

PERPETUAL BACKSLIDING

A. **People** have been departing (apostatizing) from God since the beginning of time.

1. Adam & Eve in the Garden
2. Man before the Flood
3. Israel during the period of Judges
4. Israel during the period of Kings

a. God called the prophets into service (4 major & 12 minor).

Jer 6:16-17 – Thus says the LORD: “Stand in the ways & see, & ask for the old paths, where the good way is, & walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.” But they said, **‘We will not walk in it.’** 17 Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, **‘We will not listen.’** (cf. **Hos 4:6**)

Jer 8:5 – Why has this people **slidden back**, [shuwb (shoob); used of spiritual relations (figurative); to turn back (from God), to apostatize; to turn away] Jerusalem, in a **perpetual backsliding** [meshubah (mesh-oo-baw’); apostasy: a turning away, a turning back, an apostasy, a backsliding]? They hold fast to deceit, they refuse to return.

NASU – Why then has this people, Jerusalem, **turned away** in **continual apostasy**? They hold fast to deceit, they refuse to return. **AMP** – Why then is this people of Jerusalem **turned away** with a **perpetual turning away** [from Me]? They hold fast to deceit (idolatry); they refuse to repent & return [to God].

[The reason for their backsliding is stated in the verses that follow chapter 8:5.

Learning from this case will help us avoid the dire consequences of departing from God.]

I. NO SELF-EXAMINATION (REPENTANCE)

Jer 8:6 – I listened & heard, but they do not speak aright. **No man repented of his wickedness**, saying, ‘What have I done?’ Everyone turned to his own course, as the horse rushes into the battle.

A. **An effective preacher** is a good listener.

1. Jeremiah did a lot of listening, & what he heard was alarming, but it prepared him for delivering God’s message to His people.

B. **Jeremiah lived among** God’s people, but they had sunk so low into wickedness that they never questioned their actions in light of God’s word.

1. They were not concerned about their speech; they lied & deceived when they could get away with it, & used profanity.
2. When they did wicked things, they never expressed regret or showed any remorse.
3. They were like war horses; charging into battle without hesitation, they pursued evil.

C. **Most people** are long overdue for a serious self-examination (2 Cor 13:5; Jas 1:22-25).

1. We all need to engage in some critical thinking in regard to ourselves.
2. We cannot begin that process by saying, “*What have I done?*” – But by saying, “*What am I not doing?*” & “*How can I improve?*”

[The absence of self examination will result in backsliding.]

II. WILLFULLY IGNORANT

Jer 8:7-9 – Even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; & the turtledove, the swift, & the swallow observe the time of their coming. But My people do not know the judgment of the LORD. 8 “How can you say, ‘We are wise, & the law of the LORD is with us’? Look, the false pen of the scribe certainly works falsehood. 9 The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed & taken. Behold, ***they have rejected the word of the LORD***; so what wisdom do they have?

Jer 44:16-17 – “***As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you!*** 17 But ***we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth***, to burn incense to the queen of heaven & pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done...For then we had plenty of food, were well-off, & saw no trouble.”

A. **Jeremiah saw** a spirit of rebellion toward God among the Israelites.

1. It was not only apparent by their actions, but they put their rebellion into words (quotes above).
2. How did they develop such a stubborn will against God’s word? *Willful Ignorance*.
3. The less they considered what Jeremiah had to say, the less they feared God (Prov 1:7).

4. The less they feared God, the more they wanted to carry out their own plans.

B. **What is our attitude** about understanding the issues that face us?

1. Members of the Lord's church were once known for giving accurate Bible answers to moral & doctrinal questions:

Faith only (Jas 2:24); Infant baptism (Rom 6:4; Acts 8:38); Women pastors (1 Tim 2:12); Homosexuality (Rom 1:26-27); Pre or Extra marital sex (1 Cor 7:2); Divorce & remarriage (Matt 19:9); Instrumental music (Eph 5:19); Gambling (Lk 12:15; Heb 13:5); Speaking in tongues (Acts 8; 1 Cor 13); Modern day "miracles" (Heb 2:1-4).

2. What prepared them to give answers to these questions? The desire that each one had to NOT be ignorant of God's Word (1 Pet 4:17; 2 Tim 2:15; 1:13; 2:2; Phil 4:9).

[Willful ignorance will result in backsliding.]

III. COVETOUSNESS

Jer 8:10 – Therefore I will give their wives to others, & their fields to those who will inherit them; because **from the least even to the greatest everyone is given to covetousness**; from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely.

Mic 3:11 – **Her heads judge for a bribe, her priests teach for pay, & her prophets divine for money.** Yet they lean on the LORD, & say, "Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us."

A. **The love of self** was the problem behind the problem, or the reason for their covetousness.

1. To have more money to spend on themselves, the judges, priests, & prophets would have done & said anything.

B. **Many preachers** preach what their supporters want to hear in order to keep their salaries & reputations.

1. How many churches might have been saved from current departures if preachers had been willing to stand on Truth alone?

2. Men who will not stand for truth do not love God, His Son or the church!

3. They actually love the monetary advantage of knowing & pleasing the right people ([John 10:12-13](#); [Phil 3:18-19](#); [Acts 20:20, 27-30](#)).

[Covetousness will result in backsliding.]

IV. FALSE TEACHERS

Jer 8:11 – For *they* [prophets & priests; or as we might say today: preachers & elders] *have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly*, saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ When there is no peace.

NASU – They heal the brokenness of the daughter of My people *superficially*, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there is no peace.

- A. **Jeremiah** preached that his people must repent or be destroyed.

1. The false prophets countered by saying, “Everything’s going to be alright.”

2. And they praised everyone who stood with them ([Mal 2:17](#); [Isa 5:20-21](#)).

- B. **False teachers** will change or ignore God’s word to suit their own purposes & to please the masses; *and they will be praised by everyone for doing it.*

1. They write many books, & buy a lot of air-time on the television.

2. Their so-called “New Hermeneutic” is just the “Old Hermeneutics” revisited ([2 Pet 2:1-3](#)).

3. Those of us who resist them will be accused of being narrow minded, divisive & evil.

[False Teachers will take the lead in backsliding.]

V. NO SHAME FOR SIN

Jer 8:12 – Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! ***They were not at all ashamed***, nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; in the time of their punishment they shall be cast down,” says the LORD.

A. **Jeremiah saw** his people digress to the point where they were no longer ashamed of any sin.

1. Those sinful deeds they once despised, they began to embrace.
2. We are seeing this happen all around us.
3. We cannot be indifferent about sin, whether the sin is in us or in someone we love.
4. Sinners ought to be ashamed of themselves (**Psa 31:17**), & sometimes that's us.

[Having no shame for sin will result in backsliding.]

CLOSING

A. **What was the result** of Israel's perpetual backsliding?

Jer 8:13 – ***“I will surely consume them,” says the LORD.*** “No grapes shall be on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, & the leaf shall fade; & the things I have given them shall pass away from them.”

B. **What will be the result** of those who backslide today?

Rev 21:27 – But ***there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles***, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

20:15 – And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Heb 10:39 – But ***we are not of those who draw back to perdition***, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.