for not being faithful to each other in their covenantal relationships. He based his rebuke on their common nature and origin (“Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?”). Ultimately what we saw in vs. 10 is that Israel’s faithlessness to each other is ultimately faithlessness against God himself. This can be seen from the phrase, “profaning the covenant of our fathers.” In essence, the thing that made Israel’s faithlessness to each other so awful was that it was a breach of the covenant that God had made with their fathers. To be faithless to each other was to break God’s covenant. So often in our relationships we think that when we mistreat each other we are primarily sinning against each other when actually all sin is first and foremost against God. If the Israelites in Malachi’s day would have been faithful to the covenant that God had made with them, they would not have broken faith with one another. After all, love for each other is at the heart of the covenant that God made with them (Leviticus 19:18). You will even notice that the 10 commandments are broken up into two sections: the first four commandments have to do with Israel’s faithfulness in their relationship with God (Exodus 20:4-11) while the last 6 have to do with Israel’s faithfulness in their relationships with each other (Exodus 20:12-17). This is why Jesus

said that the Greatest Commandment, the commandment upon which all of the law and the prophets hang, is love for God and love for your neighbor (Matthew 22:34-40). Thus, a lack of faithful love for each other is ultimately an offense against God, a breach of his covenant.

You might remember that we took a look at Psalm 51:4. This is a prayer that David prayed after coming to realize the depth of his sin in committing adultery with Bathsheba and having her husband, Uriah the Hittite, killed. Notice that David does not say, “Against Bathsheba and Uriah have I sinned.” Rather, in reference to the Lord, he says,

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

The reason why he does not say that he sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah is because he didn’t transgress Bathsheba or Uriah’s standard of righteousness. No, he transgressed Yahweh’s standard of righteousness as set forth in the “covenant of our fathers.” Thus, you can see why I titled the sermon on Malachi 2:10, “Stabbing God Through Man’s Back.”

This morning we will be looking at Malachi 2:11-12 as we continue our trek through the book of Malachi. As stated above, in vs. 10 God deals with Israel’s sin of faithlessness in a general way, and now in vs. 11-16 God pinpoints exactly how the Israelites have been faithless toward each other. What we find in 2:11-12 is that the Israelites’ faithlessness to each other, and thus ultimately to God, was exhibited through their disobedience in marrying foreign women.

Observe the text,

¹¹Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god. ¹²As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD cut him off from the tents of Jacob—even though he brings offerings to the LORD Almighty.

Notice the title of the sermon, “Tying the Knot with the Enemy’s Daughter: Satan’s Inroad to the House of God.” This morning we are going to take a walk through the Old Testament to show you why God took intermarriage, ‘marrying the daughter of a foreign god,’ so seriously. Before we dig in, though, I want to give you a quick snap shot of where we will end up. What we are going to find is that God took intermarriage as seriously as he did because intermarriage was Satan’s inroad to God’s house—marriage was the hole through which Satan, the rat, crawled to corrupt, defile, and pollute God’s people from the inside out. It is one thing when the enemy is dropping bombs and shooting arrows from the outside in, it is another when his henchmen are standing next to you within your own ranks. The way that Satan dug himself and his evil ways into the fabric of Israel was through intermarriage—by having the men of Israel marry his idol-worshipping daughters.

Malachi 2:11-12

We see in the beginning part of vs. 11 is that Yahweh considered marriage to the ‘daughter of a foreign god’ to be a ‘*detestable thing*.’ According to Yahweh marriage to the ‘daughter of a foreign god’ was an abomination (as some translations put it). Think of something in our culture that we would consider to be vile or detestable, an abomination. What about a personal banker ripping off an elderly widow, running away with her last cent never to appear again: would we not consider this to be an abomination, a vile crime worthy of legal action? What about abortion, homosexuality, abuse, and other such vile actions: well, marriage to the ‘daughter of a foreign god’ was just as vile, repugnant, and foul in God’s eyes. From the Old Testament perspective, marrying the ‘daughter of a foreign god’ was something worthy of God’s just condemnation. Notice how serious the consequences of marrying the daughter of a foreign god were:

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! (2:12)

What was the consequence of marrying the daughter of a foreign God? Complete excommunication, expulsion from the community of God’s covenant people—the OT equivalent to church discipline. This was no small offense in the eyes of God. In many ways marriage to foreign women was one of the greatest offenses that the Israelites could have committed. I have been amazed at how often this commandment is repeated in the OT. In fact, one of the things that has become quite clear is that intermarriage with idol-worshipping women was the primary thing which caused the collapse of the powerful, God-blessed Israelite nation built by David and Solomon. We will get back to this in a moment. For now, we need to consider a few things about the Israelite’s sin in marrying the ‘daughter of a foreign god.’

God’s Beef With Israel

Notice here that God’s primary beef with the Israelites was not that they were marrying foreign women, period. It was that they were marrying the ‘daughter of a foreign god.’ Thus, it would be inappropriate to conclude from this command that God is some sort of an ethnocentric racist. God’s concern about the Israelites here is not that they were simply marrying foreign women. Turn with me to Matthew 1:1-7. The purpose of looking at Jesus’ genealogy in Matthew 1 is to show how antiracial God actually is, and to solidify the fact that God did not give this command to the Israelites (to not marry foreign, idol-worshipping women) out of a distaste or hatred for non-Israelite nations.

¹The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. ²Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, ⁷and Solomon the father of Rehoboam...

Notice here that this is the genealogy of Jesus Christ. We see that the genealogy starts with Abraham and works its way up to the 12 patriarchs where we see that Jesus ultimately comes from the tribe of Judah. If we keep following the descent of the Son of God we get to vs. 5 where we see that Salmon was the ‘father of Boaz *by Rahab.*’ Now don’t forget that this is the line of the Messiah. The question we need to ask is this, ‘Who on earth was Rahab?’ Certainly she was an Israelite, right?! Wrong, Rahab was the Canaanite woman (a Canaanitess) from Jericho who hid the 12 Israelite spies who came to Jericho to size up the land as they were making plans to take the land over (Joshua 2). What we see here is that Rahab, a Canaanitess, is in the line of the Messiah. Salmon, an Israelite, a descendent of Abraham, married this foreign woman. Thus, Salmon married the Canaanitess, Rahab, and she bore him Boaz.

Notice what the next part of the verse says; Boaz became the ‘father of Obed *by Ruth.*’ Boaz, whose mommy was the Canaanitess, Rahab, married Ruth. Who was Ruth? She was a Moabitess, a foreign woman. The interesting thing about this marriage is that God blessed and exalted it, He wanted it. What we then find in the next part of the verse is that Ruth, the Moabitess, bore a son, Obed, to Boaz. Obed became the father of Jesse, who then became the father of David. Notice that even by the time of David there was much Gentile blood in the tribe of Judah. David’s great, great grandma was Ruth the Moabitess, and his great, great, great grandma was Rahab the Canaanitess. What is even more interesting is that, in vs. 6, David ended up marrying Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah *the Hittite.* If Uriah was a Hittite, a non-Israelite, his wife, Bathsheba, was most likely a Hittite, a non-Israelite, as well. Thus, we see that David himself married a foreign woman and Solomon was the fruit of their martial intercourse.

I find there to be two interesting things gleaned from this genealogy in Matthew 1: (1) Technically, at least according to the mindset of the day, Jesus was a full-fledged Jew. There was an unbroken line of Jewish blood from Jesus to Solomon, to David, to Judah, to Abraham when you look solely at the male side of his genealogy. However, Jesus had much Gentile blood flowing through his veins. As a theological aside, those who have this idea that God’s purposes regarding the human race primarily surround the Jews need to take another look at their own Messiah. I am not suggesting that Jesus was not a pure Jew, but it does mean that he did have much Gentile blood flowing through his veins. Israel certainly was and still is a special nation (Romans 11), however God’s purpose for Israel was not to be the nation of nations, the nation served by all the nations of the world, but rather they were to be a servant, a redemptive servant of God, to the rest of the nations. Jesus himself had Gentile blood pumping through his veins. We know that he at least had Rahab’s Canaanite blood, Ruth’s Moabite blood, and Bathsheba’s Hittite blood pumping through his veins. God has never been an ethnocentric racist—his own Son in at least some way represented the many nations surrounding Israel (the very nations God called the Israelites to wipe out).

(2) Notice the amount of interracial marriage in the line of the Messiah. Of course, David’s relationship with Bathsheba, although the Lord abundantly blessed it, was not initially pleasing to the Lord. However, we do see that Salmon married Rahab of which nothing bad is said, and I would suggest that Salmon was blessed by the Lord for marrying Rahab. After all, she proved herself to be a God-fearing woman (Hebrews 11:31). We also see that Boaz honorably married Ruth the Moabitess. The point of all of this is to show that God had nothing against the marriage of foreign women. In fact, God

was so pro-interracial marriage that he incorporated interracial marriage into the line of Christ, the God-man.

Thus, we can conclude that God's primary beef with Israel had very little to do with the nationality of the women they married; rather, his primary beef had to do with the heart and allegiance of the women they married. God had purposed to make Israel his special people, his special possession (Exodus 19:5-6). He wanted to set aside a people for himself on the earth who were not going to follow the course of the world by falling into immorality and idolatry, who were going to rise above the filth of the nations. He wanted to set a people apart for himself who were going to represent him and his righteous standard to the world. In order to keep them pure from the defilement of the world, he told them to not marry foreign, idol-worshipping women. In fact, he requested that they steer clear from any and all contracts and binding relationships with the nations of the world in order to avoid the temptation of following after them in their godless ways. You see, God knew that defilement and pollution were inevitable if the Israelites were to bind themselves to the heathen nations of the ancient world. After all, God's righteous plans for Israel went completely against the course and pattern of the fallen world in which they found themselves. He knew that his people, Israel, as fallen beings were going to fall into the course and pattern of this fallen world if they bound themselves to the world. He knew that if the Israelites bound themselves to the kingdoms and people of the pagan world they would be more influence by the nations than the nations would be by Israel. Thus, his purpose for calling his people to steer clear of binding relationships with the people of the world was his way of protecting them from falling into the same defilement and pollution that the nations had sold themselves to. Observe the following passage from Deuteronomy 7:

¹"When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than yourselves, ²and when the LORD your God gives them over to you, and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction. You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. ³You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, ⁴for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly. ⁵But thus shall you deal with them: you shall break down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and chop down their Asherim and burn their carved images with fire. ⁶"For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 7:1-6)

Notice here that the commandment he gave regarding marriage to foreign women had everything to do with protecting Israel from the trap of idolatry and everything that was associated with it. His reason for this is found in vs. 6. What we see in vs. 6 is that God called them to not bind themselves to the surrounding nations because he had called them to be 'a people holy to the Lord your God.' Holy literally means 'separate', 'set

apart' for the Lord. In order to really wrap your mind around why intermarriage was such a big deal to God you have to understand what Canaanite pagan idolatry consisted of. It consisted of child sacrifice, promiscuous sex with men and animals alike, incest, homosexuality, and many other types of malice (Leviticus 18:1-19:4). The nations surrounding Israel were not simply a little lost in life's journey, they were completely opposed to God and unashamedly sold out to everything opposed to Yahweh and his righteous character. If you were to look up the word 'dirty' or 'putrid' in the dictionary it is likely that you would find a picture of the Old Testament Canaanites.

Notice in vs. 3-4 God's reason for commanding the Israelites to not intermarry. The primary reason he asked the Israelites to not intermarry was because he knew that if they did, their foreign, idol-worshipping women would teach their children the evil ways of the nations. What you find in the Old Testament is that, much like today, the home was the birth of everything that permeated society. God knew that Satan would have an inroad into the nation of Israel through the family and so he laid forth a strict word of warning to them to not marry women who were not sold out to Yahweh, his righteousness, and his truth. This should highlight for us the importance of teaching our own kids, knowing that the family is so influential in God's Kingdom. Notice the drastic consequence which he laid forth to the Israelites if they were to disobey him in this area, "*Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly*" (vs. 4). Why such a drastic consequence? Because, God wanted his people to be peculiar—he wanted them to represent himself, his glory, and his righteousness to the world—and he knew that if they were to marry these foreign, idol-worshipping women—if they were to bind themselves to the world by covenants and contracts—they would become just as wicked and defiled as the other nations.

The Beginning of Israel's Love Affair With Other God's

What we find is that despite the constant warnings that God had given the Israelites regarding the danger of marrying the 'daughter of a foreign god,' they did so anyway. Almost as soon as they entered Canaan they started making contracts, covenants, and other binding agreements with the people of the land against God's command. They did not take his warnings seriously. And what we ultimately find is that Israel's rebellion against God in this area led to the downfall of their nation. Simply put, Israel got too comfortable with the nations surrounding them, and as God warned, they became just like them. Turn with me to 1 Kings 11. In this passage you will see that Solomon's uncontrollable passion for foreign woman led to the downfall of Israel. This was the sin that destroyed Israel. And why, because it made a hole through which Satan could weasel his way and defile and pollute Israel from the inside out. What we see with Solomon is that Satan didn't just infiltrate God's ranks; no, he burrowed himself into the heart of the most powerful man in Israel. Through Solomon, Satan infiltrated the throne of Israel. How did he get through? In short, he got in by enticing Solomon to go after his idol-worshipping daughters. Look with me at 1 Kings 11:1-13

¹Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ²from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will

turn away your heart after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. ³He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. ⁴For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. ⁵For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. ⁷Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. ⁸And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods.

⁹And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice ¹⁰and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded. ¹¹Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. ¹²Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen."

Satan effectively infiltrated Israel from the top through enticing Solomon with his own idol-worshipping daughters. Solomon's disobedience in marrying foreign women caused him to go after other gods, just as God warned. In vs. 11-12 God promised Solomon that he was going to rip the kingdom from his hand and give it to his servant. And after Solomon died, Israel, which consisted of 12 tribes, for all intents and purposes, fell apart. The kingdom was sorely divided. Israel became subject to the same sort of contentious and violent division that now exist between North and South Korea. To this day Israel remains divided. However, he said that he was not going to tear the whole kingdom from him; rather he was going to 'give one tribe to Solomon's son.' The tribe that God gave to his son was Judah. What ended up happening is that Israel, which consisted of the 12 tribes, because of God's judgment on Solomon because of his sin in following after other gods, which was the result of marrying foreign, idol-worshipping women, was broken in two. And in the same way that Korea was broken into Northern and Southern Korea, Israel was broken into Northern Israel and Southern Israel. From this point on, the nation of Israel went down hill. And why, because of Solomon's idolatry! And what was the root cause of Solomon's idolatry, his binding relationships (i.e., marriage) to foreign, idol-worshipping women.

On top of this, Solomon set a precedent for the rest of the Israelite kings to follow. What we see from Solomon on is a downward spiral. From the time of Solomon on we see this decline where the Israelites and her Kings fell into the ways of the world. There were a few kings, Josiah for example, who decided to take a strong stance against idols and the wicked ways of the nations, but these kings were few and far between. Solomon, in essence, tried to keep a foot in two worlds—he sought allegiance to Yahweh while worshipping the idols of his wives at the same time. Little by little Satan used his idol-

worshipping daughters to draw the people of Israel away from Yahweh. Little by little the Israelites fell deeper and deeper into idolatry. This is generally how Satan always works, Satan never tempts us to become ax murderers, rather he starts with something small, and begins the slow, yet effective, process of forming a callous over our hearts. Slowly but surely our sensitivity to sin deadens. The next thing you know, you are living a life sold out to sin.

It is that whole sort of Camel-asking-to-get-his-head-under-the-tent-situation. You know the story.

There was once a man who lived in a tent. A camel came to the tent one day. "I want to live in this nice tent," said the camel. So he put his head through the door. The man saw the camel's head and asked, "What are you doing?" "Oh, I am putting my head into your tent." "The camel's head will do no harm in my tent," said the man. Then the camel put one foot into the tent. "What are you doing?" "Oh, I am putting one foot into your tent." "The camel's one foot will do no harm," said the man. Then the camel put two feet into the nice little tent. "What are you doing?" "Oh, I am putting two feet into your pleasant tent." "The camel's two feet will do no harm in my tent," said the man. Then the camel put three feet into the little tent. "What are you doing? You are in my tent. Go out." The camel put four feet into the tent. Then he said, "It is my tent. You go out." And he put the man out.

The Slippery Slope of Idolatry

Solomon, proverbially speaking, let Satan's head into God's tent. How did Satan get his head in the tent? By enticing Solomon with his own idol-worshipping daughters. He weaseled his way into God's most influential institution, the family. And from this point on, little by little, each successive king allowed more and more of the enemy to invade God's ranks. Take a look with me at 2 Kings 21:1-9. In this passage you will see that it didn't take long before Satan (the camel), proverbially speaking, took over God's tent. What you are going to see in this passage is a summary of the horrid reign of Manasseh, king of Judah. Manasseh reigned about 300 years after King Solomon. Observe King Manasseh and notice how he became indistinguishable from the surrounding nations in their idolatry and immorality.

¹Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah. ²And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the despicable practices of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. ³For he rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had destroyed, and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. ⁴And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem will I put my name." ⁵And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶And he burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking

him to anger. ⁷And the carved image of Asherah that he had made he set in the house of which the LORD said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever. ⁸And I will not cause the feet of Israel to wander anymore out of the land that I gave to their fathers, if only they will be careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the Law that my servant Moses commanded them." ⁹But they did not listen, and Manasseh led them astray to do more evil than the nations had done whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel.

Was there a difference between Manasseh and the surrounding kings of the heathen nations? Not at all! Notice a few things about the fall of Israel from the passage above: (1) Manasseh rebuilt the high places and altars for worshipping idols (vs. 3), (2) actually introduced idol worship in the temple of Yahweh by building altars for these false gods in the temple (vss. 4-7), (3) he actually sacrificed his son on the altar of an idol—maybe even in the temple of Yahweh itself (vs. 6), (4) consulted fortune-tellers and such instead of, as the prophets of old, seeking Yahweh for direction, and most of all (5) notice in vs. 9 that Manasseh led Israel to become more corrupt, defiled, vile, and polluted than the nations (the Hittites, the Gergashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites—Deuteronomy 7:1).

The Consequence of Marrying the ‘daughter of a foreign god’

In, essence this passage regarding Manasseh sums up the consequence of Solomon’s disobedience to God in marrying foreign women. Do you remember the warning that Yahweh delivered to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 7:3-4 regarding marriage to foreign, idol-worshipping women?

³You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, ⁴for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.

What we see in this passage is the fulfillment of this warning. Observe King Manasseh and notice how he became indistinguishable from the surrounding nations in their idolatry and immorality. Solomon invited Satan to put his head under Yahweh’s tent when he disobediently married foreign, idol-worshipping women. Little by little Satan inched his way in until with Manasseh he found a way to get his whole self in God’s tent, defiling and corrupting all that God set apart for himself. Really, King Manasseh is the ultimate evidence of the awful consequences of intermarriage.

Notice the warning God gave in vs. 4, “*Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.*” Ultimately what you find is that God did destroy Israel because of their idolatry. In 722 BC he sent the Assyrians against the Northern Kingdom to judge them for their idolatry, and he sent the Babylonians against the Southern Kingdom in 586 BC to judge them for their idolatry. Neither the Northern nor the Southern Kingdoms in Israel recovered from God’s judgment upon them.

Back to Square One

Let us go back to Malachi 2:11-12 now and see if our walk through the Old Testament has helped us understand these verses a little bit better.

¹¹Judah has broken faith. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves, by marrying the daughter of a foreign god. ¹²As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD cut him off from the tents of Jacob—even though he brings offerings to the LORD Almighty.

Do you now understand why God considered marriage to the daughter of a foreign god to be ‘detestable,’ an abomination, a vile action worthy of complete excommunication? Marriage to the daughter of a foreign god is worthy of such drastic judgment because it was Satan’s inroad into the very heart of God’s people. Marriage to the daughter of a foreign God was Satan’s way of getting his head in Israel’s tent. Satan’s ploy to keep the people of God from representing him, his glory, and his righteousness is by infiltrating them, polluting them from the inside out. This is exactly what he did with Israel.

Thus, what we see is that God did not command the Israelites to not marry foreign women because he was racist; rather, it was because he wanted a pure, separate, and undefiled people who would represent him to the world, and he knew that Satan used idol-worshipping women as a ploy to infiltrate and pollute Israel, keeping them from living lives to the glory of God.

I understand that there was very little application in this sermon this morning. However, next week the entire sermon will be the application of the truths we learned this morning. Sometimes it is important to spend time interpreting the text of Scripture, because your application will only be as good as your interpretation.