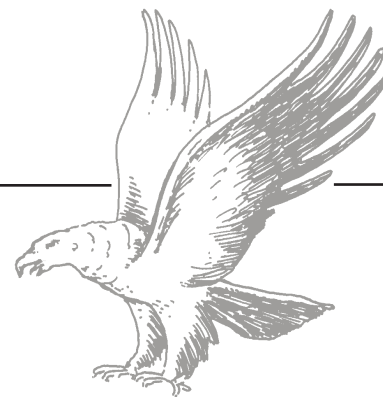


# Wings

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



December 4, 2016

## Sons of Hell

Some of Satan's best allies are people who claim to be God's best friends. The failure to recognize their own destructive behavior inflicts enormous damage on God's cause.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Matt. 23:15)*



The phrase "son of" is a common Hebrew idiom meaning "to share the characteristics of" something. So "son of perdition" in Jn. 17:12 and 2 Thess. 2:3 describes someone who, by his rejection of God's authority, is doomed to destruction. By contrast, "sons of light" (Jn. 12:36) are those who open their lives to the light of God's guidance. The fiery temperament of James and John earned them the title of "Sons of Thunder" (Mk. 3:17), while Barnabas ("Son of Encouragement") was known for his optimistic spirit (Ac. 4:36).

So when Jesus accused the Pharisees of turning a proselyte into "a son of hell," He was hurling the worst possible insult at them. Read the rest of Matthew 23 and it's obvious that Jesus viewed the Pharisees as embodying all the ugliness of hell—deceit, selfishness, treachery, greed, pride. Anyone who fell

under their influence would be corrupted by their faulty theology and do great harm to God's cause.

The irony, of course, is that the Pharisees considered themselves to be the ultimate representatives of holiness. They were defenders of God's holy law, practitioners of the true faith, a tiny slice of humanity who truly "got it" when it came to morals and virtue. If you wanted to get a glimpse of heaven, the Pharisees said, "Look at us!"

But Jesus saw something more sinister at work in these people. Their very righteousness had become a stumbling block to achieving the most important virtue of all: *humility*. Their condescending treatment of others blinded them to their own imperfections, and turned them into insufferable snobs.

The "sons of hell" created by the Pharisees were not murderers, thieves, rapists, or idolaters. No, it was worse than that. They were *hypocrites*, pretenders who fooled no one but themselves by their sanctimonious preening. Satan has many allies, but none so effective as those who believe they are

beyond his grasp. The Pharisees and their minions considered themselves too good for the sinners who surrounded them—and thereby erected a tall barrier that kept those sinners from ever finding God. What more does Satan need?

Holier-than-thou pride always produces the worst kind of evil. It cloaks itself in the mantle of godliness, but refuses to acknowledge the flaws and weaknesses that are common to all humanity. The result is a pretentiousness that is forever criticizing others while hiding or excusing its own faults—all in the name of God, of course. The damage inflicted by this kind of religion is incalculable.

Hell will be populated by legions of people who were confident they would never go there. If we want to avoid that fate, we must temper our loyalty to God with equal parts of humility and compassion, recognizing that our service to Him will always be imperfect and incomplete. It is only by displaying the same unselfish love for others that God has manifested toward us, that we can be called "sons of God."

— David King