

# Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



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## Why Do Christians Quit?

In my years of dealing with Christians who give up their religion, I've come to realize that all the various reasons they offer for their decision mask one simple problem.

*“We see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief” (Heb. 3:19).*



Of all the adult Israelites who left Egypt for the Promised Land, only two ever reached their goal. The rest perished in the wilderness, victims of divine wrath. It was a wide range of sins that led to their downfall—idolatry, rebellion, immorality, grumbling, and the like—but all can be boiled down to one word: *unbelief*. They went astray in their conduct, because they had “gone astray in their hearts” (v. 10). It was a failure in attitude.

We should keep this in mind when dealing with Christians today who go astray. Many reasons can be offered as to why they quit—hypocrites in the church, an uncomfortable building, the preacher offended them, unfriendly people, and so forth—but the underlying problem in every case is really quite simple: they have lost faith in God. Buying a new building, replacing the preacher, or setting up a visitation committee will not genuinely restore such people, because the real problem lies

untouched. Our task is much more difficult: persuading a hardened heart to renew its faith in an unseen God.

The Israelites who fell because of unbelief never doubted God's *existence*. They doubted His *word*. God told them how to live and worship—but they preferred a better way. He promised to sustain them—but manna and water were not good enough. He assured them that their hardships would be rewarded with a home in a land flowing with milk and honey—but they insisted on short cuts. He threatened them with punishment if they did not obey—but they shrugged off the threats and disobeyed anyway. God knew what was best for the people, and even spelled it out for them—but “they did not believe in His word” (Psa. 106:24). Their behavior betrayed a deep-seated lack of confidence that God knew what He was talking about.

Oh, our wayward sheep today insist they still believe in God. Fine, but that's not the issue. Do they trust His *word*? Do they believe the life of the righteous is more satisfying than that of the wicked (Psa. 32:10)? Do they really

believe there is a heaven, with joys that far exceed the costs of going there (Rev. 21:4)? Are they certain there is a hell reserved for those who have not bothered to prepare for heaven (Rev. 14:10-11)? Regardless of what a backsliding Christian might claim, his behavior demonstrates that he sees these divine promises as having little or no relevance in his life. “They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient (Tit. 1:16).

Faith is not an academic proposition that allows us to check off the right box on a multiple choice quiz. It is a set of convictions that forms the framework by which we interpret and interact with all of life. Kept in good repair, our faith will guide us in our decision-making, and sustain us when life gets tough. But if neglected, a weakened faith will eventually succumb to the pressures of a hostile world and become useless as a bulwark against temptation.

“Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God” (Heb. 3:12).

– David King