

Deuteronomy 32:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:

Analysis

As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young—the eagle (nesher, possibly also vulture) disturbs the nest's comfort, forcing eaglets toward flight. **Spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings**—when fledglings falter, the mother catches them mid-fall, bearing them on strong pinions until they gain strength.

This ornithological metaphor illustrates divine pedagogy: God sometimes disrupts comfort zones (stirring the nest) to promote growth, but never abandons during failure—He bears us through weakness toward maturity. Exodus 19:4 uses identical imagery: 'Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.'

The eagle's care combines challenge and support, discipline and grace. God's training isn't harsh abandonment but attentive coaching—pushing toward flight while remaining ready to rescue. This anticipates the New Testament's sanctification theology: God works growth through trials (James 1:2-4) while sustaining believers through the Spirit (Romans 8:26-27).

Historical Context

Eagles were common in the Sinai wilderness and Palestine, making this a vivid, culturally accessible metaphor for Moses' audience. The image extends the father-

child relationship (v. 6) with maternal nurturing (note the feminine pronouns for the eagle), showing God's comprehensive parental care. Isaiah 40:31 promises those who wait on the LORD will 'mount up with wings as eagles,' combining strength and divine enablement. The eagle became a symbol of God's deliverance and covenant protection throughout Scripture (Psalm 103:5; Revelation 12:14). Modern eagle research confirms this protective behavior—eagles do position themselves beneath struggling young, though 'bearing them on wings' may be poetic intensification of the protective instinct.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. When has God 'stirred your nest'—disrupted comfort to push you toward spiritual maturity—and how did you respond?
2. How does knowing God 'bears you on wings' during failures free you to attempt bold obedience without fear of ultimate catastrophe?

Interlinear Text

כְּנֶשֶׁר	יַעֲרֵ	קֵן וְ	עַל	גּוֹזֵל יוֹ	יִכַּחַף
As an eagle	stirreth up	her nest	H5921	over her young	fluttereth
H5404	H5782	H7064		H1469	H7363
יִפְרֹשׁ	כְּנָפָיו	יִקַּח הוּא	יִשָּׂא הוּא	עַל	אֲבָרְתָּו:
spreadeth abroad	her wings	taketh	them beareth	H5921	them on her wings
H6566	H3671	H3947	H5375		H84

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 19:4 (Parallel theme): Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

Isaiah 46:4 (Parallel theme): And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

Isaiah 63:9 (Parallel theme): In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Isaiah 40:31 (Parallel theme): But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

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