

Breakdown Of the Old Covenant

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[0 : 00] of our fathers. We were given this covenant relationship with God, but we have profaned the covenant. We have made the covenant of none effect.

We, instead of it being a holy thing in our midst, we have lost it. Then he describes one of the other tribes of the children of Israel, Judah.

And Judah has been faithless and an abomination has been committed in Israel and Jerusalem. Then he tells what the abomination is. Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord. That is, this same profaning the covenant is profaning the sanctuary right at the heart, because that's where it comes from.

What I think he's saying is that it's at this seeking or forgetting to take to lay it seriously to heart, to give glory to God.

Forgetting the function of the offering in the temple, profaning the sanctuary of the Lord. When that breaks down, then the whole society breaks down around it.

[1 : 16] And the breakdown was exhibited by daughters of marrying, daughters of foreign gods. Not marrying people of your own faith, going outside of that.

And the consequences of that are in verse 12. The Lord cuts off from the tents of Jacob, the man who does this.

Cut off from the worship of the people of God. Cut off from worship. And lots of people have, you know, lots of people have disobeyed God.

And so, no longer go up with joy to celebrate. And no longer have any sense of praise. And no longer can lay it seriously to heart to give glory to God.

The whole thing just breaks down. The wrong kind of marriages are taking place. Marriages for the wrong reasons. And then he came to the verse which Marcus has already told you about.

[2 : 26] So I'll leave that out. You cover the Lord's altar with tears in verse 13. With weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor at your hand.

We've come together tonight to make an offering to God. And since time began, people have gathered together to make an offering to God. And instead of there being a sense of a worshipful offering to God, the thing breaks down.

It isn't acceptable to God. So we end up simply entertaining ourselves. And you ask why.

Well, he's told how the nation has broken down. How the covenant with God has broken down. How the nation, national covenant has broken down. And now he talks about how the family covenant has broken down.

He says, you ask why. Why? It's because the Lord was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth. To whom you have been faithless. Though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

[3 : 40] See, the whole thing is that the covenant breaks down at every level. Once it's broke, the covenant with God is broken down. The covenant that holds the nation together breaks down. The covenant that holds the family together breaks down.

And that's how the society works. And he goes on to say, has not the one God made and sustained for us the spirit of life?

And why does he desire godly offspring? You take heed to yourselves. Let none be faithless to the wife of his youth. For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel.

And covering one's garments with violence. One of the commentators says that what that is, in effect, is that he's saying, you are, I mean, you have to take the word violence out of there, it's suggested.

Because the violence is the violence of making sacrifice at the temple of God. That this is back to the offering again. And on the one hand, he's carrying on with his garments, in a sense, are soiled by the fact that he's going on with the process of worshiping God through the offering.

[5 : 00] But at the same time, he has broken the covenant he has with the wife of his youth. Now, you know, I know I don't want, at this point, to show partiality in instruction.

But obviously, the burden of divorce falls in our society and in our church very heavily on the people who have been divorced.

And, you know, there's a kind of shrinking back and saying, there are the people. But let me remind you that this is the fourth step in the process.

It was the breakdown of the covenant with God first. The breakdown of the national covenant next. Then the breakdown of the family covenant.

Then the breakdown of the personal covenant with God. So that, in a sense, it's the result of a whole series of breakdowns. And though individuals who are involved in it bear a terrible burden.

[6 : 15] For which I'm sure that the compassion of God is available in certain ways. And undoubtedly, it's very much available through God's redemptive purposes in Christ.

Still, divorce is not just an incident that takes place in our society. The family on the corner over there have just got a divorce.

Well, so, so what? Well, the so what of that is that it affects all of us. We are, in a sense, they are responding to the society that we live in and of which we are responsible for.

So that we need a good deal of care for people who are caught in that situation. For it says, I hate divorce, says the Lord.

And divorce, you know, doesn't just refer to something that happens in court. Divorce refers to something which is, which is, I think, alien to God's purpose.

[7 : 24] You know, that we are alienated from one another. And God wants to bring us together. But instead of there being a dynamic force at work in our society.

Bringing people together and bonding them together and uniting them together. And giving them a solid relationship to one another. And making them one. Instead of that principle being at work in our society.

There is another principle in which people are being torn apart. And being alienated from one another. And cut off from one another.

And that that process is a breaking down process. As opposed to the healing and redemptive purposes of God's forgiveness. Which is a bringing together. And so God sees his people breaking down and separating from one another.

And that process at work in our society and in our world is divorce. Divorce not just of husbands and wives.

[8 : 29] But divorce as a general principle of our new age society. In which everybody is going to live for themselves alone. Cut off and divorced from everybody else.

That that's part of the process that takes place. Well, the passage does that.

And in a sense the whole of the Old Testament fails. This is the last book. The Old Testament has not got the answer.

But just think of how Malachi centers out the priest. The offering of the sacrifice. Taking it to heart to give glory to God. Presenting an offering which is acceptable to God.

Giving a blessing which has God's blessing on it. All those things that are meant to be. The inheritance of the people of God. And which have been. Which haven't worked out.

[9 : 34] They haven't. They haven't. They haven't come to fruition. It's a very full chapter.

And I'm only skimming it lightly. But I want you now to look at. Another concept. And the way I want you to look at it. Is by turning to Hebrews chapter 9.

Thinking about the temple. Thinking about the worship. Thinking about the place of the priest. And this may confuse you. There may be too much here for you. But I think that there is an amazing parallel.

In which you see the breakdown of the old covenant. Between God and his people. And the establishment of the new covenant.

Between God and one person. Jesus Christ. A covenant which will be reciprocally honored.

[10 : 32] Fully by both parties to it. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That they will. That this covenant will be maintained. Now take the picture from Malachi.

And listen to these words. Now, he says. The first covenant. Had regulations for worship. And an earthly sanctuary. A tent was prepared. The outer one. In which were the lampstand. And the table. And the bread of the presence. It's called the holy place. Beside the second curtain. Stood a tent called the holy of holies. Having the golden altar. Of incense. And the ark of the covenant. Covered on all sides with gold. Which contained a golden urn. Holding the manna. And Aaron's rod. That budded at the tables of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory. [11:29] Overshadowing the mercy seat. And he ends with the wonderful words. Which were more than ready for. Of these things. We cannot now speak in detail.

So we've had enough of that. I mean it's a magnificent picture. But. It's mind boggling. To try and picture.

The whole elaborate process. Of the old covenant worship. And so he brings it to an end. Saying we can't go on with this. But then he says in verse six.

These preparations. Having thus been made. The priests. Go continually into the outer tent. Performing their ritual duties.

But. Into the second. Only the high priest goes. And he but once a year. And not without taking blood.

[12:26] Which he offers for himself. And for the error of the people. By this. The Holy Spirit indicates. That the way into the sanctuary.

Is not yet opened. As long as the outer tent. Is still standing. And you see Malachi is saying. That the worship in the outer tent. Failed. He said that that's symbolic. Of the present age. And he goes on and says.

In verse nine. According to this arrangement. Gifts and sacrifices. Are offered. Which cannot. Perfect.

The conscience. Of the worshiper. That whole system. Couldn't do. What it set out to do. The whole system. Ultimately. Failed.

[13:23] So that. You know. That most people. I mean. This is something. We still do. We give. Our hope. And our allegiance. And our faith. To a system. That ultimately. Is going to fail.

It cannot do. What it sets out to do. It can't. Perfect. The conscience. Of the worshiper. But it deals. Only with food.

And drink. And various. Substitutions. And regulations. Ad infinitum. For the body. Imposed. Until the time. Of reformation.

Then you see. The new covenant. And the new priest. Verse 11. When Christ. Appeared. As a high priest. To the good things. That have come.

Then through the greater. And more perfect tent. Not made with hands. That is not. Of this creation. He.

[14:19] Entered. Once and for all. Into the holy place. Taking not. The blood. Of goats. And calves. But his own blood.

Thus. Securing. An eternal redemption. Or if the. Sprinkling. Of defiled persons. With the blood. Of goats. And bulls. And with the ashes. Of a heifer. Sanctifies. For the purification. Of the flesh. How much more.

Shall the blood. Of Christ. Who through. The eternal spirit. Offered himself. Without blemish. To God. Purify your conscience.

From dead works. To serve. The living God. Verse 15. Therefore. He is the mediator. Of a new covenant.

[15:15] So that those who are called. May receive the promised. Eternal inheritance. Death has occurred. Which redeems them.

From the transgressions. Under the first covenant. Death has recurred. Has occurred. Which establishes. A new kind of covenant.

Correct. Well. There you. I just wanted to put. Before you. These two parallel pictures. The one. Of the failure. Of the old covenant. It simply.

Didn't. Work. It didn't accomplish. And God knew. That it wasn't going to accomplish. It. The old covenant. Is only. It's a covenant. Of death.

And though all sorts of people. Admire it. And think. How wonderful it is. And these laws. If everybody would obey them. And this way of life. If everybody would do it. And if everybody was

really devoted.

[16:10] And if. And if. And if. And if. This could be the greatest religion. In the world. But the if. Doesn't come off. It never is realized.

It's never fulfilled. And so a new covenant. Is established. By. Christ. Being. The. One high priest. Who enters. The holy of holies. And makes the perfect sacrifice. Of his own blood. And establishes a new covenant. So that if you want to.

Relate. To the priest. The priest spoken of. In Malachi. Who is that priest. That priest. Is none other. Than our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is. Our great. High priest. And he alone. And I could. Go on. At some length. About this. But I. If you just.

[17:12] Read that. You will see. You know. Because. The old. The new. The new testament. Says this. Says you know. God who. At sundry times.

And in diverse manners. Spoke unto the fathers. By the prophets. Hath in these last days. Spoken unto us. By his son. Jesus Christ. You know. What Malachi said.

Was only. A preface. Speaking about. A priest. Who ultimately. Would accomplish. Perfectly. The will of God. And through whom.

People would be made. Perfect. As. They. Are. In. Christ. Christ. It's only. As we are.

In Christ. That we are. Made perfect. There is. No system. Of ablutions. Or sacrifices. Or ritual. Or anything else. That can accomplish.

[18:07] The only thing. That accomplishes it. Is. The perfect. High priest. Making the perfect. Offering. When you become. A Christian.

You become. A person. In. Christ. And you lose. Your identity. Before God. Because he sees you. In Christ. Well. Just. Let me finish. By reading this. To you again. From verse five.

Of chapter two. My covenant. With him. That is. Jesus Christ. Was a covenant. Of life. And peace. I gave them.

To him. That he might fear. And he feared me. And he stood. In awe. Of my name. True instruction.

[19:08] Was in. The mouth. Of Jesus Christ. No wrong. Was found. On his lips. He walked.

In the obedience. Of faith. In peace. And uprightness. He turned many. From iniquity. His lips. Guarded knowledge. And men. Seek instruction. From his mouth. And he is. The messenger. To man. The incarnate.

Son of God. The messenger. Of the Lord. Of hosts. There you have. The picture. Of the failed system.

Which was brilliant. In its conception. And still. Powerfully. Attractive. To people. But it doesn't. Accomplish. What has to be.

[20:04] Accomplished. That is. Only. Accomplished. In Christ. And you share. In that. Only. As you are.

In Christ. There is no system. By which you can. Do anything. Except come under. The just condemnation.

Of God. Except to be. Found. In Christ. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well I'm.

[21:01] well I'm challenged by the call to integrate not to be part of this disintegrating society but to be an integrating alternative body of belonging to Christ and therefore I feel I can confidently urge you over to coffee after the service to integrate with one another in love and fellowship and to have a great time and I think I said in our notice sheets that there will be a talk back and that anything that you wanted to ask from last week and this week about Malachi or next week or the week after then you can ask us, we'll be there as best as we can do have a look at your notice sheets and I just want to underline one or two things please bring your friends and uncles and aunts and everything to Palm Sunday service here on the 19th and we hope it'll be a good time and also if you're keen on drama we'd like to know

I mean if you think you're keen on drama we'd like to check you out but if you are actually good at it it would be great to know because we'd like to think about the use of drama I thank you to everybody who helped me move but it wasn't to that address so if you want to come and visit us and you call on 4069 I think you'll find one of these great big new houses you're welcome to do whatever you want to one of those houses but it's not our house we're 4049 West 37th 4049 West

37th and I've had a little note at the bottom here which I'd like to emphasize and that's that it may just be that you're the kind of person who doesn't normally come to church or you come to church occasionally and you're not really sure whether you believe all this stuff about God anyway well I'm really glad you're here if that's the case because after Easter we'd like to start a group and we're not sure whether to call it

Agnostics Anonymous or Discovering Christianity but either title it would be a thing that would probably meet in somebody's house maybe our house and it'd be informal and we'd run through sort of basic questions like is there a God and who is Jesus Christ and can you trust the Bible anyway and why on earth did Jesus die and did he rise from the dead and is there life after death those kind of questions and I promise you nobody will bash you over the head of the Bible like this I hope there'll be more Agnostics than none and so it'll be your group but if you're interested in that do let me know it'd be great if you'd like to enter into that Grant begins as a notice and while he's coming up Steve gave me a notice Steve do you want to stand up and I don't know what I've done with his notice but Steve is trying to do something about that's the bloke over there in the corner he didn't stand up for long enough he's keen on organizing some golf thing is that right?

right well you have a go before Grant just the fifth annual swallow that the fifth annual St. John's Golf Tourney is happening on Saturday the 6th of May and it's going to be a lot of fun and I have these to hand out if you're interested it's called To Boldly Go Where No Man Has Gone Before and at the back is Captain James T. Kirk of the Starship Enterprise and that chap with the funny ears I'm issuing a challenge to all of you on Saturday April 1st about 7pm in the evening all of the small group Bible study groups and the individuals are going to come together for an evening of Christian interaction also known as head-to-head competition and the way this has started is the Tuesday evening

Kruger Lockhart Bible study challenged the Wednesday evening Dykstra von Hakkopf Bible study to a blind volleyball match and that's yet to be seen sorry and in turn for the Wednesday evening Bible study group to challenge the another Tuesday night Bible study the I guess we can call it the Gillespie Jones Bible study group to floor hockey and anyway these are some formal decrees of challenge and there will be a number of things not only sporting but some some parlor games whether it be charades or even Trivial Pursuit and

[26 : 37] Pictionary a variety of confrontations going on in the church hall and you've got a month to formally challenge some other groups or individuals and please come out and we'll see who gets fed to the lions there goes one of the lions right well so that's everything we've got golf we've got floor hockey we've got if anybody wants to play rugby I'd like to play rugby that's marvelous so every particular sporting option here at St. John's but we're going to close by picking up on what we've been hearing 374 glorious things of thee are spoken Zion city of our God and I love the last verse fading is the world link's pleasure all it's boasted pomp and show solid joys and lasting treasure none but

Zion's children know let's stand and sing and an offer tree will also be taken huh to etc know Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[31 : 12] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. So may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God our Savior.

May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be amongst you now and remain with you always.

Amen.