

# Wings

---

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



February 6, 2011

## The Power of Doubt

God wants us to believe without doubting. That level of confidence is possible, but ironically, it requires that one first struggle with serious doubts.

“When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted” (Matt. 28:17).

This account describes an incident in Galilee some days after the resurrection of Jesus (v. 16). We know that immediately following the resurrection, His apostles struggled to accept the truth that He had come back from the dead. The response of doubting Thomas (“Unless I see . . . I will not believe”, Jn. 20:25) illustrates the depth of their despair during those first few days (see also Mk. 16:11,13).

But at this late date described by Matthew, we would expect the apostles to have already reconciled their minds to the reality of what had happened. Yet that was not the case. Even after numerous encounters with Jesus, they still had trouble accepting the fact that He was really, literally, back from the dead.

It is easy for us who accept the resurrection as an historical fact—two thousand years after the event—to criticize these men as dense or slow-witted. But we did not personally walk with Jesus for three years as they did. We did

not experience the shame and devastation of having all our dreams shattered by Roman nails as they did. The loss of faith these men experienced was total, and it was with great difficulty that they eventually came to believe again.

But they *did* believe again. And the new faith they found was not like the old. Before, they believed in a political Messiah who could save their nation. Now, they believed in a resurrected Son of God who could save the world. Their confidence sparked a spiritual revolution that swept the Roman Empire, and the same men who once had lost all faith would fearlessly challenge kings and rulers with the courage of their convictions: “We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Ac. 4:20). The doubt was totally gone.

The metamorphosis of these men from timid losers to pillars of courage is one of the strongest evidences of the veracity of Jesus’ resurrection. No other explanation can account for such an improbable change. The strength of their later conviction is underscored by the despair out of which it grew.

The story of the apostles’ journey of faith illustrates the role that doubt can play in our own struggles to believe. Today, as in the first century, many people scoff at the idea of worshipping a crucified itinerant rabbi who supposedly arose from the dead. It is such a preposterous story upon which to build a religion. But that is precisely how the Lord intended it to be. Even those who eventually come to accept the story as true must struggle with the implications of that fact. It is through the process of dealing with these doubts that a real and lasting faith can emerge.

In all my years of watching people make this conversion, I have noticed a curious phenomenon: Those who quickly accept the message with a minimum of study or thought often don’t stick around for long. In their hearts, they never really wrestled with the meaning of the new faith they embraced. But those who resisted the message, who fought against its demands before surrendering, usually become the strongest believers. Their faith was hardened in the furnace of doubt.

– David King