

The Eagle

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[0 : 0 0] Deuteronomy chapter 32 read verses 11 and 12 and there was no strange God with them this couple of verses is simply the most illustrated if you like the most clear and vivid picture that the Lord paints through the mouth of Moses here of his own care of his people Israel the rest of the chapter, much of the chapter is concerning both the Lord's loving care of them but their rejection of him throughout the 40 years in the wilderness this remember is Moses almost parting shot if we were to look ahead to the end of Deuteronomy if we were to see verse 47 where he says it's not a vain thing for you because it is your life and through this thing you shall prolong your days in the land whether you go over Jordan to possess it he is after he's sung the song in verse 44

Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people and Hosea the son of Nun that's Joshua and so after he's completed it and explained to them they have to adhere to what they're being taught here then the Lord spake to Moses the same day saying get thee up into this mountain Abarim and unto Mount Nebo which is in the land of Moab that is open against Jericho and behold the land of Canaan which I gave unto the children of Israel for possession and die in the mountain where I have lost up and be gathered unto thy people as Aaron thy brother died in my poor and was gathered unto his people so this is although he still has opportunity and time to bless each of the twelve tribes in chapter 33 this is Moses' parting shot he has given this the inspiration of this song in order to declare to the people the nature of their relationship to the Lord and this picture of the eagle is simply as we say the most vivid illustration out of the rest of the description that he gives in this chapter 32 let's think about the eagle for a moment we mentioned with the children a few moments ago how the eagle takes care of its young first of all when the eagles meet together and mate they are monogamous in the sense that when an eagle certainly a golden eagle mates with its partner it does so for life they will stay together as a couple until one of them dies and season by season they will bring forth their young and usually the mother will lay approximately four eggs of which one or two might survive and live and while she's caring for them the father eagle will go out and do most of the hunting about 80% of all the items that are brought to the nest it's the father eagle that does it the male eagle that does it about 90% of the biomass that is brought which has brought them that's again the father that does it while the mother is caring for the eagles after they hatch initially when the shell just cracks it's quite some time quite a few days sometimes weeks before they're completely out of the shell and then they're just prostrate they're just helpless they lie flat on the base of the nest and they're completely bald of course they can't do anything and so they are kept warm by one or another the parents basically nesting over them nestling over them to keep them warm to protect them until they're able with feeding and so on finally to sit up a wee bit after a few weeks and then to sit up properly and then to be fed with a wee beaks going as the food is brought to them and so on they gain strength and they gain a bit of plumage and then eventually when the time comes they are able to be ejected as it were from the nest in the nicest possible way not just kicked out but rather when they are when they are out of the nest which is usually set up very high on some kind of rock or a little cave or something for great security because the eagles care very much for the safety of their young then as they drop they are able to spread their little wings a little bit but they can't do much flapping so this is partly what it means here as the eagle stirreth up her nest she makes it fluff it up so that it's warm for them she protects her young she fluttereth over her young keeping them with the feathers of her wings keeping them protecting them making sure they're warm and when it comes to flying she spreadeth abroad her wings and this is a reference to the fact that when they are still young the eagle in spreading its wings the young will rest on either end of the wing and then she'll tip she'll tip slightly one way or the other and they'll drop of course and they'll begin to glide or they'll begin to learn how to soar or whatever but they won't have a lot of strength and she's not just going to let them drop when they run out of strength

then she'll come up

underneath them and pick them up again as it were on her wings and this way they will learn by experience how to fly little by little she will bear them on her wings this is what it's a reference to she fluttereth over her young she spreadeth abroad her wings and takes them beareth them on her wings so the Lord alone did lead him that is Israel and sometimes of course as we said she'll tip she'll tip one way or the other and they'll drop and there's a tendency for Israel or for us as those who seek to follow the Lord that when we feel ourselves dropping oh the Lord's abandoned us oh he's forgotten us oh he doesn't care about us but all he's doing is he is enabling us to learn to spread the wings to gain strength by experience and he is always ready to swoop as it were beneath us to bear us up again underneath truly are the everlasting arms the Lord does not abandon his people but he does train them up in the way that they should go he does protect them he has great care of them so we mentioned you know with the children that the speeds at which eagles can fly can glide can dive are unmatched by any other bird except possibly the peregrine falcon which is of course a much smaller bird so this makes it one of the fastest creatures on the planet it's said of course the eagle can look directly into the sun and there's various other attributes that it's got for such a cruel looking bird with its spooky beaks and its great big talent it takes enormous tender care of its young it is incredibly gentle with its young and so likewise the Lord who may seem as though he is cruel he's not cruel but may seem as though he is wrathful against sin which of course he is he is absolutely unrelenting in his wrath and his judgment against sin and yet his tender care of his own children is unparalleled the eagle is that which can soar higher than any other creature and God is higher than the eagle can go faster than almost any other creature but nothing is as the speed of the Lord when he comes is as the lightning that shines from the east even onto the west the highest most capable creature that everybody sort of wants to be everybody wants to share and just think of all the sort of empires of the world you know think of the Roman Empire what do they make on top of their standards they make an eagle because everybody wants to kind of wants a piece of this kind of greatness they want to share in its speed and its power and its ability when Napoleon Bonaparte was leading the French Empire what do they have on the tops of their standards the Napoleonic eagle in the eastern empire the Byzantine empire and the Russians of course in their Tsarist empire what do they have they had a double headed eagle it's got a mythical creature obviously but it was meant to be one which looked both east and west but again it's the eagle and an awful lot of countries and nations use the eagle as a heraldic symbol because it has that strength and power that everybody wants to kind of plug into and of course more recently the third Reich used it as well in the second world war and before that so whether the connotations are negative or positive it is a creature that everybody kind of wants to be like but God is greater than the greatest eagle this is what he is trying to convey to them that he is as we see in verse 4 the rock now a rock is in a sense more powerful more strong stable than the eagle because it is to the rock that the eagle goes when it wants to make its nest he is the rock his work is perfect all his ways are judgment a God of truth

and without iniquity just and right and there is a contrast between verse 4 and verse 5 he is the rock they Israel have corrupted themselves he is the rock he is perfect and just and righteous they have corrupted themselves their spot is not the spot of his children now what do they mean by this spot well there is two ways of looking at this there is the physical and material and there is the more spiritual sense in the physical sense it is probably a reference to the fact that the pagans are those who worshipped other gods tended to mark themselves paint themselves either with circles or oval shapes or different kind of markings or tattoos it probably wasn't quite like the tattoos we have nowadays where the ink goes underneath the skin but they painted themselves they marked themselves with these spots or circles or whatever depending on the different kind of deity or God that they worshipped and he says their spot that they have is not the spot of his children they don't they don't have the markings of the children of God they are perverse and crooked generation and of course the Lord in Leviticus prohibited his children from making such similar markings in themselves

Leviticus 19 28 we shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead nor print any marks upon you I am the Lord which of course you could take as being a divine prohibition on the tattoo in the early days but the point is that their markings are those of false gods they bear as it were the marks of false gods in them that's in the physical sense now if we're looking in the spiritual sense there's a recognition here that everybody has thoughts blemishes false sins but there's a difference between those who are seeking to love and serve the Lord and yet fail and yet fall and stumble and do

commit sin and they hate that sin and they repent of it and they want to try better and yes they keep sinning again the next day but it's not what they want to do they want to be the Lord's but you know as Paul says in Romans 7 the good that I would I do not but the evil that I would not that I do that's the kind of spot that the children of the Lord have they yes they have spots they have blemishes they have sins they have a spiritual spot a spiritual blemish day by day but they don't love it they hate it they keep falling into it they keep sinning it and yes there's part of them in the fleshly sense that loves it but they really want to turn from it but their spots is not as the spot of his children in the sense that this is a proud deliberate sin this is a perversity as it says later on in the chapters do you thus requite the

[12:13] Lord O foolish people and unwise is not he thy father that had bought thee hath he not made thee and established thee see even in this verse here thy father first of all this Old Testament reference to God as father it's not just Jesus and the Lord's Prayer who kind of invented that idea it's not my father that bought thee here's the sense of their redemption being bought back from sin it doesn't say you know simply made you it goes on to say made you first of all he had created you but not enough that he created you he also bought you back from the sin in which you were by nature and established you he settled you he gave you everything you needed remember the days of old and all that he did but the sin of Israel and all who thus turn away from the Lord says you know Jeshurun verse 15 Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked the sense here is of a sort of pet beast whether it were a horse or a sheep or a ram or whatever that had been sort of fed like a pet from when it was little and had been spoiled basically now there's two ways that such a spoiled pet might react it might be constantly kind of grateful and loving and affectionate and so on or it might just become spoiled and just demanding and just kick out and lash out at the hand that feeds it and this is the sense of it here

Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked like an agricultural creature that had been taken in as a pet that had been sort of hand fed and hand reared and spoiled and now it was just kicking out lashing out at the hand that fed it thou art waxed fat thou art grown thick thou art covered with fatness in other words began to think well I'm strong enough myself I'm good enough myself look at the land in which I dwell look at the richness of the fields look at all that I have here my own hand has gotten me this and it's the sense in which the more the Lord blesses the more Israel turns away from him thinking this is my good this is my strength and this is very much like the heart of modern man as well because when a disaster happens when something bad or tragic or harrowing occurs people shake their fist at heaven and say how can you believe in a God of love that would do this how can a God of justice do this is this God's will oh what an evil God you must believe and yet when they look around at all the good in the world all the blessings that they enjoy all the riches all the luxury in which they live they don't turn around and say what a good God actually that's given me all these things what a kind God that's blessed us with abundance of food and drink and that when we're ill or when an accident happens there's hospitals and doctors and nurses that we can go to they don't think oh what a good God is that has provided this only when something is wrong something outside of their control then they are ready to blame

God for that they provoked into jealousy with strange gods with abominations provoked they into anger they sacrificed unto devils of course they might or might not think that they are actually worshipping devils they might just invent gods of their own but at the end of the day it doesn't matter because anything that we worship or anything that we give power or glory to which is other than God it's only the devil that is ultimately benefiting but there is a sense of course in which there is a perverseness as it says here with human nature they behave themselves strangely verse 27 fear not as wrath they behave themselves strangely and they were against the Lord with this perverseness desires to do that which is forbidden simply because it is forbidden talking about worship of devils let me think for a moment if somebody wants you to think that they're really some really bad wicked person oh you better be careful of me because look how they'll put marks or t-shirts or tattoos or whatever of death's heads skulls with screaming skull heads and long flowing hair things stabbed with knives and blood coming out of them as though it's really sort of devilish and make me think oh they must be a really bad person we better be scared of them and they're trying to sort of attract this is how bad

I am you better be scared of me you better give me respect what are they looking for are they looking for the feet of men are they looking to something scary and what is it that the feet of man are for is it respect God is ready to give them respect God is ready to give them love for who they

are but they don't want that man in his fallen nature has a perversity which will sometimes literally glorify the devil because it's as bad as he can be and there's a part of him that desires that he as bad as bad can be so that he will shock people so that they will be ooh scary and oh how powerful he must be that he can walk with the devil sort of thing and all they are fooling is themselves the devil just sits back and lets them play their games knowing that at the end of the day they'll be drawn down to hell with him and then it won't be glamorous and then it won't be tough and then it won't be fear and respect from men it'll just be ongoing agony for all eternity they sacrificed unto devils verse 17 not to

God and of course this is what Paul says about the Corinthian pagans he says you know 1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 20 I say the things which the Gentiles sacrificed they sacrificed to devils and not to God and of course they weren't saying that they worshipped devils they were saying they worshipped Venus and Saturn and Caesar and Jupiter and all these other Roman gods or Greek versions of the same gods but they are devils false gods are those whom the devil wants you to worship they sacrificed to devils and not to God I would not that you should have fellowship with devils you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils you cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils and likewise in Revelation chapter 9 verse 20 and the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship devils and the idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood which neither can see nor hear nor walk neither repented they of their murders and so on there is a perverseness in man that desires to be just as bad as it can be to do that which is forbidden just because it's forbidden just to see what will happen just to see what people's reaction will be but God who already knows the end from the beginning

[19:23] God who already knows what the end of these things will be wants to say to his children to Israel to us now look that is just dumb that is just stupidity oh that they were wise that they understood this that they would understand their latter end to desire to live without the Lord now in time is simply that which you will be granted your wish for eternity but eternity without God will not be like living in this world without God because this world is a mixture of God and of the devil at work it is a mixture of good and evil there are good people in this world there are good things that happen in this world rain comes down to cool and soothe and moisten the land even as it does this morning it just literally drops down out the sky fresh water that supplies all the needs of nature there's none of that in heaven in hell a big point where if you remember

Jesus' illustration in Luke 16 where the rich man cries to Abraham to dip his finger in water let Lazarus dip his finger in water and cool my tongue for I'm tormented in this flame there's no refreshing showers that will soothe or cool in a lost eternity it is in eternity it is either completely good and blessing and holy because it is the undiated work of God or it is completely devilish hellish and a torment of eternity here there's a mixture and so people think I can live out of God in this world and it's okay but the only reason this world is okay is because God is at work in it and because there is good in it and Israel would not see and we so often will not see oh that they were wise verse 29 that they understood this that they would consider the latter end the Lord has cared for his children as the eagle cares for her young in

Exodus 19 he already made reference to this at verse 4 he has seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bear you on eagle's wings and brought you unto myself now how the eagle will deal with its own young as we said is tender it is gentle it is self giving of itself whether it's the mother or the father eagle they will go to great lengths to protect to help to rear to nurture their young but you look at an eagle's beak and in its talons and at the strength and the speed and the power that it is in its body and its design and you don't want to be on the wrong side of that eagle if you're one of its young that's great you've got all that power and all that strength and all that sort of weaponry of its entire body is protecting you but if you happen to be another creature on the ground another creature which is potential prey or which might be food or attack or whatever then you ought to be afraid because if something is diving out the sky at 200 miles an hour you're not going to stand a chance against it when you think of the strength and the talents that will sweep up that rodent or that creature from off the ground and having hit it at that kind of speed probably the impact alone probably knocks the creature out they just don't know what's coming and this is what one of God's creatures is like what much more is the creator like you know in the

Proverbs Solomon himself says there are three things which are too wonderful for me yea four which I know not the way of an eagle in the air the way of a serpent upon a rock the way of a ship in

the midst of the sea and the way of a man with a maid now what what is the common denominator in all of these things there is that which is invisible when the eagle is in the air you can't see that by which he or she is born up he just saw us later in the sky and then when he dives in its prey it does so from a position of invisibility the way of an eagle in the air we have a serpent upon a rock how does it move on the rock it crawls in its belly yes and it may strike from out of a rock but the way of a serpent upon the rock is an amazing thing we can't see how it moves we can't see the mechanism by which his body is able to go when there's no earth to go down into the way of a ship in the midst of the sea that which is hidden below the waves is that by which it is driven in the olden days of course it was all sail power you can't see the wind you can't see that which drives the ship how it turns this way and that how it continues to be held up in the on the surface of the sea there is that which is invisible which makes it a wondrous thing and the way of a man with a maid what is the power of love that which is invisible that which determines why one person falls hopelessly head over heels with one person and not with another with somebody else who might be eminently more suitable in many ways much more appropriate qualities or characteristics that would match you up much better but you can't help your heart you fall head over heels with somebody completely different perhaps they be with you too but nobody can understand that thing which is the power there the amazing thing of love the way of a man with a maid nobody can enter into the depths of that it is in a sense invisible and the lord's care and wonder for his children is a thing which in physical depth is invisible and yet we know that he does it we see the effects of what he does as an eagle stireth up her nest fluttereth over her young spreadeth abroad her wings taketh them beareth them on her wings so the lord alone did lead him and there was no strange god with him nobody else looked after Israel the way the lord did nobody else had the power to protect them as an eagle protects our young no one else had the power to destroy armies and enemies that came against them as an eagle can destroy the prey or any creatures that may threaten or attack their young the eagle is the greatest protection that her young has and the lord is the greatest protection that his children have so the lord alone did lead him there was no strange god with them whatever we invent as our gods are our priorities in this world they have no eternal value our jobs are great perhaps if we enjoy them but they are there for a purpose which is yes that we may work which is a good healthy thing to do that they may provide us with sufficient income with which to live to keep our bodies going but our job and our career has no eternal value and likewise our hobbies or the things that we need pour so much of our attention into or the accumulation of our bank balances has no eternal value but your immortal soul that has eternal value oh that they were wise verse 29 that they understood this that they would consider their latter at the end one little thing i want us to notice in passing is that verses 13 and 14 and 15 he talks about how he brought them to the high places of the earth this is almost certainly a reference to the fact that they were at this stage on the eastern side of jordan where there are the high sort of plateaus of grasslands which are very very good for what were in those days anyway very very good for for flocks and herds and so on it's why the the reubenites and the gadites wanted to stay that side of the river because they had flocks and herds for pasture land it was great for pasture land the high places of the earth and he might eat the increase of the fields he made him to suck honey out of the rock and the clefts of the rock the bees would make their nests their hives and so you could reach the honey out of the clefts of the rock in that sense and oil out of the flinty rock because where no other trees would go the hardy olive tree would put down its roots and either in bunches and groups together or individually the olive tree would go you get oil from the olive tree butter of kind of the cows milk of sheep fat of lambs rams of the breed of bashar and goats with the fat of kidneys of wheat and that it's drink the pure blood of the grape from the vineyards it were the riches of the land and that's only east of jordan they haven't even crossed over jordan to inherit the promised land proper just yet and the sense i think we should understand here is of see how good the lord is to you simply in this world in this side of jordan the riches and the blessings of which he has delighted to give you here before even you cross over into the true promised land this is how good god is you don't want to get on the wrong side of a golden eagle you don't want to get on the wrong side of the lord but the care that the eagle has for her own young her own children not all of them survive of course i mentioned earlier how they might lay four eggs and maybe one or two might survive in any season and of course all those that are brought into contact with the gospel and may think yeah this is a good thing i'll go with this think of the parable of the sword some of it's fall up quickly but it will not away some maybe of the eggs that are laid but maybe they never hatch or they hatch for the young don't survive not everyone that begins with the lord goes on with the lord

but if that is the case if they do not survive it is not for the eagle's lack of attention it is not for the lord's lack of love it is either because we simply did not want that which the lord offered or because we desired to turn away back the lord will not have the enemy to think that he can triumph over his children were it not that i fear the wrath of the enemy lest the adversaries should behave themselves strangely lest they should say our hand is high we crushed the

[30 : 19] Israelites because we're strong instead of because the lord turned away from them and so for this reason he didn't abandon them entirely having let them drop he would swoop down under them and pick them up again as the eagle spreadeth abroad her wings taketh them beareth them on her wings he desired to be born on the wings of the wind born upon the wings of the lord 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 they shall walk and not faint the lord will give you strength and grace to continue to the end of the way but nothing else can there's nothing else in this world which has eternal value in the way that the lord's dealings with your soul have eternal value as the eagle takes care of our young the lord who is all powerful will take care of his children and you may be in the nest for now and helpless but he cares for you and he feeds you and he provides for you and if the time comes when you must fall out of the nest he will swoop beneath you and he will bear you up until you can learn to fly and to cope with the problems the difficulties the dangers of this world but he will always still be there the lord will never leave you nor forsake you and however deep down you may fall he will always be able to swoop beneath you so the lord alone did lead him there was no strange god with him whatever the eagle does god does better whatever her care of her young the lord's care is more loving more gracious more eternal this is a picture this is an illustration but if the picture is vivid and if the picture is good how much greater must be the artist and if the creature is impressive how much more so the creator but he's brilliant you