

Hymn Writer Loses Joy of Salvation

H. Bosch

Robert Robinson, author of the hymn "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," lost the happy communion with the Saviour he had once enjoyed, and in his declining years he wandered into the byways of sin. As a result, he became deeply troubled in his spirit. Hoping to relieve his mind, he decided to travel.

In the course of his journeys, he became acquainted with a young woman on spiritual matters, and so she asked him what he thought of a hymn she had just been reading. To his astonishment he found it to be none other than his own composition. He tried to evade her questions, but she continued to press him for a response.

Suddenly he began to weep. With tears streaming down his checks, he said, "I am the man who wrote that hymn many years ago. I'd give anything to experience again the joy I knew then." Although greatly surprised, she reassured him that the "streams of mercy" mentioned in his song

still flowed. Mr. Robinson was deeply touched. Turning his "wandering heart" to the Lord, he was restored to full fellowship.

Come, Thou Fount

Hymn writer — Robert Robinson

(1) *Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace; Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise.*

Teach me some melodious sonnet, Sung by flaming tongues above; Praise the mount

— I'm fixed upon it — Mount of Thy

redeeming love.

(2) *Here I raise mine Ebenezer.*

Hither by Thy help I come And I hope by Thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger; Wondering from the fold of God. He, to rescue me from danger Interposed His precious blood

(3) *O to grace how great a debtor, Daily I'm constrained to be! Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, Bind my wandering heart to Thee: Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love; Here's my heart, O take and seal it; Seal it for Thy courts above.*

He, to rescue me from danger Interposed His precious blood



The Bible View



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Who Is Your Leader?

Bill Brinkworth

Much of the opposition early Christians faced was from "religious", but unrighteous, people. However, in Acts the early church started facing conflict from those that clearly opposed biblical teaching of any kind.

One such enemy was Barjesus. The name meant "son of Jesus" or "son of Joshua". However, he used the name Elymas, which meant "wizard". Being that this sorcerer was a Jew (vs. 6), he probably had some type of biblical training in his past. If he did, he knew that sorcery was sinful (I Sam. 15:23, II Chron. 33:6); yet he pursued that wickedness even though he knew God hated it. To make matters worse, this male witch tried diligently to keep someone from being saved (Acts 13:6-7).

Many have been exposed to what God says is right or wrong. They have learned His ways from good preaching, Christian education, Bible reading, or a godly upbringing, yet somewhere in their lives they have made the

decision to ignore everything they have heard and live the way they wanted. They have chosen to live their lives contrary to God's command, as did Barjesus.

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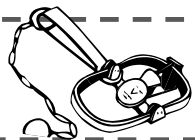
Don't Go Back!

Bill Brinkworth

For a Christian, there is no way out of a backslidden condition without first doing the hard work to reconstruct what is broken in your life. After the sin is stopped and avoided, and all attempt is made to do what one used to do, the battle is not over. There must be certain things done so one does not go back to where he previously had been.

We can learn some preventative measures from returning to a backslidden condition by following what Nehemiah had his people do after they got the city (Jerusalem) rebuilt to the condi-

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"BETTER SHUN THE BAIT THAN STRUGGLE IN THE SNARE." — John Dryden

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Who Is Your Leader?

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I have asked myself again and again, “How can these people, that definitely have learned God’s way, live the way they are living now?” In this account, the sorcerer was not a child of God, as he was called “... thou child of the devil, thou enemy of righteousness...” (Acts 13:10). For some that live ungodly lives, that may be the explanation; they were not saved to begin with.

For others, they may be saved, but sin has a powerful hold on them. Sin’s control can completely change how a person thinks and behaves. Romans Chapter 1 describes people like this. The people described in that chapter “knew God” (Romans 1:21) but they “... became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” The rest of the chapter details that sad list of sins they had gotten involved with.

Why do people act ungodly? Some live a lifestyle contrary to God’s commandments, because they may not even know what His commands are or may not even consider obeying anything other than their own desires. For others that should know better, it may be because they have purposefully decided to ignore what they have learned, and live their own

way. Rebellion of this type is usually rooted in a controlling sin. For whatever reason, one’s lifestyle usually revolves around one’s own decision. The decision God desires for each one of us should be similar to the choice Joshua made, “... as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” Jos. 24:15. Whom have you chosen to obey?

Don’t Go Back!

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tion it used to be in. These measures included:

◆ He returned to proper worship. His case was different than ours would be today, as his time was still under the law; but he made sure that all who served in the temple were qualified by their lineage to be in the priesthood. He made sure the right spiritual leaders were in service.

◆ For us to return from a backslidden condition, we have to make sure we worship in a good, Bible-following church. So many get far from God, and when they want to return or get closer, they pick the same worship (or lack thereof) that may have helped them get in a far-from-God position in the first place.

◆ We have to make changes. Nehemiah’s charges had to clean out their sin and get back to obe-

dience to God.

◆ One of the most important steps Nehemiah made to protect his people from returning to where they spiritually were was to include scripture in their lives. Today, reading the Word of God is one of the most important measures one can take to prevent spiritual decline. How can one know the will of God, if he does not read and obey His Word?

◆ Most importantly, after the Israelites had read the Word of God, they obeyed it. There is no way in this world to return to God today unless we obey, by faith, what God speaks to our hearts about and shows us in His Word.

◆ Nehemiah also rehearsed some of the spiritual errors Israel had made in the past; so it was quite clear what they had done to get in the condition they found themselves in, and so they would not do the same things in the future.

Anyone can drift away from where they should be. Some get to the place where they never want to be at the place where they are close to God. However, some do see the errors of their ways. When the errors are seen, and the conviction is causing one to reminisce of their past “better” spiritual condition or desire to be closer to God, that is the time to make changes so one cannot go backwards. There may not be another chance!

The full-length study can be found at: www.openyourmineeyes.com/Views/BibleView226.pdf.

Degrees of Backsliding

Dr. Haven

A Christian never falls suddenly from advanced Christian life to barrenness or open sin. The stages in the descent are slow, and often almost imperceptible. Little negligences of duty bring darkness to the soul, and eat out its spiritual joy. Little temptations betray it to the power of the enemy. By gradual departures from God, and little indulgences in sin, one at length falls into total backsliding and apostasy. The following may serve as an admonitory list of the steps taken in the downward path:

- Neglect of secret prayer: Job 15:4.
- Disregard for the Bible: Jeremiah 6:19, Hosea 4:6.
- Worldly-mindedness: II Timothy 4:10.
- A quarrelsome spirit: Isaiah 29:20-21, I Cor. 3:3.
- Dwelling on the faults of others: Matt. 7:3-5.
- Readiness to take offense: Prov. 14:17-19.
- A murmuring spirit: I Cor. 10:10.
- A critical hearing of the Word: I Cor. 3:1-4.
- Covetousness: Luke 12:15, Col. 3:5.
- Light thoughts of sin: Matt. 22:5.
- Indulgence in secret sin: Num. 32:23, Eccl. 12:14.
- Falling into outward sin: Hosea 4:16-17, Eph. 5:3-8.
- Persecuting the righteous: Acts 7:52-53.

“You cannot run away from a weakness; you must some time fight it out or perish; and if that be so, why not now, and where you stand.” — Robert Louis Stevenson