

God's Controversy With the Backslidden Church

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson addresses God's judgment on the backslidden church, emphasizing the need for repentance and a return to truth and holiness.

Duration: 1:01:28

Scripture: Hosea 4:1

Topics: "Backsliding"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Hosea and the controversy between God and the backslidden church. He emphasizes that God is seeking to balance the books and take revenge on those who have mocked His name. The preacher reads from Hosea 4:1-2, highlighting the lack of truth, mercy, and knowledge of God in the land. He calls for repentance and urges the congregation to come forward if they feel the Spirit moving them to return to their love for God.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing WORLDCHALLENGE PO BOX 260 LINDALE, TEXAS 75771 or calling 903-963-8626.

None of these messages are copyrighted and you are welcome to make copies for free distribution to friends. A few weeks ago, I preached a message in this church about God's controversy concerning Zion, His church. That God judges nations when the governments and the people oppress His body, His church.

When a nation begins to take away the freedoms of God's people, God sends judgment. You saw that happen to the Russian Empire. You saw the whole empire collapse because they persecuted the Church of Jesus Christ for so many years.

Afghanistan, you saw the same thing happen. They were killing Christians and believers, murdering them and burning them and beheading them. These were Muslim nations and Russia came down and the nation went into depression.

You see it in Indonesia. Indonesia, Thailand and some of these others were persecuting Christians. And in the Indonesian riots, remember, many of those ethnic Chinese were Christians, born-again Christians.

And over 1,500 of them, I believe, were slain or near that amount. And so God judges nations. He has a controversy with nations when they persecute His body.

And this is what I believe is going to be a part of the judgment on America because the attempts to be politically accurate and to get God out of our schools, out of all of our institutions, and really harassment against anything that has to do with Jesus Christ. And I believe that that's the controversy God has with America, not just our drugs, our alcohol, our sexual promiscuity, but all of the legal attempts to take God out of our schools and now a legal move underway to remove, in God we trust, off all our coins, an outright attack on anything having to do with the name of our Lord. And so judgment will come as a result of that.

Tonight I want to speak to you about God's controversy with the backslidden church. God's controversy with the backslidden church. Tell you what, I'm going to be in the book of Hosea, so why don't you turn to Hosea and leave it open around the fourth chapter.

We're going to be referring a lot to this prophet tonight. God's controversy with the backslidden church. Heavenly Father, there are things happening outside the doors of this church, all over the United States and around the world now.

Lord, you have come to balance the books. You've come to take revenge on those who for years and centuries now have mocked your name. And Lord, you said judgment will begin in the house of God.

And we pray, Lord, that you open our eyes and our understanding. Holy Spirit, come upon me now and speak through me as an oracle of God. I pray, Lord, that as we humble ourselves before you, we would hear your mind.

In the words that I speak tonight, Lord, enlarge our vision. Help us to see the heart of God and why he is having to judge the nations. Why all the nations are in turmoil.

One nation after another, Lord. Absolute despair, depression, economic depression, unemployment, mass suicides in Japan now, mass suicides in Korea and in Thailand and in Indonesia and all the Asian nations. Literally thousands are taking their lives.

Fear, uncertainty. But, oh God, we want to look at your church tonight. There is a church in this nation and around the world that is going to come under your wrath and your vengeance.

We pray, Lord, you give us an understanding. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Now, when God suddenly pours his corrective judgments on any nation, the Bible said he begins in his own house. The judgment must, Peter said, begin in the house of the Lord. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? If the righteous scarcely be saved, it does not mean that Christians are going to be saved by the skin of their teeth.

That's not what it means. If you take it in context, that whole chapter, Peter is talking about suffering for Christ. It has to do with suffering.

And he's actually saying, if the righteous, in a time of judgment, scarcely find immunity against suffering, in other words, even Christians are going to suffer in great measure, and he said, if we're going to suffer and we're not immune to these things, where will the ungodly come in? What kind of suffering will be meted out to the ungodly? Now, please note that the Bible says that God's people, overcoming people, are not going

to be scarcely saved. In fact, the Bible makes it very clear they're going to be presented by Jesus Christ of the Father with exceeding great joy. It's going to be with a triumphant sound.

We're not going to just limp into heaven. We're going shouting and jumping all the way. I can assure you that.

The entire passage is about the suffering of Christians. Rejoice in as much as you are made partakers of Christ's suffering. But we're to commit the keeping of our souls to him and well-doing as a faithful creator.

In all these times that are coming, he said, you present your soul, your body to me, because I'm going to be faithful to you. Now, Paul refers to the time we're living in now as the wrap-up of all times, the end of all times. He says, upon whom the ends of the world have come.

And he said, really, if you want to know God's heart when it comes to judging, when it comes to his people, you don't have to pray for a vision. You just don't get along with God and say, Lord, reveal to me your mind. He'll say, go into the Old Testament, dig it out.

I have revealed my mind. That's why the apostle said, and all these things happened unto them in the Old Testament for our example. They are written for our teaching, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

We are living in that time, Paul said, the ends of the world have all come down upon us now. So everything is meant for our teaching. But the Lord is saying, if you want to know what is going to come to your nation and to the world, if you want to know my heart when it comes to my mercies and my judgments, get to know my character by studying every one of these Old Testament prophecies.

Folks, I love the New Testament, and I'm in that constantly. But when I want to know the real heart of God, he's already judged, he's already shown his mercies. I go to the Old Testament, and I just live in it, and I get the mind of God so that we don't have to speculate.

We don't have to dream up something because it's so clear. The heart of God is so revealed, especially in Hosea. Hosea is the prophet who clearly reveals the heart of God about what's going to happen to America and to the nations of the world in the short days ahead.

Hosea is the prophet who clearly defines God's controversy with a backslidden church. Go to Hosea, the fourth chapter, if you will, please, verses 1 and 2. Hosea, the fourth chapter, verses 1 and 2. Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel, for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there's no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing and lying and killing and stealing, committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

Now, listen to that, if you will, please, very clearly. The warning is addressed to the children of Israel. These are God's people.

Now, folks, here is a church being described in the last days. This was in his time, but he's also speaking duly of another time, because God said, you look at this, you read it, and you're reading your own times into it also. And I want you to look at this, please, a church totally bankrupt of truth, having no mercy, a called-out people, yes, but completely ignorant of God's ways, no longer in communion with him, a church full of cursing, lying, adulterous, hateful people, even murderers in their midst, killers.

And, folks, listen to me, please. Can you imagine such a church as that existing today? Is there a church in America and in the land and in the world today that is full of adultery, full of bitterness, full of rebellion, and even killing and murder? Absolutely, yes. It's not the overcoming church of Jesus Christ, I assure you.

But there are two churches in the land, just as there were two churches in the time of Hosea. Israel represents the backslidden church that had become adulterous, fornicating, full of rebellion. There was murder, there was raping, there was incest.

And then there is Judah. Of Judah, God said, Judah still rules with God and is still faithful with the saints. Though Israel will play the harlot, let not Judah offend.

He's saying, I have an overcoming church, I have a holy remnant represented by Judah. But there was another church in Hosea's time, Israel, children of God, absolutely backslidden, priests that were unholy and ungodly. And God says, I have a controversy with this church because they call themselves by my name.

They claim to be my church. And God says, I have a controversy. The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land because there's no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God.

Swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery, blood touching blood. He said, there's a river of blood flowing out of this church. I'm telling you, that's abortion.

Blood touching blood until it becomes a river. And folks, I want to show you that that is coming from what is called the evangelical churches even. Would you listen closely? There's a church in the land and a people backslidden.

The Bible said a spirit of wardom is in the midst of them. It's a harlot church. Have you not seen in your newspapers yet the pictures of our national leaders coming out of church on Sunday morning with their Bibles in their hands? Do you not hear them say, we are born again, we are Christians? In the United States Capitol every Sunday morning, there are attorneys, judges, lawyers, politicians, and in every state capitol in the United States, and the same thing around the world, in Europe especially, you see them Sunday morning toting their Bibles and putting on their front, and they will say that I am a Christian.

Many of them claim to be evangelicals. Many of them teach Sunday school, hold prayer meetings, and yet these are the same people, those people who are voting now for abortion, those who are taking up the homosexual agenda, many of them claim to be born again Christians. They're not agnostics.

They're not atheists. They claim to be Christians. That's where the blood is touching blood.

The prophet is talking about lying and stealing, corruption, judges, magistrates, doctors, lawyers, business leaders, coming and going out of Protestant evangelical churches. Folks, I have listened to this double talk, this double speak, from many of them. I told you about President Clinton's pastor, Philip Walkerman, of Founry Methodist Church, who excuses the President of the United States.

I don't know what the President may be guilty of, but his pastor says we cannot judge him for this because he has so many good qualities that outweigh his sins, if there be sins. And out of churches like this, with pastors... Listen, do you know that the majority of pastors now, in many denominations now, do not believe? I think the last figure was less than 25% of the pastors in most denominations don't even believe in the virgin birth. Thousands pouring into these churches.

No wonder there's so many people who want nothing to do with God or church because they see this stench. They see the hypocrisy and the phoniness of it all. Those who make the laws about abortion, those who stand up against prayers in our schools, in our society, all across this land, especially in the South, and in the Midwest, and even in the North Midwest, especially the whole Bible Belt, governors, coming out of prayer meetings and then making statements to protect the whole homosexual agenda.

God says, I'm angered with this church. The people call themselves by my name, yet they abandon my word. They've turned aside from the knowledge of that which is holy.

They are profane. There's blood on their hands. They act as if they have no knowledge of God whatsoever.

There are thousands upon thousands of churches in America, in England, Australia, around the world, dead, immoral, ashamed to the name of God. A church system so wicked and corrupt that the ungodly are shocked by it. How did this backslidden, immoral church come into being? How was it birthed? How did we come to this country? Folks, this city is full of churches like that.

I could name you three of the most best-known churches in New York City where the whole agenda is homosexuality, immoral activity, adultery, fornication on all sides, drunkenness, alcoholism, drug addiction. Not a word is said about it. Hosea blamed a backslidden, corrupted ministry for perpetuating this great wickedness in the land.

He said, this thing that's happening in our land has come from our pulpits. God said, look at verse 6, chapter 4, My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge, because thou hast rejected knowledge. I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me.

He's talking about the ministry. You will not be priest to me, seeing thou hast forgotten the law of God. I also will forget thy children.

Those are his spiritual children, God says. How can I minister to your spiritual children? He said, you will not be a minister to me. You may be a minister to the crowd.

They may think of you a pastor or a priest, but you're not mine. I have nothing to do with you. You have no knowledge of God.

You are not of mine and your church is not of mine. It was a time of great prosperity, if you know the context of this prophecy. Time of great prosperity in Israel at the time.

There was great increase. In verse 7, look at it, it says, As they were increased, or as they prospered, so they sinned against me. Therefore will I change their glory into shame.

The ministry of Hosea's time were eating off the sins of the people. They were excusing sin, but not only were they excusing it, they were enriching themselves by the sins of the people. Verse 8, they eat up the sin of my people.

And in the Hebrew, it means they live off the sins of their people. This is the man in the pulpit who will never reprove. He'll never cry out against sin.

He'll never give a prophetic warning because it would cost him all he wants. He's a hireling, and the hirelings are in the pulpit all over America. They are hirelings.

They're in the ministry to be known and loved and financially secure, period. Folks, I'm not inventing this. This is the prophet.

Hosea 4.11, harlotry and wine and new wine take away the heart. That's their discernment, their understanding. Harlotry, he said there's a drunkenness.

Alcoholism. Alcoholism. Drinking.

Adultery. Fornication is eating away the discernment of the ministry. I heard of a German pastor who took an evangelist acquaintance of mine aside, and he said, please don't preach so hard about pornography because there's hardly a pastor or Christian in Germany that doesn't go to sleep every night without some nude or pornographic image on his mind from television.

He said, they won't hear it here. And he was actually told to soft-pedal it, as if the man who was saying it is confessing himself that that's what he goes to bed at night with these pornographic images and pictures in his mind from what he's seen. Hosea warned the ministers of the Lord have lost their spiritual life, their understanding, their joy, their void of life, because they're given over to sexual lust and they're drinking.

They're carousing. According to Hosea, the backslidden sensuous church was the result of people becoming just like their pastors. Look at verse 9. And there shall be like people, like priests.

Folks, look at me, please, and hear me well. You can sit in any congregation in America. You can't be there more than a half an hour and you'll know what the pastor's like before he speaks.

There will not be a sense of awe and holiness in that church. You will sense a looseness. You will sense the absolute sense of immorality or holiness or righteousness.

And you can always go to a church where you know there's a man or there are men, there are leaders who are seeking the face of God and they've been warning against sin because there is something of an incredible joy that breaks out in that congregation that doesn't have to be worked up. There is a fellowship that you cannot invent. There's something about it that if you're walking in the Spirit, you know it, you sense it, you feel it when you sit in a pulpit.

That's why I so am blessed when I hear people from all over the world that come here, even when the church is empty, and will write me a letter or call us on the phone, said I was in Times Square Church and there was nobody there, but I felt the presence of the Lord in the building. God help us. Listen to this terrible warning of Jeremiah.

I've seen in the prophets of Jerusalem a horrible thing. They commit adultery and they walk in lies. They strengthen the hands of the evildoers, that none of these evildoers return from their wickedness.

They are all of them unto me as Sodom and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah. If you think that I'm preaching story, listen to this language. This is from God's own heart.

He said these preachers are Sodom and Gomorrah to me. From the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land. He said your land is corrupted because there's a stream coming out of the pulpits, ungodly streams of corruption.

And the people love to have it so according to the prophet. I tell you something, if you're not willing to pay the price and lay down your sins, if you don't really got a heart to walk in holiness before the Lord in His

righteousness, if you don't have a heart for that, you won't last long in a Holy Ghost church. You'll go find somebody, you'll find a pastor that's going to be just like you.

He'll mirror what's in your heart and he'll speak to the idolatry in you, and you'll sit there and you'll be given over to a lie, and you'll think it's the truth and you'll say, what a wonderful sermon when it's sending you to hell. Now why is America become so evil, such rampant wickedness and profanity? Folks, there's not a high school kid in this city except a few Christians. Have you ever walked around these kids and listened to the profanity? There's profanity in the movies, there's profanity on television, there's profanity at Wall Street.

It's the in thing now for Wall Street women, these up-and-coming breaking through the glass ceiling to have a profane mouth, making millions of dollars and spewing out profanity. Where did they get it? The Bible said it's from a profane pulpits in America. Not that they're cursing, but there's a profanity coming out of godlessness that has given birth to this spirit.

The Bible said if they stood in my counsel, and if they would cause my people to hear my words, then they would have turned them away from their evil way and from the evil of their doings. God's saying if I had men in the pulpit who would name sin, if I had men in the pulpit who were not afraid to prophesy, if there were men that would stand and defend my name and stand up against this encroachment of evil on all sides, if I had them, if my people, if my servants had not backslidden, there would have been a bulwark. This flood would have been stopped.

God says I will punish and reward them for their doing. Now let me show you what God prophesies that he's going to do in this coming storm that's coming to America, and not just to America, Europe and around the world. The evangelical churches in Europe are dying.

I get calls from leaders of denominations all through Europe. In fact, I'm going next May to France and to Germany and to Bosnia and to Romania. But the cry of the pastors and the leaders that are really on fire for God is saying, Brother Dave, there is such a deadness in our churches.

There's no life. It's dead. It's dead.

It's dead. It's dying. It's dying in England.

It's dying in Australia. Churches are dying. Even evangelical churches are dying.

And I go to ministers' conferences, and I look at some very wonderful men, but there's a sense of despair and death. I'll punish them and reward them for their doings. Verse 9. In verse 10, it says God is going to send upon them a spirit of dissatisfaction.

For they shall eat and not have enough. They shall commit wardom and shall not increase because they have stopped giving heed to the Lord. He said, I am going to cause a disease in this ministry that's been so faint that it's backslidden.

I'm going to cause, I'm going to give them over to total dissatisfaction, a spirit of dissatisfaction, so that the more they indulge, the more they try to satisfy and find pleasure. He said, there's going to be no pleasure. I'm going to take away all fulfillment.

Folks, you show me a backslidden Christian, and I'll show you one of the most miserable persons in the face of the earth. Backslidden, cold, indifferent to the Lord. But you show me a pastor that once had the touch of God.

You show me a pastor once moved in the anointing of the Holy Spirit. You show me a pastor once used to be close to the heart of Jesus, and he was embraced by the Lord, and you could hear it in his language. You saw it in his walk.

And he turns away a sign. It may be pornography, it may be to adultery or fornication, whatever it may be. And you see the withering and you see the drying.

In fact, if they don't change, the Bible makes it very clear. God says the judgment upon ministers especially is that anything they do in the way of the world will never ever bring them a moment of pleasure. It will be diminishing.

In fact, it will be totally diminishing in its results in their life so that they go deeper and deeper into the pit. And the more exotic their sins become, the less fulfilled they are. And oh, if you've ever run from God, you know that's true.

You ran from God because you didn't want the restrictions and you wanted the freedom, and you went out and got your freedom, and you found it was hell, and it was a prison. They shall eat and not have enough. They shall commit adultery, ward them, and shall not increase.

In other words, their satisfaction will not increase, but it will decrease. The Bible said they become clouds without water, carried about by the wind. Trees whose fruit is withered, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.

Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame. Wandering stars. That wandering stars there in the Greek is roving about like a tramp.

Roving about like a tramp. Folks, I have seen those that at one time were men of God that moved my heart, and I saw a backslidden condition come over them. They sit now and just watch one filthy television program after another, and there's no life, there's a withering, and you see them just tramping about.

They're just roaming about like tramps, the Bible says. Raging waves of the sea, fruitless, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. The Bible said the wicked are like troubled sea when it can't rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

There's no peace, saith the Lord God to the wicked. If you're backslidden here tonight, and this is what the message is about, because God's promised me that he's going to bring home a lot of backsliders tonight. God sent you here to hear a word.

I'm talking not about backslidden preachers, yes, but I'm talking about a backslidden congregation as well. I'm not talking to you that are walking with the Lord. I'm not talking to the remnant church.

I'm not talking to the blood-bought who love Jesus with all their heart. This message is not your message. It's for those who slipped away, and you're a part of this.

You're a part of this whole backslidden scene. The Lord wants you to hear, first of all, his warning that the fear of God will uphold of you, so they can show you his mercy. Another judgment, verse 16.

The Bible says, because, let me read it to you, for Israel slid it back as a backslidden heifer. Now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place. Folks, this is an awesome judgment.

Listen to me, please. This is for every backslidden Christian. For every backslidden preacher in the United States and around the world.

Listen to it closely. The message I preached to you is going out to tape, and many, many hundreds of preachers receive it. In a conference last two days, I said, how many get my newsletters and tapes? And a third of the congregation stood up out of hundreds.

So I'm addressing them as I address you tonight also. And I do it with a broken heart. The Bible says, because of backsliding and forsaking the truth and righteousness, God will strip you of all your increase and your comfort, and he'll turn you into a wilderness to fend for yourself like a little lamb.

For Israel slid it back as a backsliding heifer. Now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place. That large place is a wilderness.

In the Hebrew, it's a wilderness place. What he's saying, because you don't want restrictions, you've been as stubborn as an ox trying to throw off the yoke. You don't want the restraints.

My easy yoke, my easy burden. You don't want that. You want to hold to your sin.

You want to hold to this woman, to this man. You want to hold to your sexual perverse. You want to hold to this thing that has your heart.

You are backslidden in your heart, God says. And I have done everything I know how to do to reach you. He says, now I'm going to have to take you as a lamb.

You want your freedom? I'm going to take you into a wilderness, a dry, withering place, and I'm going to release you. I'm going to strip you of your comforts and your increase, according to the prophet, because you are stubborn as an ox. He said, I'm going to lead you out and you're going to wander around.

And folks, I believe God does this out of love sometimes, many, many times. The only hope, the only hope is that in that lost condition, where you have to fend for yourself, and this has to do with the economic collapses coming. Hear me.

I feel the breath of the Holy Ghost when I speak it. Hear it well, folks. God is going to take this nation as a little lamb out into a dry wilderness and strip it.

Every ungodly religious television program is going to be stripped of its money, of its finances, and will go bankrupt. Every backslidden denomination, every ungodly denomination headquarters is going to go bankrupt. God's going to strip it.

God says, I'm going to take away your increase. I'm going to lead you as a lamb into this withering place, and you're going to fend for yourself. And God hopes that when the economy goes down, and so many people are running around trying to make it on their own, perhaps they'll say, God, I need you.

Maybe there'll be repentance. Finally, God, the last curse is in verse 17 to 19. God says, I'm going to leave them alone.

They're going to be given over to their alcohol, their sexual fixations, and they're going to end up embracing shame. I want you to... Verse 17, Ephraim is joined to idols. Ephraim is another name for Israel.

Ephraim, because that was the capital. The capital was there in Samaria. Ephraim is joined to idols.

Let them alone. Their drink is sour. They've committed war continually.

Her rulers with shame do love. And what it says, what it is in Hebrew, her rulers are not ashamed of their shame. Now, folks, what do you think is happening in our country right now? What better word describes it than shame? Not ashamed of their shame.

He's talking about the leaders and the priests and the people. Ephraim is joined to idols. Let him alone.

God says, I'm going to let you alone now. This is not a time to pray anymore. This is not a time now to intercede anymore.

God says, I'm going to let you alone. And that's what is coming. Their drink is sour.

They've committed adultery continually. Her rulers dearly love their shame. They're not ashamed of their shame.

And in the original, it says, let them rest in their sins now. They're beyond reproof. Let them rest in their sins.

They're beyond reproof. Hopefully, they will be moved by judgment, I believe is what God is saying here. And, folks, this is the last indignity in the book of Hosea before God sent judgment.

This was the last indignity against the Holy God, that they could flaunt their sin and not blush. They laughed. They mocked their shame.

We have a whole nation that says morality doesn't count anymore. Give us prosperity. Give us leaders who can make us prosperous.

We don't care if they're devils, is what is being said. They can be scoundrels. They can flaunt their shame.

As long as we have all that we want. What greed. This is the last indignity that a nation or society inflicts on a holy God before the fist comes down.

Before the fist of God comes down on the nation. And this is what happened in Israel. This was the last.

The Bible says in verse 19, The wind has bound her up in her wings. That means a storm. A storm has come and picked her up in the wings of the storm and carried her off into the wilderness to be judged.

Now, I've had... Listen very closely to me. I'm going to wrap this up in the next five or ten minutes. Now, listen closely, please, to what God's put in my heart.

I've had people write to me from all over the United States and say, Brother David, have you given up on America? Is there no hope? Can we still pray for America? Is there going to be a revival come to this nation? You're talking so much about judgment that's coming. Folks, yesterday, yesterday, front page of the New York Times. The party's over.

The party's over. They said, Brother David, is there no hope? Hosea offers incredible hope. And I'm going to take that hope in just a minute.

But let me tell you what I believe. The only hope that we have for America or any other nation on the face of the earth that's under judgment is that in judgment, in the storm, there'll be repentance. Because in Hosea's time, God's message of hope didn't come until that nation was plagued and fallen and smitten.

And in a smitten condition, Hosea comes along in the fifth chapter. Let's go to the 14th chapter. 14th chapter of Hosea.

Now, folks, I'm going to give you what I believe Hosea the prophet has revealed to us about the heart of God. Can you look this way for a moment? Don't read ahead of me. You're so anxious for hope, you're going to grab a hold of it.

What I'm about to read you is God saying, perhaps in the hardest of times, when all the things that people have trusted in have been stripped away from them, when I start shaking everything that can be shaken, when all the trusted institutions and prosperity crumbles, when everybody is struggling, fighting to survive, perhaps then there will be repentance, they will turn to me again. And then, and only then, I will, verse 4, I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for my anger is turned away from him. But that promise did not come.

And look at verse 1, if you will, of chapter 14. Oh, Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. He said, you see, they're already in a fallen condition.

And here comes the prophet. Folks, look at me. God gets no pleasure in judging America or any other nation.

This is a hard work for our loving Heavenly Father. What a hard work it is for Him. But He says, there is no other way.

You have so hardened your heart, there's no other way I can reach you. You're so backslidden. Your churches are so backslidden, so far from me, that I have to strip and shake everything, so that the only hope left is that you have to turn to me to even survive.

For I give you nothing but a life and death option. You turn to me with all your heart, and I will heal you. And I've got a word for you, backsliders.

Here's the heart of God. Oh, Israel, or oh, backslider, return to the Lord thy God, for you've fallen by your sins. Take with you words, first of all, and turn to the Lord and say, take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, so we'll run to the calves of our lips.

He said, if you'll just turn to me and repent. Turn to me and say, I don't want my sin. I don't want to live in this darkness.

I don't want this cloud hanging over my head. He said, if you'll turn to me, I know you're hurting. There's not a person listening to me here tonight that's in a backslidden condition.

And don't tell me that the word backsliding isn't biblical. I just read it to you like a backslidden heifer. Now, if I had called you that, you'd have been offended.

But the prophet Hosea called it. God's not asking you to make him a bunch of promises. He's not asking you to wait till you clean up your own life.

He's not waiting for something out of you. All he wants out of you is a humble confession. I've messed it up.

I have fallen by my own sins. But you have said, oh, come to me, my people. Return to me with words.

Give me out of the innermost part of your being, out of your mouth, out of your heart, the mouth. Speak to me, the Lord says. Don't hide from me.

Talk to me. Do you know that you can talk to God right now no matter what your condition is? You call on God. How many prisoners in there are prisoners? I just got a letter the other day from a young man.

He has lost everything. He once had a ministry and he's lost his wife. He's lost his children.

He's got a 13-year-old daughter that's given birth to an illegitimate baby by an older man twice her age. He's got a 14-year-old son that's a drug addict. And his 16-year-old boy, all three of them live with his mother.

And his mother just come to the prison that week and said, Your 16-year-old son is the hardest young man I've seen on the face of the earth. There's nobody harder than your son. And this man cast himself down on a bed and he says, Oh, God, I've messed up my life.

I've messed up my family. All my children are going to hell. I've got a son so hard as rocks.

God have mercy on me. And God's spirit came down in that prison, filled him with the Holy Ghost. That man's on fire for God.

I'll heal your backsliding. I'll love you freely for my anger is turned away from you. Oh, what a wonderful word from God.

Now, folks, that's the hope for America, that the day would come in our fallen condition, in the midst of a depression such as we have never seen. Folks, don't you understand? Just as we had in 1929, in the 30s, a dust bowl, and the farmers going bankrupt. We have a dust bowl in Texas and Oklahoma, the same place it was then.

How many times does God have to speak over and over again the same thing? Farmers going bankrupt, the cotton crop is gone, and all these things, and people still partying. People still saying, I don't believe it, I don't care. The whole world is going into depression, and we're just floating along like in an island of tranquility.

Wake up, saints. But now let me tell you something. What a wonderful thing God has said through the prophet Hosea.

He comes in the midst of this. I mean, the nation is in turmoil. In fact, the whole story of this, if you read Hosea and you go to some of the other prophets who were speaking at the same time, contemporary with him, you'll find that there was a famine in the land.

You'll find that all the trades were bankrupt. You'll find that all the springs had dried up. Trade had stopped.

Everything was stopped. It just collapsed. And in that collapsed condition, God comes with this wonderful hope.

He says, I have judged you, but I'm not mad at you. My anger is no longer there. He said, if you'll just repent and turn to me, that's what we should pray with.

Not that God keep us out of the storm, but in the storm, God bring repentance. Can I have five more minutes? All right. Now, let me show you how God showers us with incredible promises.

If we'll just turn to the Lord. Now, I've got to say this in all seriousness, all that are in this, but I don't know where you sit if you're backslidden. I don't know what you're going through.

I don't know what thing has your heart that's keeping you so cold and you're sitting in a withered condition in this church tonight. I don't know what the profanity is. I don't know what the profaneness or the iniquity that's taken hold of your heart.

But I know one thing. If you just talk to him tonight, if you just get up and walk down this aisle, if you choose, it could be done even in your seat. You start calling on the name of the Lord.

He says, come on, bring forth words. Give me your heart. I'll heal your backsliding.

I'll love you freely. And I will not show you anger. God says, look at verse five.

I will be as the do unto you. I'll be as the do unto you. Here's what will happen tonight.

If you simply open up your heart right now, let the Holy Spirit break through the hardness or break through the confusion. In my closing moments here, let me show you this wonderful promise God makes to you. He says, I'm going to make you, I'll be to you as the do of heaven.

Now, in Israel at the time, the context when this was written, there was hardly any rain. And it was the dew that came every morning that fertilized and brought back life. And according to the scripture, to the context of this, when you read the whole story about the effects of dew, it causes greenness.

Well, there's been withering, it brings back the greenness. He said, you've withered away, you've dried up, you've been fruitless. He says, every day you get up now, you're not going to have that cloud of gloom hanging over your head.

I will come down on you like dew. And I'm going to bring life back to everything that's been corrupted. Everything has been withered.

I'm going to come now and I'm going to minister healing. Everything's going to be green. Thank God.

He says, I'm going to be like the dew to you. You can't stand the heavy rain right now, but I'm just going to start greeting you up. Glory be to God.

And you're going to start bearing fruit. Oh, folks, I can't tell you what a joy it is to wake up every morning with Jesus, with no cloud, nothing between you and the Holy Ghost, to be able to look God in the eye, to feel the sense of joy and freedom in him. And you can actually feel the dew of Christ coming down on your

soul.

And you know that there's growth. You can sense it in your heart, whether anybody sees it or not. Oh, they'll see it when you've been with Jesus.

They'll take notice. Don't worry about that. But there's a greenness that comes.

And secondly, he said, you shall grow as the lily. In other words, he said, you're going to blossom with the quality found in the lily. Remember, the lily stands for purity and beauty and aroma, beautiful aroma.

And really, remember, it's compared to more beauty than Solomon reigned in all of his glory. Nothing is glorious as a lily. But it's the most fruitful, one of the most fruitful plants, because a single root of a lily gives 50 bulbs, 50 bulbs out of a single root.

He said, in other words, you're going to bear fruit. You're going to be fruitful. Where you were dying and everything was wasting away, now you're going to be fruitful.

There's a wonderful fruit coming out of your life, blessing instead of cursing. Everybody's going to notice it. He said, you're going to be fruitful, 50 bulbs out of one.

But there's only one problem here. And God took note of it. God doesn't make any mistakes.

You see, the lily has one of the most fragile root systems of all. And so God adds to the lily an amazing thing here. He said, you cast forth roots like Lebanon.

The trees of Lebanon took their roots down as high as the tree. The roots were that deep so that the tree could not be blown over or bend in any storm. He said, you're going to be a lily with fruits, I mean roots, like the trees of Lebanon.

You're going to go down deep in the Lord, and you're going to bear fruit. You're not ignorant. God's going to teach you by the Holy Ghost.

He's going to teach you. You're going to know, and you're going to grow. And then finally, he adds these words, His branches shall spread, and His beauty shall be as the olive tree, and His smell as Lebanon.

The trees of Lebanon, all of the cedar trees, the wind would sweep down with the spices, and the cedar smells from the cedar trees swept over all the valleys of Israel. He said, your branches will spread. In other words, people are going to find rest in you.

You're going to have influence. That smell has to do with influence. You're going to have spiritual influence on others.

You're going to reach other people, in other words. They're going to see Jesus in you. They're going to see something changed in you.

And you're going to be like a tree. People can come under the shadow of your tree and find refreshment. Would you look at, I will heal their backslidings.

I'll love them freely. Verse four, my anger is turned away from Him. Do unto Israel, grow as a lily, cast as roots as Lebanon.

His branches will spread. His beauty shall be as the olive tree. His smell as Lebanon.

They that dwell under his shadow shall return. They shall revive as the corn. You're going to revive other people.

The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. Now, to answer your question specifically, will there be a revival? Listen to me. The revival I want to see is that out of all this testing, those that turn to the Lord with all their heart, people are revived through the influence of Christ in their life.

The aroma of Christ brings reviving to dead souls. We're not talking about manifestations here. We're talking about the aroma of Christ reviving people.

Hallelujah. Look at the last part. Verse eight, and with this I close.

Ephraim shall say, what have I to do anymore with idols? I've heard him. I've observed. I've listened to him.

Now I'm like a green fir tree. From me is the fruit found. He says, look at me now.

I was once withered and dry. Fruit is coming out of me. Hallelujah.

Glory be to God. He said, I don't want idols. I've found him.

I've returned to my Lord and Savior. Will you stand, please? Will you stand? Please hold steady, folks. Folks, please don't leave.

If you have to go, I understand that you've got to respect the moving of the Holy Spirit, please. Times Square people, I'm going to ask you from now on, too, I say it lovingly as a pastor, the altar call is the most important time of the service. We understand if you have to go, and many of them are leaving, not just have to go.

We understand that. You have to get a train or something. Folks, please, always stand at attention.

This is very vital. I wouldn't want to stand before the judgment and have to answer for breaking the spirit of conviction upon a meeting. And often it's very distracting.

I don't know why I had to speak this message tonight about backsliding. But God doesn't waste words. There are a number of backslidden people here.

When I say backslidden, it means that your heart is not on fire. It was on fire. You're drifting.

Something has your heart. And the Lord wants that just so that it will not destroy you and break communion with him. The Lord promised me that if I'd be faithful to preach this very word tonight, that he was going to move on the hearts of people that came to this meeting.

Some of you for the first time. Others of you have been here before. Maybe you've been here a long time.

But your heart's backslidden. There's no getting around it. Plain simple.

You're not what you were or where you were. Something happened. Something's happened in your life.

And the Lord says, come on now, bring words. Bring your words. Bring your confession to me.

And I'll heal your backslidden condition. And I'll embrace you and love you. And I'll speak good to you.

You'll not see my anger. You'll see my grace. You'll see my mercy.

You'll see my love. No one will condemn you. Nobody's going to put a microphone in your face and say, what did you do? Nobody's going to do anything silly.

We're going to pray for you. We're going to ask you to repent honestly before the Lord. Up in the balcony, go to the stairs on either side, come down any aisle.

Those that are watching downstairs, you come up the stairs. Those that are in the main auditorium, just get out of your seat. Now, don't come unless the spirit moves you.

If the spirit moves you, you have to say, Pastor Dave, God's speaking to me tonight. I want to be on fire for God. I don't want coldness.

I don't want to be in a backslidden condition. I'm coming back to my love for Him. I'm coming back.

I need Him. Come on. Lord bless you.

Wherever you're at, up in the balcony, move to the stairs. And downstairs, watch my video. Just come up the stairs and down any aisle here and meet me right here at the front.

I just heard one of the clearest words the Holy Spirit ever heard in my life. Just as clear as could be. The Lord said, David, now tell them how much I love them.

Tell them how much I've been waiting to just cleanse them because they've already been forgiven at the cross. If they'll just bring a repentant heart now, tell them how much I love them. How much I've been waiting, just waiting for a heart confession and to set their hearts.

Set your heart right now, Lord. I want to follow you, not half-heartedly, but everything in me. I want to follow you with all my heart.

Look at me, please. God is not a demanding God. He's not just standing over you demanding and commanding.

He's a loving Heavenly Father. I'll tell you, He speaks strongly sometimes to us, but that's only because of His great love. Tremendous love.

How many of you came forward and are convinced that the Lord truly, deeply loves you? Raise your hand, please. Come on, everybody. I don't care if you're a sinner.

You should have your hand up. God loves you. Convince yourself on the power of the Word of God that He loves you and He cares about you.

You can put your hands down now. Hello. What did I read to you from the prophet Hosea? He said, come, bring words with you now.

And give me the calves of your lips. Your two lips are the lambs of sacrifice that you bring to the Lord. You lay it on the altar and say, Jesus, cleanse my lips.

Cleanse my mind and my heart. Just come now, Jesus, and take full possession of my mind, my soul, and my body. Pray this with me right now.

Jesus, I come to you now to confess that I've sinned against you and I'm here to repent. I bring the words of my mouth from the depths of my heart. I come to you to say I'm sorry.

Forgive me. And now, Lord Jesus, on my confession of my sins and your promise to forgive me and to heal my backsliding, I give you my faith. I believe what you said.

Come right now, Jesus, and love me freely just like you promised. Embrace me. Forgive me.

Heal me. Show me your love now. Let me feel your love.

And I'm going to pray for you. Father, we have done exactly what you told us to do. You said you bring the calves of your lips.

You speak words to me of forgiveness, of repentance, godly sorrow. And, Lord, because we've done that now, you do your part. You come now, Holy Spirit, and you bring assurance.

You bring a sense of cleanness and purity. Now come down like the dew from heaven right now and green up these, Lord, who've withered. Some, Lord, that lost their discernment.

Some, Lord, that haven't prayed a long time. They've just been so weary, Lord. They've been out in that wilderness and everything's been dry and empty.

Now, Lord, pour out your spirit upon them right now. God, let them take roots right now. Let them be fruitful.

Send fruit now to these that are here now. Raise your hands and thank Jesus right now. Just raise your hands and give him thanks.

Hallelujah. This is the conclusion of the tape.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/4/SID4249.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-wilkerson/gods-controversy-with-the-backslidden-church/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net