

Message Five

**The Wings of an Eagle,  
the Hands of a Man, and the Feet of a Calf**

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 1:5-11; Isa. 40:31; Acts 16:7; Eph. 4:1; 1 Cor. 2:15

**I. The wings of an eagle signify the resurrection power of Christ, God's power in life applied to us and becoming our grace—Ezek. 1:6b, 9, 11b; Exo. 19:4; Isa. 40:31; 2 Cor. 4:7; 1:12; 12:9; 1 Cor. 15:10:**

- A. The Bible uses the eagle as a symbol of the Spirit when it speaks about the Spirit of power—Isa. 40:31.
- B. When God saved the Israelites out of Egypt and brought them to Himself at Mount Sinai, He told them that He bore them like an eagle, carrying them upon His wings; this was a word of grace to let them know that He was full of grace toward them—Exo. 19:4.
- C. Psalm 103:5 says that God can satisfy us so that our youth is renewed like the eagle; it is possible for us to have our youth renewed like the eagle by taking Christ as our life—Col. 3:4.
- D. “Those who wait on Jehovah will renew their strength; / They will mount up with wings like eagles; / They will run and will not become weary; / They will walk and will not faint”—Isa. 40:31:
  - 1. To wait on Jehovah, the eternal God, means that we terminate ourselves, that is, that we stop ourselves with our living, our doing, and our activity, and receive God in Christ as our life, our person, and our replacement—8:17; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 12:2; Col. 4:2.
  - 2. Such a waiting one will be renewed and strengthened to such an extent that he will mount up with wings like eagles; as a transformed person, he will not only walk and run but also soar in the heavens, far above every earthly frustration.
- E. What we are and what we do should not be according to our own wisdom, strength, and ability but by the grace of God, for we have no boast in ourselves or in anything else but only in the Lord—2 Cor. 1:12; 10:17; 1 Cor. 3:21; Gal. 6:14; Phil. 3:3; Jer. 9:23-24.
- F. The grace, power, and strength of the Lord are both for moving and for covering us:
  - 1. On the one hand, the Lord's grace is the power for us to move; on the other hand, the Lord's power is our protection, our hiding place—1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 12:9; Psa. 17:8; 57:1; 63:7; 91:4.
  - 2. The front face of the four living creatures is the face of a man, but the body is that of an eagle—Ezek. 1:10a, 11b:
    - a. The living creatures look like a man but move like an eagle.
    - b. The two wings for moving and the two wings for covering indicate that there is something mysterious about us and that this gives others the impression of the Divine Being.

**II. The spiritual significance of the hands of a man is that a normal Christian should always do things exactly like a man—v. 8a; Acts 20:34:**

- A. Paul's writings indicate that although he experienced the eagle's wings, he was still very human in his living, taking the human way and doing things in a human way—1 Thes. 2:5-8; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20.
- B. No matter how much the grace of God is with us and no matter how much the Lord is empowering us, we must nevertheless do things in a human way:
  - 1. Under the eagle's wings there should be human hands, and these hands should always be working—Eph. 4:28; Acts 20:35; 18:3; 2 Thes. 3:6-12.
  - 2. We need both the wings of the Lord's empowering grace and the hands of a man, cooperating with God in a human way.
- C. The highest humanity is one in which divinity is added to our humanity and in which the divine attributes are expressed in our human virtues—1 Cor. 12:31b—13:8a; Matt. 5:44; Phil. 4:5-7; Luke 23:34a; Matt. 18:21-22; 1 Cor. 4:2; 7:25b; Psa. 37:3; 1 Pet. 5:5-6; John 13:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:8; Phil. 2:3; Eph. 4:2.
- D. Christian humanity does not refer to our natural virtues; rather, it is the Christ who lives in us and out of us—Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-21a; 2 Cor. 12:2.
- E. We all need to learn to be human Christians, living in a Jesusly human way according to the humanity of Jesus, which is His human life in resurrection—4:10-11:
  - 1. To damage humanity is to ruin both the means and the channel created by God for His economy.
  - 2. The more spiritual we are, the more human we will be.
  - 3. If we would live Christ, we need to learn to be human in a genuine way:
    - a. On the one hand, we have the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4); on the other hand, we are normal human beings.
    - b. The fact that we have the divine nature with the divine life does not mean that we no longer need to be human.
    - c. We need to live a genuinely human life by the divine life and nature; in this way we will be able to live the highest human life, a life like that of the Lord Jesus—Eph. 4:20-21.
- F. When Christ comes into us as life, He is the eternal life with both the divine life and nature and the human life and nature; now our wonderful Savior lives, acts, moves, and works as life within us in a quiet, normal, ordinary way and also in a very human way—Col. 3:4, 12-14.
- G. The Spirit, who was not yet because Jesus had not yet been glorified in resurrection, is the Spirit with the humanity of Jesus; the Spirit today has been constituted with the glorified humanity of Jesus—Luke 24:26; John 7:37-39.
- H. We need to experience the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Jesus—Acts 16:7:
  - 1. The Spirit of Jesus refers to the Spirit of the incarnated Savior who, as Jesus in His humanity, passed through human living and death on the cross.
  - 2. This indicates that in the Spirit of Jesus there is not only the divine element of God but also the human element of Jesus and the elements of His human living and His suffering of death as well.

**III. The spiritual significance of the feet of a calf is that we should walk like a calf, having straight feet; we should walk not according to our crooked human feet but with the feet of a calf—Ezek. 1:7; 2 Cor. 1:12:**

- A. The apostle Paul speaks of walking with the straight feet of a calf—2:17; 1 Thes. 2:3-4, 12; Eph. 4:1.
- B. The calf's feet are not only straight but also cloven, divided; the divided hoof signifies that in our Christian walk we need discernment of what is right and what is wrong in the eyes of God—Lev. 11:4-6; Phil. 1:9; 1 Cor. 2:14-15:
  - 1. The development of the ability to discern is based upon learning and experience—Heb. 4:12; 5:14; 1 Cor. 2:15:
    - a. The degree of the learning and experience we have before God is the degree of the discernment we will have.
    - b. The most profound discernment comes from the most profound dealings.
  - 2. "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and all discernment"—Phil. 1:9:
    - a. Discernment is the ability to sense things; the Greek word for *discernment* means "sensitive perception, moral tact."
    - b. According to Paul, we should love with a mind full of knowledge and discernment:
      - (1) This knowledge and discernment are Christ Himself; when we experience Christ, He becomes our knowledge and discernment, our perceptive power.
      - (2) The more we experience Christ, the more we will discern matters not by our cleverness but by the Christ who lives within us—Gal. 2:20.
  - 3. We need to discern between ethics and Christ, for ethical teachings are not of Christ, of the Spirit, of resurrection, or of the new creation—6:15.
  - 4. Romans 8 reveals that the best way to discern a matter—the secret of discernment—is to discern according to life or death.
- C. The calf's feet "sparkled like the sight of burnished bronze" (Ezek. 1:7); this indicates that we need a walk that has been tested and burned by the Lord so that it will be like shining bronze, enlightening and testing others—Rev. 1:15a.
- D. In the Bible a calf signifies freshness, livingness, and vigor:
  - 1. A calf is young, vigorous, and full of energy; this indicates that our Christian walk should be a "skipping walk," a walk that is full of life—Psa. 29:6; Mal. 4:2.
  - 2. If we enjoy grace and live in the presence of God, we will always be new and fresh, and with us there will be no oldness.

**IV. If as living creatures we have the wings of an eagle, the hands of a man, and the feet of a calf, we can be coordinated and become one corporate entity for the carrying out of God's economy.**