

“Bent To Backsliding”

Hosea 11:7

Introduction: Hosea is one of the twelve Minor Prophets. His message was to the Northern Kingdom and was historical, prophetic, and practical. Its content was that of backsliding as we see in the illustration concerning his wife contained in the first three chapters. Although the message was stern and graphical, it did not change the apostasy in which Israel was heading. Therefore, Israel went into captivity under the Assyrians. As we view the book of Hosea, we see the dealings of God with the nation of Israel. He reveals their condition, pronounces their judgment, and offers them hope if they repent. Notice the procession of events.

1. The Portrait of Israel chapters 1-3
2. The Putrefying of Israel chapters 4-7
3. The Punishment of Israel chapters 8-10
4. The Promise to Israel chapters 11-14

Body: In chapter eleven, we see another panorama of the problem with Israel. Thus, there is the Calling of Israel (vs. 1-3), the Cords of Israel (v. 4), the Condemnation of Israel (vs. 5-6), and the Condition of Israel (v. 7). It is this last point that we will look at. God described Israel as being “*bent to backsliding*”. Webster described “*bent*” as “inclined or subdued” while Strong depicted it as “hang to or cling to”. Yet further, Webster defined “*backsliding*” as “The act of apostatizing from faith or practice” while Strong labeled it as “turning away, turning back, apostasy”. Therefore, we must conclude that Israel had a bad habit of backsliding, much as we do today. Backsliding is a terrible sin that deprives the child of God from the greatest blessings that the Lord has to offer. Notice what the Bible portrays about backsliding.

- I. The Priority of a Backslider Proverbs 14:14- “*The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.*”
 - A. His Wandering- “*The backslider in heart*”
 1. The Evasive Heart Jeremiah 17:9- “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*”
 2. The Erring Heart Hebrews 3:10- “*Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.*”
 3. The Evil Heart Hebrews 3:12- “*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*”
 4. The Enslaved Heart
 - a. Hebrews 3:8- “*Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness*”
 - b. Hebrews 3:15- “*While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*”

- c. Hebrews 4:7- *“Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”*
 - B. His Ways- *“filled with his own ways”*
 - 1. The Evaluation of Man’s Ways Proverbs 16:2- *“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.”*
Proverbs 21:2- *“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.”*
 - 2. The End of Man’s Ways Proverbs 16:25- *“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”*
- II. The Picture of a Backslider Jeremiah 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.”*
 - A. A Backslider is Evident- *“Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done?”*
 - B. A Backslider is Evil- *“hath played the harlot”*
- III. The Perspective of a Backslider Jeremiah 3:11- *“And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah.”*
 - A. Concerning Sin- *“The backsliding Israel”*
 - B. Concerning Self- *“hath justified herself”*
 - 1. Proverbs 30:12- *“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.”*
 - 2. Judges 17:6- *“In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”*
- IV. The Persistence of a Backslider Jeremiah 8:5- *“Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.”*
 - A. Their Departure- *“a perpetual backsliding”*
 - B. Their Deceit- *“they hold fast deceit”*
 - C. Their Determination- *“they refuse to return”*
- V. The Penalty of a Backslider Jeremiah 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.”*
 - A. The Anger of the Lord- *“mine anger”* Jeremiah 15:6
 - B. The Action of the Lord- *“to fall upon you”*
 - 1. Lost Blessings Isaiah 59:2- *“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”*

- Jeremiah 5:25- *“Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.”*
2. Lost Battles Psalms 81:13-14- *“Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.”*

Conclusion: It is important to remember the high price to pay for backsliding. However, if one has backslidden, we must remember that the mercy of the Lord endureth forever. They can return to Him and find a place of refuge in His arms. Remember Jeremiah 3:22- *“Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.”*