

Wings

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



August 24, 2014

I'll Fight for You!

Politicians use this promise to buy our votes. They can never deliver on that promise, of course, but the greater danger is the corrosive effect it can have on our faith and our spirit of self-reliance.

“The people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, ‘No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.’” (1 Sam. 8:19-20).



As we head into another election season, we are already being bombarded with political ads. In all this media blitz there is one promise we will hear over and over again: “I will fight for you!” Sometimes it will be customized to appeal to a targeted audience: “I will fight for [insert special interest group here]!” Whatever the details, the message is always the same: if we elect Candidate X, we will have a champion fighting fiercely to give us what we deserve. Hurrah!!

Israel’s demand for a king is an ancient echo of this modern political trope. The Israelites were tired of the localized border raids that were so prevalent during the Judges period and wanted a real king with a standing army who would fight their battles for them. What could possibly go wrong?

Actually, there was much that could go wrong. First, battles are fought and won by armies, not kings. Having a king with all his royal regalia leading his troops into battle may inspire excitement among the crowds, but countless battles have been lost by kings who ran like rabbits when their own armies crumbled before the enemy.

Also, kings rarely fight for their people. Oh, they’ll give stirring speeches about sacrificing for their nation, but a review of history shows that most rulers fight to secure their own fame and fortune. The people are merely pawns to that end, a tool that kings will manipulate to further their own selfish agendas.

But the greatest problem with Israel’s request was that they already had a king fighting for them—God. By demanding a human king, they revealed a lack of faith in the only King who could really save them. As God told Samuel, “they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (8:7).

It’s no different today. The promises of our politicians should be received with a generous dose of skepticism,

because no politician can possibly fulfill all his promises to all his constituencies. Even if he did, we can be sure he’s lining his own pockets somewhere in the deal. If we put our faith in politicians to save us, we are sure to be disappointed.

More importantly, when we look to any king or politician to fight for us, we are unwittingly surrendering a good chunk of our autonomy. Freedom means being in control of our own destiny, and when we hand over that control to a fast-talking salesman who promises us the moon, we are giving up our freedom for slavery. We won’t like the outcome, but at that point it will be too late.

Israel came to regret their request for a king. He fought their battles for them, but he also brought the nation to the brink of disaster. Our politicians, like Israel’s kings, are mere window dressing in the panoramic sweep of history, mortals who cannot deliver on the lofty promises they sell us. Our destiny lies in our own hands, buttressed by a deep respect for the God who rules over all.

We don’t need politicians fighting for us. We need more faith in God.

– David King