Returning to The Lord Our God Jeremiah 3:21-23

22 Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.

* Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.
* Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.

Returning for Salvation, Healing, Hope, to God

There is Hope for the vilest sinner

There is Salvation for the chiefs of sinners

There is healing for the worst among us.

Jer 17:14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.

God delivered Israel out of Egypt over night, but it took 40 years in the wilderness because they wouldn’t get Egypt out of them.

God caused Egypt to let go of them but they wouldn’t let go of Egypt.

Matthew 6:24—*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

## The Backslider

Pr 14:14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

Jer 3:21 A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God.

* The voice we need to hear is the voice of repentance
* The voice of the Intercessor will believe for it.

22 Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.

23 Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel.

THE WEEPING PROPHET is praying for the return of the children of Israel,

saying

* they have perverted their way
* they have forgotten the Lord their God

Seeing

* Israel treacherously departing from God v.20
* Israel chose their way over God’s way
  + Believing for Israel to see their only hope is the Salvation of the Lord our God.
  + Believing for Israel (backsliding children) to return for healing.

Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.

(Backslide) – backslider - backsliding

Going forward or going backward no neutral ground.

You can never backslide and profit from backsliding, the consequences are to great.

Backsliding involves a process, cool down, cool off, lukewarm, cold and indifferent.

COLD OR HOT

23 Truly in vain is salvation hoped for

* from the hills
* from the multitude of mountains

Ro 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Jer 3:15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Jer 4:22 For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

Jer 5:21 Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:

Jer 51:15 He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.

### What Is a Backslider

‘Backslider’ is not a New Testament word, but the concept is found in many N.T. verses, as well, as O.T. verses. What is meant by the term ‘backslider’? Backslider refers to someone that at one time was advancing toward God, but now is headed away or ‘sliding back’ from God into the old carnal life.

Ga 4:9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Ps 12:1 Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

Depending on his attitude, the backslider can be the easiest or the hardest kind of person to reach.

No one back slides over one experience. For a Believer to backslide many decisions have been made that have led up to such a sinful condition. A person does not just one day up and backslide, but little by little and by letting important things slip does a person slide back from God. A backslider has allowed their love to get cold and something or things to get between them and God. It is not easy for the righteous to backslide.

John 17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

A person does not backslide overnight. Samson, Peter and Judas are examples of this.

**Read Hebrews 6:4-9** and take notice of the following words and phrases—*once enlightend….have tasted…. were made…have tasted…if they shall fall away…renew…bringeth forth…receiveth…rejected….*

Backsliding

### *Smell of the world*

### *Fly in the ointment*

### *Disgruntled thought*

### *Lose your Patience*

### *Fly off the handle stick in the wall and vibrate.*

### *Totally lose it---Backslide-turn away*

Nehemiah 9:17 And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not

Jude 1:5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

Heb 12:25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

### *Eph 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

### *Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:*

Jer 3:6 The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot.

Jer 3:8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby **backsliding Israel** committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

Jer 3:11 And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.

Jer 3:12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever.

Jer 3:14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

Jer 3:22 Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.

Jer 8:5 Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.

Jer 31:18 I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God.

Jer 31:22 How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.

Jer 49:4 Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? that trusted in her treasures, saying, Who shall come unto me?

Ho 4:16 For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the LORD will feed them as a lamb in a large place.

Ho 11:7 And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

Ho 14:4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

### Heb 3:12 *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

### 13 *But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

### 14 *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end*How to Deal With the Backslider

#### All backsliders are not so in reality.

There is no middle ground between sinner and saint. You are either saved or lost. A backslider is a sinner and we only classify them differently because God deals with those who once knew Him in different ways from those that have never known him. (Heb. 6:4-8; 10:26-29; Luke 12:48)

They are still headed down the path toward hell and there is no assurance promised because of some past experience they have had. This is not to say that God cannot renew them to repentance because God absolutely can save the backslider.

Ho 14:4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

To backslide is to *fall from grace* in the same sense that Adam and Eve fell in the garden and needed atonement.

Jer 3:22 Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.

#### Seek to determine the cause of their backsliding.

The very thing that led them to backslide may be the very thing that is keeping them from coming back. All obstacles must be removed.

Here are some reasons why people backslide:

##### Mistreatment or Inconsistencies of Christians

Many people blame or even try to punish God for the failures of men. The only just complaint that can be made would be against men who claimed to be following God, but God is absolutely guiltless and righteous in all He has done. (Jer. 2:5; Isa. 5:4)

* What wrong has God done to them? NONE
* Why should they treat God so? NO GOOD REASON

##### Manifestations or Temptations of Satan

###### As an angel of light

* 1. To present the lie as true
  2. To present false workers as true

###### As a roaring lion

* 1. To intimidate
  2. To over power through pressure

###### As a serpent

* 1. So subtle
  2. Violent, Vicious and ferocious

##### Misunderstandings

This is so sad, but so true. How many casualties have been caused in the church because of very simple misunderstandings? That if those involved would have just talked it out, no harm would have been done. Bring all your questions to God in prayer and He will solve them. Do not carry them and let them drive you away from God.

##### Materialism and Worldliness

God delivered Israel out of Egypt over night, but it took 40 years in the wilderness to get Egypt out of them.

Matthew 6:24—*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

##### Motives for Serving God were Wrong

Christianity is only a matter of convenience for some people. Many people pray the sinner’s prayer because all their friends were doing the same. When it comes down to it, you must be in love with Christ. Absolutely no other motive will keep in the long run.

##### Mind Battles

###### **Loneliness**- *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*1

###### **Lust**- *the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word*2

###### **Pride** - *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*3

1Hebrews 13:5; 2Mark 4:19; 3James 4:6

##### Motionless Spiritually

###### Luke warmness

###### Lack of zeal

###### Lack of prayer

###### Lack of faith

Some have never had a very deep experience with Christ. Mark 4:16, 17; I John 2:19; II Peter 2:20-22; Matt. 13:20,21; Heb. 10:38,39

#### The Penitent Backslider

The penitent backslider is one who feels sorry for his sins and would like to return to Christ, but feels God will not have him.

##### Show God’s **willingness** **to receive** all who come back to Him.

Luke 15:11-24; Jer. 3:12,13; Mark 16:7

Samson’s hair began to grow again and Peter saw a look of love.

##### Show what God requires for restoration.

II Chron. 7:14; I John 1:9; Hosea 14:1, 2, 4

Luke 22:61—*And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord… And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.* (Matt. 26:75)

Rev. 2:4, 5— …*thou hast left thy first love.* *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;*

##### Give instructions as to how to grow in grace, and not backslide again.

It is by paying attention to the small foxes that spoil the vine that a person can be safeguarded from backsliding (SOS 2:15). Also, we must not slip in the basics of Christian living. Keep the fire burning!

* Pray – Luke 18:1; Matt. 26:41
* Read the Bible – Acts 17:11; 20:32; I Peter 2:2
* Attend church – Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:41-47
* Witness – John 1:41-45

#### The Impenitent Backslider

The impenitent backslider does not manifest any sorrow for their backsliding and they have no desire to return to the Lord. Show the awful sin they have committed and show the penalty. Jer. 2:13, 19; I Kings 11:9; Amos 4:11; Heb 6:4; II Peter 2:20-22; Luke 11:24,26; John 6:66

##### Indulgence of known sin – II Cor. 6:17

##### The neglect of the means of grace – Gal. 3:1-3

##### Worldly alliance or association – Prov. 1:10-19; II Tim. 4:10; James 4:4

### 2 Cor. 3:14*—But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.*

### 15 *But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.*

### 16 *Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.*

### 17 *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

### 18 *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

### *2Co 3:7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:*

### *8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?*

### *9 For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.*

### *10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.*

### *11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.*

### *12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:*

### *13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:*