

Are backsliders saved?

Backsliders have no reason to believe that they are saved. The bible says: The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, but a good man will be satisfied from above (Pr 14:14).

John MacArthur writes:

backslider in heart. This term, so often used by the prophets (Is. 57:17; Jer. 3:6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 23; 8:5; 31:22; 49:4; Hos. 11:7; 14:4), is here used in such a way as to clarify who is a backslider. He belongs in the category of the fool, the wicked, and the disobedient and he is contrasted with the godly wise. It is a word that the prophets used of apostate unbelievers.¹

A Christian submits to the Lordship of Jesus. Backsliders may have tried Christianity on for size but in their departure from the knowledge of truth (Ro 1:32, 2 Pe 2:20, Heb 10:26) they prove that their conversion was unlikely to be authentic.

A backslider has turned: from God (1 Kin. 11:9), his gospel (Gal. 1:6, 7; Gal. 3:1–5) and his love (Rev. 2:4). He has turned toward: Satan (1 Tim. 5:15), the world (2 Tim. 4:10) and evil (Ps. 125:5).

Backsliders are prompted by: a haughty spirit (Pr 16:18), spiritual blindness (2 Pet. 1:9; Rev. 3:17), murmuring (Ex. 17:3), lusting after evil (Ps. 106:14), material things (Mark 4:18, 19; 1 Tim. 6:10) and prosperity (Deut. 8:11–14). They do not pass God's tests of persecution or tribulation (Matt. 13:20, 21).

The Christian passes God's tests showing himself to be true (Gen. 22:1–18, Jn 6:6, 1 Ti 3:10). He is an overcomer (Re 2:7, 11, 26).

Backsliders displease God (Ps. 78:56–59) and God withholds his blessings from them (Is. 59:2). They are unworthy of his kingdom (Luke 9:62) and they will be punished (Num. 14:43–45; Jer. 8:5–13).²

True discipleship will cost an individual something (Lk 9:61–62). The apostle Paul wrote: Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Php 3:13–14).

¹ MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed., p. 896). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

² Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1996). *Nelson's quick reference topical Bible index* (pp. 79–80). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.