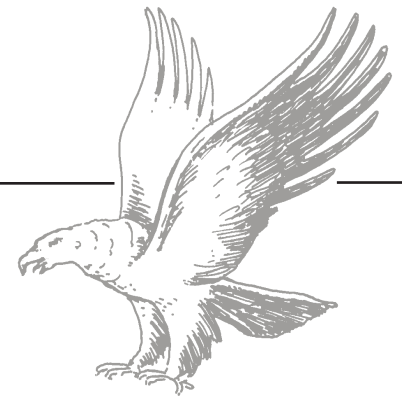


# Wings

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



March 27, 2016

## Doing the Lord's Work Carelessly

Doing any job deserves our best, but when the task comes from the Lord, we have the ultimate reason to do it well.

*“Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from blood” (Jer. 48:10).*



This verse is a standard sample of Hebrew parallelism, in which the second half of the verse restates the message of the first half. Thus, “the work of the Lord” in the first line is defined as the spilling of blood with a sword in the second line—a gruesome image. What’s going on here?

As always, the context informs our understanding. The whole chapter is an oracle against Moab, an ancient enemy of Israel (v. 1). Over and over, God promises doom on the Moabites for their pride and wickedness (v. 4, 8, 16, 20, 29, 39, 42, etc.). The instrument of that destruction would be “the sword” (v. 2), a metaphor for invasion from a foreign military power (elsewhere identified as Babylon).

Given this background, therefore, the verse is a warning to the invaders who have been assigned the task of executing God’s judgment on Moab. The

Hebrew word translated “deceitfully” (NKJV) is rendered in other translations “carelessly,” “negligently,” “half-heartedly,” or “with slackness.” The idea is that God wants His judgment on Moab to be complete; the Babylonians must unleash their full fury on the Moabites and hold nothing back.

This is not the raving of a blood-thirsty tyrant, but the judgment of a holy God on a corrupt society that had reached its expiration date. (As a side note, this passage answers those critics who deride God for not intervening in history to punish evildoers. He intervenes alright—very effectively, too. And human history is better off for it.)

This passage provides more than a history lesson. Just as Babylon had a job to do for God, we have our own assignment from Him. Our mission, of course, does not involve slaughtering enemies, but is a more noble endeavor: to demonstrate the love of God to a world mired in sin. We do that by mirroring the image of Christ in our own lives—by serving, helping, forgiving, and showing kindness, all without conditions or

expectations of payback. And along the way, of course, we are to share the message of God’s love in Jesus Christ with all who will listen. If we do this well, it will transform the world in a way that all the money and armies and politicians on earth cannot duplicate.

This is our “work of the Lord.” But it is *our* work; God will not do it for us. We are His instruments, prepared for good works, and we must throw ourselves into this work with everything we have. The danger is that we can become careless about the task before us and do a poor job of executing it. We can make that mistake in a number of ways: We can get distracted by the trivial attractions of this world. Or we can let the trials and hardships of life discourage us to the point that we give up. Or we can convince ourselves that our talents are so insignificant that there’s no point in trying.

Whatever the cause, doing the work of the Lord in a half-hearted fashion will bring God’s curse upon us. He deserves the best we have, and we should give it to Him.

– David King