

What God Reveals About the Eagle

The Swiftness of the Eagle¹

1. How swiftly does the eagle fly?

A great bald eagle was once observed flying across a lake in less than one minute. The lake was two miles wide; thus the average speed of the eagle was calculated to be 120 miles per hour. This meant that speeds in excess of 150 miles per hour had been achieved during the flight.

When searching for prey, the eagle can soar to a height of one-half mile. From that vantage point the eagle can survey an area of some four and one-half square miles. Upon spotting its intended prey, the eagle will turn sharply, fold its wings into a tight, aerodynamic formation, and dive at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour!

2. Why do eagles appear to be slow?

The soaring eagle may appear to be lazy and sluggish to the casual observer. However, if the observer is aware of the eagle's large size and the great heights to which it soars, he will not be so easily deceived. The eagle's seven-foot wingspan allows it to glide effortlessly at altitudes of over 2,400 feet, thus giving the illusion that the eagle is moving at a "snail's pace."



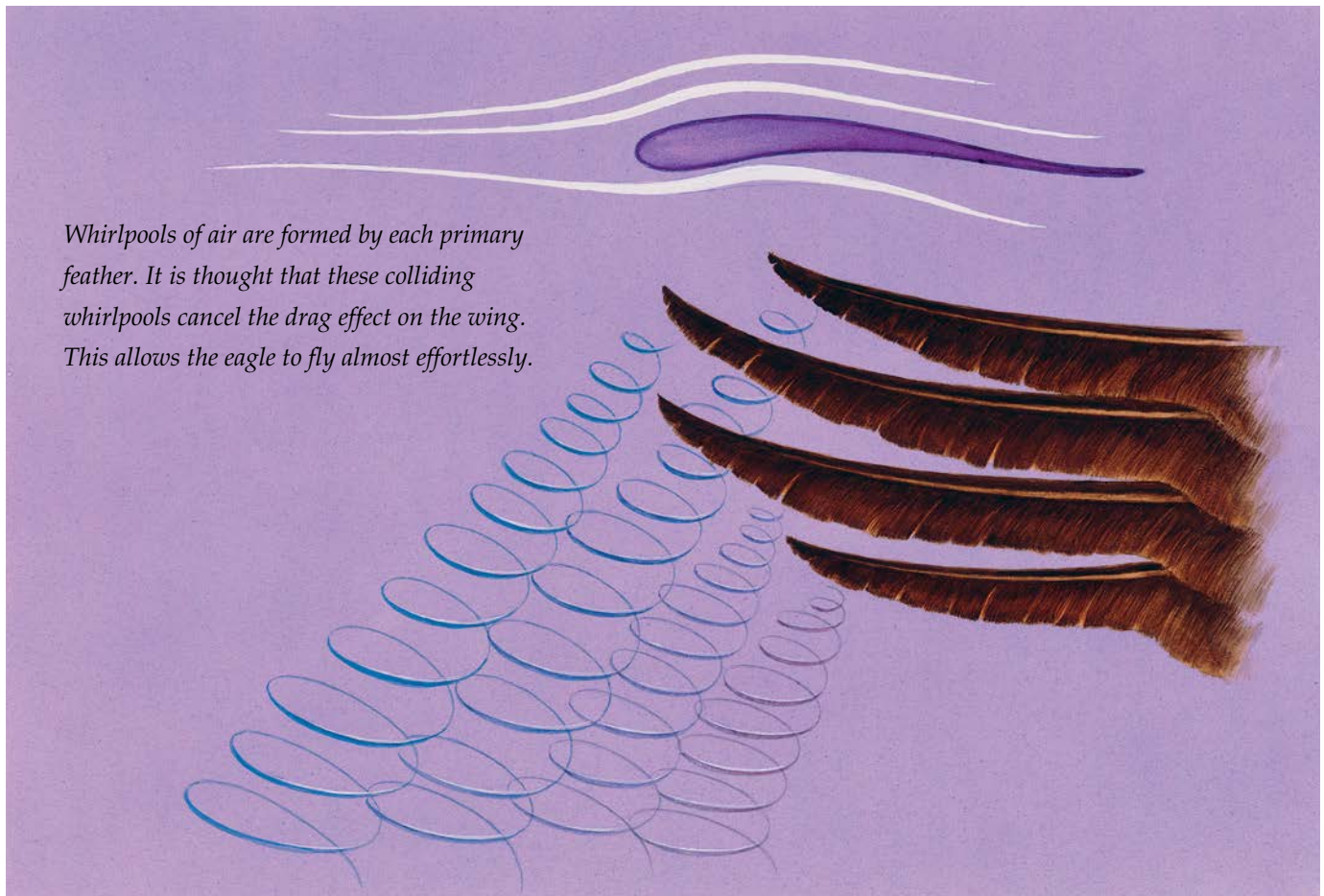
The Power of the Eagle's Wings²

1. How powerful are the eagle's wings?

The eagle is capable of carrying objects which approach its own body weight. Since an eagle can weigh up to twelve pounds, the variety of what it can carry is tremendous. Eagles have been known to transport small lambs a distance of several miles.

1. See II Samuel 1:23; Deuteronomy 28:49.
2. See Ezekiel 17:3; Jeremiah 49:22; Isaiah 40:31.

The Wonder of an Eagle in the Air¹



1. What are the “secrets” of the eagle’s wings?

The eagle’s wings are characterized by primary feathers, which are separated at the tips like the fingers of a hand. These separations play a major role in the power and stability of the eagle in flight. Air passes more quickly over the tops of the wings than the bottoms, thus creating lift. The difference between the two air speeds also causes spinning whirls of air to form near the wing tips, creating “drag,” which would normally slow the eagle down. However, because the primary feathers are separated, many small whirlpools are formed instead of one large one. Scientists propose that as the spinning currents expand, they collide and cancel the drag effect, thus enabling the eagle to fly almost indefinitely.

Eagles flap their wings mainly at takeoff and during acceleration when pursuing prey. While soaring,

the eagle uses the movement of the wing tips and the furling of the wings to achieve sustained flight.

2. Can an eagle fly in a hurricane?

The same separation of the primary feathers, which reduces drag, also serves to provide greater stability in flight. The eagle folds its wings slightly toward its body, thus reducing the total wing capacity. Eagles have been seen soaring almost motionlessly in near hurricane-force winds, moving only the tips of their primary feathers to adjust for the varying wind speeds.

3. How many feathers does an eagle have?

One eagle was found to have 7,182 feathers. Each wing had over 1,250 feathers, which accounted for sixteen percent of the bird’s total body weight.

4. How is the eagle “renewed” each year?

Each year the eagle replaces its feathers over a period of several months. However, unlike other birds, the eagle is not severely handicapped during this time, because no two adjacent wing feathers fall out, or moult, at the same time. Thus, the eagle is able to continue hunting throughout the entire renewal process.



The Sudden Attack of The Eagle¹

1. What do eagles hunt?

The eagle is an efficient hunter, killing only what is necessary for food. Eagles seek carrion (dead flesh), fresh fish, water fowl, and small land animals such as squirrels, chickens, foxes, and raccoons.

2. Does an eagle steal food?

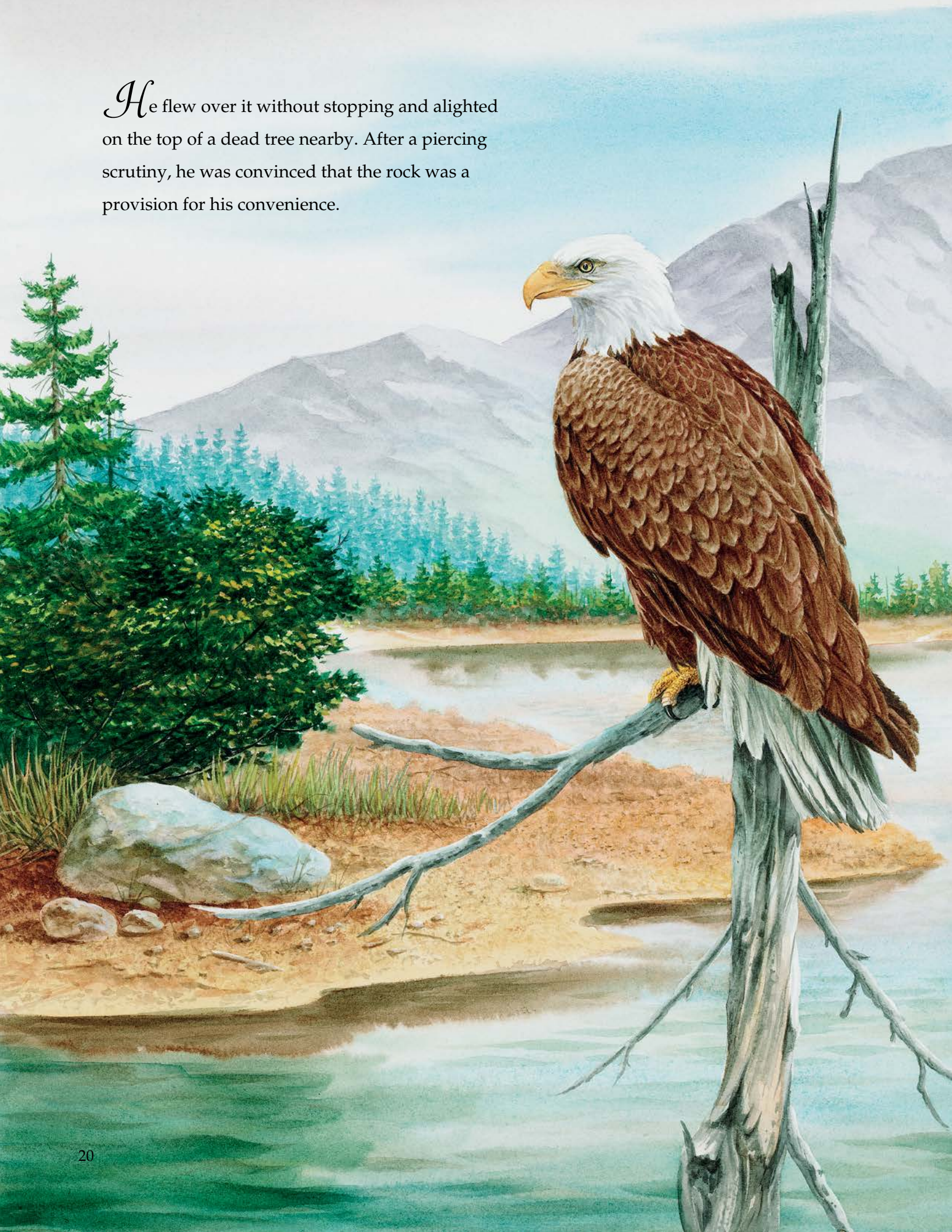
Yes. For example, an eagle may patiently wait perched in the top of a tree while an osprey hunts for fish. As the osprey dips into the water and begins to fly away with a prize fish, the eagle swoops into action, harassing the osprey until it drops the fish. The eagle will then dive at great speed to snatch the prize for itself before the fish hits the water!

3. How does an eagle attack upside down?

The eagle attacks from a perch or soaring position high above its prey. With incredible speed the eagle usually overcomes its victim with complete surprise. One of the most spectacular displays is the attack on a water fowl in flight. Swooping down from behind, the eagle attacks from underneath by rolling over onto its back and thrusting its talons into the breast of the victim. Both begin to tumble toward the water below. With smaller birds, the eagle may recover in midair. With larger ones, such as the Canada goose, both eagle and prey hit the water together. The eagle then tows its victim to shore.

1. See Habakkuk 1:8; Lamentations 4:19; Jeremiah 4:13; Job 9:26.

*H*e flew over it without stopping and alighted on the top of a dead tree nearby. After a piercing scrutiny, he was convinced that the rock was a provision for his convenience.



*H*e sailed down and perched upon it. Then he saw a large fish lying on the grass. He considered again. If the fish had been near the water's edge, he would have understood. But up on the grass—that was an uncommon situation for a fish to get itself into.



The wise eagle now peered suspiciously into the neighboring bushes. He scanned every grassy area and cast a sweeping survey up and down the shores. Everything was as it should be.

