

Beware of Backsliding

“Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. "Or else, if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, "know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. "Behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed. "Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. "When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you.” (Joshua 23:11-16 NKJV)

Israel provides us with many pictures in the Christian life. Here we see a picture that tells us the dangers of backsliding. Now backsliding is a loaded term so it is important to understand how this word is being used.

Backsliding for the purpose of this article means not to remain separated from the world. For the Israelites that meant not to intermarry or cling to the remnant of the nations, which they had subdued by the Lord's power. The consequences of doing so would be that the Lord would no longer fight for them, and they would become ensnared by the people, which would cause them to lose the land.

What is important to understand is that the promised land is a type of heaven. For the believer to fall away from God and cling to the world is to abandon the faith. Today, many look at backsliding as nothing more than a rough season that has no eternal impact on the believer or so-called believer. While it is true that sin can have its seasons of victory, it is very dangerous to look upon those times with a flippant attitude.

Anytime you find yourself clinging to the world and the things of the world, a serious examination should ensue. Scripture is clear, “. . . If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2:15 NKJV) Do not rest on promises of eternal life while ignoring the promises that accompany eternal life.

“. . . [I]f the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Romans 8:11-14 NKJV)

A profession of faith is no replacement for a confession of faith. A person can say anything, but he will be measured by his confession, by the testimony of his life. Therefore, beware of backsliding. It might be a sign that you have fallen away from the faith.

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