

# Wings

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*“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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## Strength for the Journey

The road to heaven is a long and difficult path. But we can find the strength to finish the journey, if we will prepare ourselves with the proper footwear.

“Your sandals shall be iron and bronze; as your days, so shall your strength be” (Deut. 33:25).

These words were spoken by Moses shortly before he died, as part of a blessing on the tribe of Asher. The fulfillment of this blessing in the tribe’s later history is an interesting story, but we will pass over that story in order to make a practical application in our own lives.

Sandals of iron and bronze hardly seem like a blessing. Surely hiking shoes should be made of something more comfortable. But God never equips us with armor we do not need. The sturdy shoes which shod our feet are suited to protect us from the rough ground over which we must walk. An old proverb says, “No one will go to heaven in silver slippers,” because the road to heaven is not easy. Temptation, tragedy, disappointment, discouragement — these are the stones that litter our path, and one who attempts the trek lightly shod will never reach the goal.

What are these sandals of iron and bronze, so essential to a successful journey? A strong case can be made for the

virtues of *faith* and *hope*, the raw materials from which perseverance is forged. Paul outlined the process in Rom. 5:2-4: “Through [Christ] we have access by *faith* into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in *hope* of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character, and character, hope.”

Mined from the rock of divine wisdom and hardened in the furnace of experience, these virtues can carry us safely across the most difficult terrain. They may not be glamorous, but they are effective. When we reach the end of the road, we will appreciate their value.

But for some of us the end of the road is still a long way off. Between us and our goal lie years and years of slow trudging. Can we hold out that long? God assures us we can. “As your days, so shall your strength be.” If the number of our days increases, so will the strength necessary to keep the pace. As we march on, our spiritual stamina is not worn down by the mounting distances behind us; rather, it is invigorated by the

approaching of our goal. The body may show its age, but the spirit presses on even more eagerly, knowing that victory is drawing near. “We do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16).

Faith and hope will provide us strength for the journey, but they are not passive attributes. We must provide the self-discipline to strap them to our feet, and keep them there as we go along. In practical terms, that means we must engage in activities that nourish these virtues, such as Bible study, prayer, and frequent association with others whose faith and hope are stronger than our own. Without these activities, our sandals will wear out before the journey is done.

It’s a hard road to heaven, and, “many will seek to enter and will not be able” (Lk. 13:24). But success or failure is not a matter of luck. It is a function of how badly we want to get there. Strap on the right footwear, and the journey will be successful—and occasionally even enjoyable.

– David King