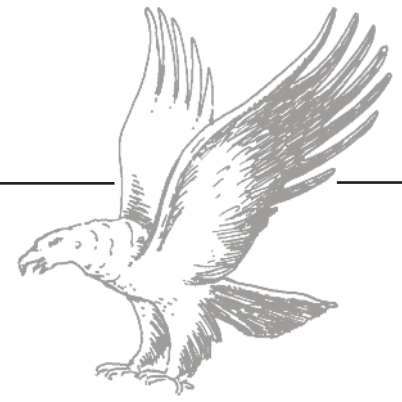


# Wings

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



September 6, 2015

## From the Least to the Greatest

When the wheels fall off an entire civilization, there's plenty of blame to go around. But there's one group who deserve far more of the blame than they usually get.

*“I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land,” says the Lord. ‘Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely’” (Jer. 6:12-13).*

*“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so” (Jer. 5:31).*



In his lifetime Jeremiah witnessed the collapse and destruction of a once-great nation. He had a front-row seat to the train wreck, and saw with stark clarity all the mistakes that brought it on. In these verses he pointed to a group who are often overlooked in assigning blame for the debacle. His rebuke provides a useful template for recognizing the forces destroying our society today.

Jeremiah had plenty to say about the corrupt kings, priests, and prophets who undermined their nation's moral foundation. But in these verses, Jeremiah cast his net much wider: “Everyone is given to covetousness . . . everyone deals falsely.” Judah's problem was not just a

crisis of leadership, but a moral collapse of the entire population, even to “the least of them.” Their leaders may have been crooks—what else is new?—but the situation had deteriorated to a more ominous stage: “My people love to have it so.” The general population was now in on the game.

When a culture is going off the rails, it's easy to blame the politicians, the intellectuals, the business moguls, the media, and a variety of other miscreants for what is going wrong. But the real villains are the ordinary citizens who approve, if not shamelessly participate in, the debauchery. As long as they can get a piece of the action, they really don't care what their leaders are doing.

No nation can survive that kind of moral freefall. Those in positions of power will always be susceptible to corruption, but malfeasance in the halls of power does not necessarily doom a nation. It's when that corruption seeps down into the streets and homes and small businesses of the wider public that society faces a terminal disease. Who is left to save the patient?

That's the scenario unfolding in our country today. Every election season we mount campaigns to “throw the bums out,” only to find out that we've replaced the old bums with new bums, who shrewdly use our own greed against us. Our intellectual class, in consort with the news and entertainment media, promotes a philosophical worldview that is overwhelmingly atheistic and materialistic—and disastrous in its practical application. Yet most of us meekly stand by, unable or unwilling to challenge this destructive ideology. As long as we're comfortable, most of us don't care.

The chief problem plaguing our nation today is not political or economic; it's moral and spiritual. Our leaders are faithless, but so are we. From the least to the greatest, we're all participating the systematic dismantling of our culture—many of us without even realizing it. The only hope for reversing this decline is widespread repentance across all strata of society. But if history is any guide, that change of heart will be found only on the other side of an apocalyptic collapse. May God help us.

– David King