



# Rockwood Church of Christ

## The Proclaimer

March 31, 2013

P.O. Box 416  
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Rockwood, TN 37854  
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**Elders:**

Dana Carter  
Kenneth Carter  
Don Chandler

**Deacons:**

Bobby Bear  
Kendall Bear  
Larry Brackett  
Roger Carter  
Steve McCreary

**Minister:**

Kirby Hinds

**Secretary:**

Susan Chandler

**Service Times:**

**Sunday**

Bible Study 10 am  
Worship Service 10:45 am  
Worship Service 6 pm

**Wednesday**

Bible Study 7:30 pm

**Monday**

Ladies Class 10 am

**Email:**

rockwdcc@gmail.com

**Website:**

Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

## NO GREATER JOY

*“For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are ‘wise’ in doing evil! But how to do good they know not”*

**Jeremiah 4:22**

Every phrase of the verse above is a bitter, stinging indictment of the Jews in the days of Jeremiah. Writing in about 600 BC, war with the Babylonians under the ruthless Nebuchadnezzar was just months away. Suffering a humiliating defeat, tens of thousands were carried away to captivity in Babylon (586 BC). How could such a thing happen to those who had been chosen to serve as God’s lights in a world of darkness? The reason? God’s people were “foolish,” they did not “know” God; they were “stupid,” having no understanding except in the ways of “doing evil.” They had no clue as to how to honor God.

How different is that picture compared with: *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (III John 4)*. That is true, isn’t it? Nothing gives us greater joy and satisfaction than to see our children doing well and especially when they are living upright, godly lives. On the other hand, no other heartache is like the one we feel when we watch our children making stupid and evil choices and then having to suffer the consequences of those choices.

Did God sentence the Jews to seventy years of “hard time” in Babylon just because He was angry with them, and wanted them to suffer? No, he wanted to teach them, to remind them of their high and holy calling to be His people. We too have that privilege. In **Philippians 2:8-10**, Paul writes, *“...for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true, and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord”* Let’s be God’s children who bring Him great delight!

**Dan Huddleston**

## BACKSLIDING HEIFER

**Hosea 4:16** illustrates the rebellious disposition of the northern kingdom of Israel by referring to that nation as a “*backsliding heifer*.” The Hebrew word for “backsliding” here appears in other passages as “stubborn,” “rebellious,” “revolters,” and “withdrew.” This malignant response to a benevolent God led God to remove his benevolent protection from Israel, resulting in the Assyrian captivity for the survivors of the ferocious Assyrian horde that descended upon the nation. The image of a “backsliding heifer” is that of the animal backing away or withdrawing from a yoke; Israel refused to have the yoke of God on it. There is still a yoke that God intends for His people to bear (**Matthew 11:29-30**).

My own image of a “backsliding heifer” in my mind is of a young cow stuck in a mud hole. Imagine trying to manhandle (or woman handle) a muddy filthy heifer from some bog into which it has gotten itself. Pull or push as one might, the heifer falters and even works violently against every effort to rescue it.

Frankly, nothing has changed, God’s people are still like that “backsliding heifer” of which the prophet Hosea wrote. It is hard to keep the saved, saved! Push, pull, coax and coddle, but still wayward members often remained bogged down in their apostasy. It seems that for some Christians, if they make it to heaven, it will only be if someone has a rope around their necks, tugging and dragging them, they resist all the way, kicking and screaming.

Two other Hebrew words appear in the Old Testament as “backsliding,” also having to do with apostasy. God said to the prophet Jeremiah, “*Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done?*” (**Jeremiah 3:6**). Three more times God indicts “*backsliding Israel*” for her crimes (**Jeremiah 3:8, 11-12**). God refers to His apostate people as “*backsliding children*” (**Jeremiah 3:14, 22**) and twice calls His people a “*backsliding daughter*” (**Jeremiah 31:22; 49:4**). God cites His people for “*perpetual backsliding*” (**Jeremiah 8:5**). Indeed, perpetual sin persists to this day.

As anciently, so now, often God’s people are “*Bent to backsliding from Me (God)*” (**Hosea 11:7**). Happily, though, God will take His backsliding people back to Himself upon repentance. “*I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him*” (**Hosea 14:4**). What congregation wouldn’t be teeming with live bodies, were all the backsliding heifers rounded up? Of, that congregational concerns were with providing enough seating for those present rather than trying to rope heifers!

**Louis Rushmore**