

# 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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## Understanding the Times

When confronted by difficult decisions, wise men will not make the call based on petty personal considerations, but will evaluate the broader, long-term implications of the decision.

“Now these were the numbers of the divisions that were equipped for war, and came to David at Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the Lord: . . . of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command” (1 Chron. 12:23, 32).

When Saul died in battle against the Philistines, the nation of Israel was plunged into a serious power struggle that threatened full-scale civil war (2 Sam. 2-4). The tribe of Judah chose their hero, David, to be their king, but the remaining tribes remained loyal to Saul’s son, Ishbosheth. Ishbosheth proved to be a weak and ineffective leader, and the people’s loyalty gradually began to shift toward David. The tipping point came when sizable military contingents from all the tribes came to David to transfer their allegiance to him.

In reviewing the descriptions of these military units, it is the Issachar contingent that catches our attention. First, we are told that the men of

Issachar “understood the times.” Israel had only recently emerged from the Judges period, an era darkened by petty tribal rivalries and moral decadence. The reign of Saul had pushed the nation tentatively in the direction of national unity, but Saul’s personal failures threatened to derail that objective and send Israel back into internecine bickering. The men of Issachar had clarity of vision to recognize that greatness was within Israel’s grasp—but only if the people could unite behind the right leader.

Given that strategic understanding, the men of Issachar then “knew what Israel ought to do.” There was a moral imperative at work here, to those who were prepared to see it. Israel could remain stuck in a path of mediocrity with an ineffectual ruler; or they could make a clean break with the status quo and move forward with a leader who had a proven record. David was already Judah’s hero; it was now time for all Israel to recognize him as their hero and make him their king.

It was this ability to analyze the decision from the vantage point of histo-

ry, rather than personal gain or loss, that made the men of Issachar unique among their peers. They threw their support behind David, not because it was easy or profitable, but because they knew it was the right thing to do for the nation. The glory of David’s reign validated the wisdom of their insight.

Every generation is confronted with momentous occasions that require difficult decisions. Unfortunately, most people approach these decisions from a purely selfish standpoint. What will this cost *me*? How will this affect *my* personal (and mostly short-term) comfort and prosperity? What is usually overlooked in these issues is the larger, more long-term, implications. How will this affect the moral and spiritual fiber of society? What impact will this have on our children, grandchildren, and generations beyond? Until we can learn to evaluate these decisions through the broad lense of history, our ability to make the right call will be contaminated by trivial considerations.

And later generations will curse us for our shortsightedness.

– David King