

# Wings

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



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## A Crucified Lord

Those of us who have grown up with the image of the crucified Jesus have no problem accepting that story. But for many people, the idea of a crucified Lord presents an unacceptable contradiction.

*"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Ac. 2:36).*

*"We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:23).*



For those of us who have grown up in the faith, the idea of a "crucified Lord" sounds quite reasonable. Jesus was crucified to save us, and now reigns as our Lord. Makes perfect sense, right?

Well, for a huge segment of the human population, it makes no sense at all. And if we wish to make the gospel attractive to them, we have to understand their perspective.

First, consider the meaning of the title "Lord." This word suggests authority, power, the ability to control and direct. Lords rule from above; they do not grovel below. To be a lord, someone must prove himself strong, able to hold his own against any and all opponents. A lord demands (and receives) honor and respect from everyone around him. You don't mess with lords.

Now think about crucifixion. Crucifixion was a form of capital punishment that involved nailing the victim to a pair of timbers, usually after a severe beating. To maximize his shame, the victim was usually stripped naked, hanging in humiliation before a gaping public. It was a form of execution so barbaric, so gruesome, that the Romans refused to use it on their own citizens. It was reserved for non-citizens who had been convicted of the most heinous crimes. Crucifixion is rarely used today, certainly not by any civilized society. In short, a victim of crucifixion was an outcast from society, a worthless human being who had forfeited the right to live and was respected by no one.

Now try to merge those two concepts into a single person—a "crucified Lord." In normal human terms, a person can be a lord, or he can be crucified, but he cannot be both. Or he might be a former lord who was stripped of his office for some crime, then crucified. But a "crucified Lord"? That's ridiculous!

At least that's how a majority of people view Jesus. It was certainly an

impediment to belief in the first century. Paul knew that the death of Jesus was "a stumbling block" to the Jews and "foolishness" to the Gentiles. The very idea that a victim of crucifixion could be worshiped as an all-powerful lord was preposterous. No right-thinking person could take it seriously. Many today still can't grasp the logic of such an equation.

Yet that is precisely how God has chosen to reveal His character to us. Jesus is Lord, yes. But the fact that He first had to experience the worst that humanity could throw at Him makes Him unlike any other lord humanity has known. He is a Lord who knows from personal experience what it means to be rejected, ridiculed, betrayed, abused, and tortured. In short, He knows what it is like to be human.

But He also knows what it means to sacrifice for others, including those who don't deserve it. His sacrifice was motivated by a love so deep that it challenges all our ordinary definitions of love. And it has earned Him the adoration of millions who call Him "Lord," not out of coercive fear, but out of gratitude.

— David King



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