

# Backsliding

Text: Deuteronomy 4:25-31

## Introduction:

1. The book of Deuteronomy records the final words of Moses to the generation of Israelites who would enter into the land of Canaan.
2. In these words, Moses reminded them of the law of God and the motive for obeying that law – God’s love for them and their love for God.
3. “It utters the same thunder, but always in the tone of infinite pity” (G. Campbell Morgan).
4. God’s love is so great that He gave His law to provide a way for rebellious, backsliding man to return to Him.

## I. The Description of Backsliding

- A. To leave one’s first love (Revelation 2:4)
- B. To be hindered (Galatians 5:7)
- C. To become entangled and overcome (2 Peter 2:20-22)

## II. The Process of Backsliding (Deuteronomy 4:25)

- A. Corruption – “When thou ...shall corrupt yourselves”
  1. This step is personal and may not be known by others.
  2. This Hebrew word means, “To ruin, spoil, mar, or pervert.”
  3. “It is the devotion of the life to something lower than the highest.”
  4. Remember your thinking when you obeyed the Gospel...
    - a. Jesus was the most important thing.
    - b. God’s Word was above all else.
    - c. Life was to be devoted entirely to godliness.
  5. Have our thoughts shifted from those ideals? (Did Israel’s?)
    - a. 1 Cor. 9:25
    - b. A relationship (1 Cor. 15:33)
    - c. Temptation to sin (2 Cor. 11:3)
    - d. Lusts (Eph. 4:22; 2 Pet. 1:4)
    - e. Material wealth (Luke 15:11-12)
  6. This corruption leads to a false view of God.
- B. Idolatry – “When thou shalt ...make a graven image”
  1. A false view of God leads to the creation of an idol.
  2. In Israel’s day, these were literal images made of wood and stone.
  3. Yet, there was no life or power in them.
  4. Though the form may be different, idolatry still exists today (cf. Col. 3:5; Rom. 1:20-25).
  5. Illus. Denominationalism
- C. Depravity – “When thou ...shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God”
  1. Ultimately, this leads one to the practice of sin (cf. Jam. 1:14-15).
  2. Think of Israel in the wilderness...
  3. Think of Eve in the garden...
  4. Think of the Prodigal Son...
- D. Anywhere along the journey, one is backslidden.
- E. Hypocrisy and ritualism may hide the fact from others, but God knows the heart.

- III. The Remedy for Backsliding (Deuteronomy 4:29)
- A. "From thence" – wherever one is, God offers mercy and hope.
  - B. "If" – the choice is man's; decide to make a change!
  - C. "Seek the Lord" – to be restored to His rightful place in one's heart.
    - 1. "Turn to the Lord" (vs. 30) – repentance
    - 2. "Be obedient" (vs. 30) – submission
    - 3. Note: Israel was not to seek for the land they lost, but the Lord they left!
  - D. "With all thy heart and soul" – total commitment is required.
  - E. "Thou shalt find Him" – forgiveness and restoration are possible.

- Adapted from a sermon by G. Campbell Morgan