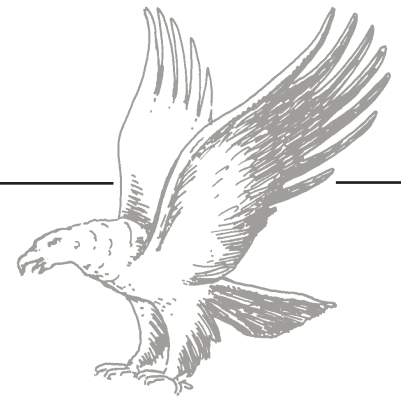


# Wings

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



June 7, 2015

## The Arc of the Moral Universe

History may appear to be full of chaotic indifference, but to the wise observer there is an invisible Hand guiding events inexorably toward a just conclusion. That conviction gives hope.

*“I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread. . . . For the Lord loves justice, and does not forsake His saints; they are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off” (Psa. 37:25, 28).*



The Bible teaches the concept of a final judgment, a grand tribunal where every evil will be fully recompensed. All perpetrators will be punished, all victims will be vindicated, and the scales of justice finally will be balanced.

But justice is not necessarily limited to the afterlife. David’s words in this Psalm—written near the end of a long life experiencing both good and evil—reflect an understanding of justice that plays out even as history unfolds before our eyes. We may not have to wait until the final judgment to see the wicked man get his due; there is a good chance we will witness it here in this life.

In the mid-19th century a Unitarian minister named Theodore Parker predicted the demise of slavery by appeal-

ing to what he saw as an historical template. In his words, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” It took a bloody civil war, but Parker’s prediction eventually came to pass, and justice was served upon that evil institution. A century later, Martin Luther King, Jr., often quoted Parker’s words to revive the hopes of those who longed to see the end of forced segregation. Once again, the moral arc slowly but inexorably bent toward justice.

Study the vast sweep of history and you’ll see the wisdom of this truth play out again and again. Without exception, every great empire that established itself upon violence and oppression eventually came to an ugly end. The Old Testament prophets spoke confidently of the downfalls of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece—in some cases before these empires even existed. Tyrants who boasted of their power and invincibility died like everyone else, and the monuments they erected to their own vanity were soon torn down. The early church suffered at the hands of mighty

Rome, yet over time the movement proved to have greater staying power than its persecutors. Again and again, the moral arc of history has tended toward the vindication of the innocent and the repudiation of the guilty.

In a day when it seems that the forces of evil are crushing everything that is right and good—and, ironically, even misappropriating Parker’s maxim to justify their own wicked schemes—it is important that we keep this principle firmly fixed in our minds. Somewhere down history’s road, the ungodly will be judged and the blameless will be exonerated. It may not happen in our lifetime, and it could involve a violent upheaval to set everything right again, but it *will* happen. The arc of the moral universe will not be denied.

“The Lord loves justice,” and history bears the imprint of that eternal truth. No matter how grim our current circumstances may appear, the child of God can take comfort in the knowledge that they are only temporary, and that justice will someday prevail. History is in the hands of a just God; He will make sure of it.

– David King