

# The Hand of the Lord

Dear reader, this page is a collection of resources that in some way relate to the Hand of the Lord. They are not in any particular order. There are sermon selections, devotionals, illustrations, quotes, etc. If you are preaching or teaching on the Hand of God there may be something useful on this page.

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**Robert McCheyne** - "Get your texts from God—your thoughts, your words, from God. In great measure, according to the purity and perfection's of the instrument, will be success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. **A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.** A word spoken by you when your conscience is clear, and your heart full of God's Spirit, is worth ten thousands words spoken in unbelief and sin."

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When we are engaged in God's work and we encounter setbacks, we can calmly carry on because, like the Israelites, "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth" (Ezra 5:11). Obstacles and delays may discourage us, but we can rest in Jesus' promise: "I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it" (Mt. 16:18NLT). It is God's power that enables His work, not our own.

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Ps 37:23-24 The steps of a man are established by the LORD; And He delights in his way. 24 When he falls, he shall not be hurled headlong; **Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand** Psalm 63:8 tells us: "My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me." ( My soul clings to Thee; Thy right hand upholds me.) In tough times, we can become so preoccupied with our role in "clinging to God" that we forget about His promised protection. It's not our fingernails that sustain us—it's His loving, upholding hand.

God's **hand** that holds the ocean's depths  
Can hold my small affairs;  
His **hand** that guides the universe,  
Can carry all my cares. —Anon.

No one is more secure than the one who is held in God's hand.

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In creation we see God's hand; in redemption we see His heart.

Sometimes we see a miracle,  
And faith in God revives;  
Yet eyes of faith can see God's hand  
At work throughout our lives. —Hess

To see God's hand in everything makes life a great adventure.

God's hand of discipline is a hand of love.

In [God's] hand is the life of every living thing. —Job 12:10

9 "Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this, 10 In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind? Job 12:9-10

As we sense the strength of God's **everlasting arms** beneath us (Dt. 33:27), we can stroll through life with confidence, **holding the hand** of our unseen Companion.

You can be confident about tomorrow if you cling to God's hand God today.

Do you see delays, changes of plans, redirections as intrusions or do you see God's hand in the delays, etc. God can use inconveniences in our lives if we look at them as divine appointments. When we can't see God's hand, we can trust His heart.

"DIS-appointment—HIS-appointment,"  
Change one letter, then I see  
That the thwarting of my purpose  
Is God's better choice for me. —Young

God omnipotent hand can turn obstacles into opportunities.

I reached for God's hand full of blessings,  
Because I was needy and sad;  
And, oh, what a shower He gave me  
From all the rich treasure He had! —Simon

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"All His saints are in Your hand". --Deuteronomy 33:3

On his deathbed, **British preacher Charles Simeon** smiled brightly and asked the people gathered in his room, "What do you think especially gives me comfort at this time?"

When they all remained silent, he exclaimed, "The creation! I ask myself, 'Did Jehovah create the world or did I?' He did! Now if He made the world and all the rolling spheres of the universe, He certainly can take care of me. Into Jesus' hands I can safely commit my spirit!"

**Hudson Taylor**, founder of China Inland Mission, in the closing months of his life said to a friend, "I am so weak. I can't read my Bible. I can't even pray. I can only lie still in God's arms like a little child and trust."

Both Simeon and Taylor knew that the almighty God who created the universe was holding them in His hands. Moses had the same assurance when he blessed the children of Israel before he died (Deut. 33). They could face the future with confidence because the God who had delivered them would also preserve them.

We certainly need not be fearful, then, as we enter a new year. God will never forsake His redeemed children. We can rejoice that our great Creator holds us in His hands. And that's true for every child of God. --H G Bosch (Our Daily Bread)

The God who made the firmament,  
Who made the deepest sea,  
The God who put the stars in place  
Is the God who cares for me. --Berg (Is the God Who "holdeth" me")

The God who holds the universe is the God who is holding you. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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Beneath His watchful eye  
His saints securely dwell;  
That hand which bears all nature up  
Shall guard His children well.  
—Doddridge

With God's arms (hands) beneath us, we need not fear what lies before us.

Sure it takes a lot of courage to put things in God's hands,  
To give ourselves completely, our lives, our hopes, our plans;  
To follow where He leads us and make His will our own;  
But all it takes is foolishness to go the way alone!  
—Kline

When the future is dark and we can't see what's next,  
Of the Lord we make childish demands;  
We cannot know all, our minds are too small,  
"We must leave all our "whys" in His hands.  
—Carbaugh

Often we forget as we eat our daily bread,  
From whom it all has come, to us who are well-fed;  
But may we all remember, as we walk upon this sod,  
That everything we have is from the hand of God.  
-Fitzhugh

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**Deuteronomy 33:3 - H A Ironside** - Here God's saints are seen in three places. They are in His heart: "He loves the people!" How precious to dwell in the bosom of infinite love! What rest in the hour of strife and in the day of distress! They are also in His hand—

the place of security as our Lord tells us in John 10:27–30, whence none can pluck them. Last of all, they are at His feet—the place of discipleship, learning His mind and will that they may walk in His ways. How abundant the provision which He has made for the comfort, security and instruction of all His redeemed ones!

Low at Thy feet, Lord Jesus,  
This is the place for me;  
There I have learned sweet lessons,  
Truth that has set me free.  
Free from myself, Lord Jesus,  
Free from the ways of men,  
Chains of thought that once bound me  
Never shall bind again.  
None but Thyself, Lord Jesus,  
Conquered my wayward will;  
But for Thy grace, my Saviour  
I had been wayward still.

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### **Deuteronomy 33:27b ALL YOU WILL EVER NEED!**

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms (Deuteronomy 33:27).

As I read Deuteronomy 33, I recalled an old song written by Ada Habershon. "When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast; when the tempter would prevail, He can hold me fast."

A woman facing difficult trials and troubling circumstances came to W. B. Hinson at the close of a sermon and said, "I'm very much afraid I might fall." Hinson replied, "Well, why don't you do it?" "But Preacher," she protested, "where would I fall to?" "You would fall down into the everlasting arms of God," he replied. Then he said, "I have read in the Bible that His everlasting arms are underneath His children. And you know, I believe that if you fall down upon those everlasting arms, it is sure and certain that you will never fall through them." Without question, the believer can rest in the unfailing strength and support of the omnipotent Father. God bolsters this assurance with a progression of truth in Isaiah 41:10 when He says through the prophet, "I am with you." "I will strengthen you." "I will help you." "I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." And in John 17:11 we read this prayer of our Lord: "Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me." His request will not be thwarted because our Savior has given every believer into the keeping, safeguarding power of the Father. So even when we stumble, we fall into the everlasting arms of His grace. —P. R. Van Gorder. (Our Daily Bread)

When we get to the place where there's nothing left but God, we find that God is all we need. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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### **A Lesson In Worry**

Lord, how they have increased who trouble me! — Psalm 3:1

My friend handed me a tall glass of water and told me to hold it. The longer I held it, the heavier it felt. Finally my hand grew tired, and I had to put the glass down. "I've learned that worry can be like holding that glass," she said. "The longer I worry about something, the more my fears weigh me down."

King David knew about fear. His whole life had been turned upside down. His son Absalom had stolen the allegiance of the nation of Israel from him and was attempting to take the throne for himself. David didn't know who was loyal to him and who was against him. His only option seemed to be to run. He said to his servants, "Make haste to depart, lest [Absalom] overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us" (2 Sam. 15:14).

In a psalm that David may have written while he was fleeing for his life, he wrote: "I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He heard me from His holy hill" (Ps. 3:4). In the midst of his fear, David looked to the Lord. God showed him grace and restored him to the throne.

There are plenty of worries that can weigh us down. **But as we release them into God's strong hands, He will help us through our trials.** — Anne Cetas

Thank You, Lord, that we do not have to be weighed down by worry. Help us to place our concerns in Your care so that we do not fear tomorrow.

Worry is a burden that God never meant for us to bear. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## Feeling Chained?

Read: Psalm 16:1-11

I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. — Philippians 4:11

Boethius lived in sixth-century Italy and served the royal court as a highly skilled politician. Unfortunately, he fell into disfavor with the king. He was accused of treason and imprisoned. While awaiting execution, he asked for writing materials so he could compose his reflections. Later, these became an enduring spiritual classic on consolation.

As Boethius sat in prison, pondering his bleak prospects, his faith in Christ infused his perspective: “Nothing is miserable but what is thought so, and contrariwise, every estate is happy if he that bears it be content.” He understood that our view of changing circumstances and contentment is a personal choice.

The apostle Paul reinforced the idea that the way we view our circumstances is more important than the circumstances themselves. While he too was in prison, he wrote: “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content” (Phil. 4:11). Both men could be content because they drew their ultimate satisfaction from God, who never changes.

Do you feel chained to difficult circumstances? God can give you contentment. Lasting satisfaction can be found only with Him, for in His **“presence is fullness of joy; at [His] right hand are pleasures forevermore”** (Ps. 16:11). — Dennis Fisher

Lord, lead me today as You see best. Use the gifts You’ve given me to encourage others on their journey. Help me not to compare myself with others but to be content. When all you have is God, you have all you need. ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.](#))

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Ruth 1:13 would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the **hand of the LORD** has gone forth against me.” Ruth 2:20 And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.” Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.” = discouraged Naomi saw God’s hand in Ruth’s life. What we see of God’s provisions teaches us to trust Him for what we cannot see of His purposes.

PURPOSE - Joshua 4:23 “For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the LORD your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed; 24 that all the peoples of the earth may know that the **hand of the LORD** is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever.”

As followers of Christ, it’s good for us to have tangible evidence of God’s help in the past. Those mementos remind us that His faithfulness continues today, and we can follow Him confidently into the future. Our “stones” may also help others know that God’s hand is mighty, as they encourage us to fear the Lord our God forever (Joshua 4:24). The memories of what God has done for us can become building blocks for today and tomorrow.

How has God shown Himself to be faithful to you and your family? What would help you to remember?

Is there someone you can talk to about it today?

Precious memories of yesterday can strengthen our faith today and tomorrow.

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Ps 139:9 If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10 Even there Thy hand will lead me, And Thy right hand will lay hold of me.

**In His Hands** - How big is the cosmos? Galaxies upon galaxies stretch into space farther than we can comprehend.

Two Harvard astronomers have discovered a “great wall” of galaxies that they estimate to be 500 million light-years long, 200 million light-years wide, and 15 million light-years thick. (One light-year is 5.88 trillion miles.) Those numbers are mind-boggling.

Here’s something even more amazing. God created all of those galaxies and sustains everything that exists by His powerful **hands**. Yet that same mighty God, the one and only God, uses those **hands** to gently touch the lives of suffering men and women.

In Psalm 147:3-4 we read that the Lord not only knows all the stars by name, but He also “heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” That truth is echoed in Isaiah 40:26-31, which states that the all-powerful Creator is the One who renews the strength of those who rely on Him. The God of the galaxies is the Great Physician who lovingly ministers to our needs. What a contrast—and what a comfort!

Regardless of how heavy your burdens, how tangled your problems, or how serious your diseases, the God of the galaxies has power enough to meet all your needs—and measureless power to spare. Put your problems in His **hands**. We are not expected to enjoy trials or to celebrate suffering. But when these unwelcome visitors arrive, we can look for **God’s hand** in them and trust that He can use them to make us more like His Son.

The **hand** that holds the ocean's depths  
Can hold my small affairs;  
The **hand** that guides the universe  
Can carry all my cares. —Anon.

We are spiritually blind if we cannot see God's hand in nature. ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. —  
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Those who see God's hand in everything can leave everything in God's hand.

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Are you in deep water? Reach up and grab God's hand of mercy.

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When you're passing through the waters  
Of deep sorrow and despair  
And you get no help from others,  
Just remember, Christ is there. —Elliott

When trouble overtakes you, let God take over.

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Put Your Hand In The Hand - Donny Hathaway

Put your hand in the hand of the Man who stilled the water  
Put your hand in the hand of the Man who calmed the sea  
Take a look at yourself, & you can look at others differently  
Put your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee

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He leadeth me! O blessed thought!  
O words with heavenly comfort fraught!"  
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,  
Still 'tis **God's hand** that leadeth me. —Gilmore

You don't need to know where you're going if you know God is leading.

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Write your plans in pencil but give God the eraser.

I've found that when life's brush obscures my view  
With gloomy strokes that seem to mar the scene,  
**God's hand** appears and gives to sunless hue  
And dreary skies a more majestic sheen. —Gustafson

When it is dark enough, men see the stars. —Emerson

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The circumstances in our lives  
Seem random and unplanned;  
But someday we will surely see  
The order of **God's hand**. —Sper

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We must be careful to avoid  
All self-sufficiency;  
If sinful pride gets in the way,  
**God's hand** we will not see. —Sper

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Psalm 31:14 But as for me, I trust in Thee, O LORD, I say, "Thou art my God." 15 My times are in Thy hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.

During times of hardship, I often feel like whining, "Who needs this pain? I certainly don't!" But Isaiah 28 and my own experience tell

me this is a shortsighted reaction. Not that we need hardship just for its own sake, but we do need to be changed and to mature. In God's hand, hardship can be an effective tool to bring about our much-needed growth.

Dear Lord, I marvel at the wonders of Your creation. You are such a great and awesome God who does not change. As I place my life in Your hands, I will trust You to be faithful. Amen.

The wonders of creation reveal God at work.

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Sovereign Ruler of the skies,  
Ever gracious, ever wise,  
All my times are in Your hand,  
All events at Your command. — Ryland

Our times are in God's hands; our souls are in His keeping.

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**SLIPPERY PLACES** - My steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. — Psalm 73:2-3

The 19th-century hymnwriter Ira D. Sankey was walking with his young son on a cold winter day. As they came to an icy spot, Mr. Sankey said, "My boy, you'd better let me take your hand."

The youngster didn't want to take his hand from his warm pocket, so he disregarded his father's suggestion. Just then he lost his footing and took a nasty fall. "All right, Daddy," he said, "let me hold on to your coat."

But the boy's weak grip was not enough to hold him up when his feet went out from under him again. Getting up, he said, "Daddy, you'd better hold my hand!" He didn't fall again.

The psalmist Asaph nearly took a spiritual fall (Ps. 73:2). He saw wicked people enjoying prosperity, getting their desires, and dying without pain (vv.3-12), yet he was "chastened every morning" despite his upright life (vv.13-14). Envious, he almost concluded that it was futile to live a godly life.

But when he focused on God, he realized that the wicked are in slippery places, headed for judgment (vv.17-20). Confessing his foolishness, he recognized that God upholds and will reward those who trust in Him (vv.21-24).

Put your hand in God's hand. It's your best guarantee against falling in life's slippery places.

When you are in a slippery place,  
Stay close to Jesus' side;

**Make sure your hand is held in His,**

He'll be your faithful guide.

—Hess ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**Everlasting Arms** - After a pre-concert rehearsal in New York City's Carnegie Hall, Randall Atcheson sat on stage alone. He had successfully navigated the intricate piano compositions of Beethoven, Chopin, and Liszt for the evening program, and with only minutes remaining before the doors opened, he wanted to play one more piece for himself. What came from his heart and his hands was an old hymn by Elisha Hoffman:

What have I to dread,  
what have I to fear,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms?  
I have blessed peace  
with my Lord so near,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Those words echo the truth in the final blessing of Moses: "There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to help you, and in His excellency on the clouds. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:26-27).

What a gift we have in our own arms and hands—they can swing a hammer, hold a child, or help a friend. But while our strength is limited, God's boundless power on our behalf is expressed in might and gentle care. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save" (Isaiah 59:1). "He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom" (Isaiah 40:11).

Whatever challenge or opportunity we face, there is security and peace in His everlasting arms.

The heavenly Father's arms never tire of holding His children. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**MY FINGERNAILS OR HIS HAND?**-Psalm 37:23-26 | Bible in a Year: Isaiah 59-61; 2 Thessalonians 3

When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, **The Lord upholds (SUSTAINS - used of laying on of hands on offering to show identification with it) him with His hand.** —Psalm 37:24 The Israelites were to learn not to trust in man or nation (II Kgs 18:21; Ezk 30:6), but in God who by his power (Ps 37:24) and word (Ps 119:116) upholds the righteous (Ps 37:17). So will the believer dwell in safety and surety (Ps 3:5 [H 6]) all his life (Ps 71:6) despite those times when he may fall (Ps 145:14).

Tough times can cause us to get our perspective turned around. I was reminded of this recently as I talked to a fellow-griever—another parent who, like Sue and me, lost a teenage daughter to death suddenly and without warning.

She told me she had been missing her daughter terribly, and she told God she felt as if she were hanging on by her fingernails. Then she felt as if God reminded her that His hand of protection was there to hold her up—that she could let go, and He would catch her.

That's a better perspective, isn't it? This picture reminds us that when troubles come and we feel least able to hold on to our faith, it's not up to us. It's up to God to support us with His mighty hand.

Psalm 37:23-24 says: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord ... Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand." And Psalm 63:8 tells us: "My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me."

In tough times, we can become so preoccupied with our role in "clinging to God" that we forget about His promised protection. It's not our fingernails that sustain us—it's His loving, upholding hand.

God's hand that holds the ocean's depths  
Can hold my small affairs;  
His hand that guides the universe,  
Can carry all my cares. —Anon.

No one is more secure than the one who is held in God's hand. By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**The Hand of God** - My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me. —Psalm 63:8

When NASA began using a new kind of space telescope to capture different spectrums of light, researchers were surprised at one of the photos. It shows what looks like fingers, a thumb, and an open palm showered with spectacular colors of blue, purple, green, and gold. Some have called it "The Hand of God."

The idea of God reaching out His hand to help us in our time of need is a central theme of Scripture. In Psalm 63 we read: "Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me" (vv.7-8). The psalmist felt God's divine help like a hand of support. Some Bible teachers believe that King David wrote this psalm in the wilderness of Judah during the terrible time of his son Absalom's rebellion. Absalom had conspired to dethrone his father, and David fled to the wilderness (2 Sam. 15–16). Even during this difficult time, God was present and David trusted in Him. He said, "Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You" (Ps. 63:3).

Life can be painful at times, yet God offers His comforting hand in the midst of it. We are not beyond His reach. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save" (Isaiah 59:1)

Beneath His watchful eye  
His saints securely dwell;  
That hand which bears all nature up  
Shall guard His children well.  
—Doddridge

God bears the world's weight on His shoulder, yet holds His children in the palm of His hand ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**Ezra 7:1-10,27-28 Seeing God's Hand**

September 6, 2010

He came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. —Ezra 7:9

On Jack Borden's 101st birthday, he awoke at 5 a.m., ate a hearty breakfast, and was at his law office by 6:30 ready to begin his day. When asked the secret of his long life, the practicing attorney smiled and quipped, "Not dying."

But there's more to it than that. Mr. Borden, who was baptized at age 11 in the Clear Fork of the Trinity River, told Fort Worth (Texas) Star-Telegram reporter David Casstevens, "I'm a firm believer that **God has His hand in everything that happens**. He is letting me live for some reason. I try to do the things that I believe He wants me to."

Ezra the priest experienced the "good hand of his God upon him" when he led a delegation to Jerusalem to provide spiritual leadership for the former captives who were rebuilding the temple and the city (Ezra 7:9-10). Ezra found strength and courage in knowing that the Lord was with them each step of the way. "So I was encouraged, as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me; and I gathered leading men of Israel to go up with me" (Ezra 7:28).

When we see the Lord's hand in our lives, it brings forth a deep "Thank You" and a growing desire to do what He wants us to do.

If we would view through eyes of faith  
The course of each new day,  
We'd quickly see God's gracious hand  
In all that comes our way. —D. De Haan

**If you know that God's hand is in everything,  
you can leave everything in God's hands.  
When we know that God's hand is in everything,  
we can leave everything in God's hand.**

**God's hand is in everything,  
you can leave everything in God's hands.**

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**Why do we need to remember the nine things God's hand accomplishes?** Because many times we have been in a terrible predicament we forget that only his hand can deliver us. We also often forget that - because of our lack of trust in Christ - his hands were pierced and nailed to a Cross so that we could be saved.

**1) We are created by the hand of God**

"Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me?" Job 10:8

"Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands." Psalm 119:73

**2) We are sustained by the hand of the Lord.**

"Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind." Job 12:9-10

"But Moses said, "Here I am among six hundred thousand men on foot, and you say, 'I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!' Would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? Would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them?" The Lord answered Moses, "Is the Lord's arm too short? Now you will see whether or not what I say will come true for you." Numbers 11:21-23

**POWER** - Ex 32:11 Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why doth Thine anger burn against **Thy people whom Thou hast brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?** (cp Dt 5:15, mighty hand Dt 7:19, mighty hand Dt 11:2) (cp He "had brought them up from the land of Egypt and they had feared other gods." - 2Ki 17:7 - why they were sent into exile to Assyria)

Isaiah 43:13 "Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?"

Creation - Isaiah 45:12 "It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands And I ordained all their host.

Isaiah 48:13 Surely My hand founded the earth, And My right hand spread out the heavens; When I call to



them, they stand together.

Joshua 4:23 "For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the LORD your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed; 24 that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

Dt 3:24 'O Lord GOD, Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness and Thy strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Thine?

1 Sa 5:11 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly confusion throughout the city; **the hand of God was very heavy there.** (1Sa 6:3, 5)

### 3) We are strengthened by the hand of the Lord

"[A]nd who has extended his good favor to me before the king and his advisers and all the king's powerful officials. Because the hand of the Lord my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me." Ezra 7:28

"You make your saving help my shield, and your right hand sustains me; your help has made me great." Psalm 18:35

"The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand." Psalm 37:23-24

### 4) We are delivered by the hand of the Lord

"In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.'" Exodus 13:14

### 5) We are redeemed by the hand of the Lord

"They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand." Nehemiah 1:10

Isaiah 50:2 ... Is My hand so short that it cannot ransom?...

### 6) We are lead by the hand of the Lord

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast." Psalm 139:7-10

God knows each winding way I take,  
And every sorrow, pain, and ache;  
And me He never will forsake—  
He knows and loves His own. —Bosch

Isaiah 49:16 Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands;

Your walls are continually before Me.

### 7) We are blessed by the hand of Lord

"A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil.

This too, I see, is from the **hand of God.**" Ecclesiastes 2:24

**TO GRANT UNITY** - The **hand of God was also on** Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD. 2Chr 30:12

### 8) We are satisfied by the hand of the Lord

"You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing." Psalm 145:16

1Chr 29:16 "O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided to build Thee a house for Thy holy name, it is from Thy hand, and all is Thine.

Isaiah 41:10 (Speaking of Israel but applicable to all who are in Christ) Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will **uphold** you with **My righteous right hand.**'

## 9) We are motivated by the hand of the Lord

"Also in Judah the **hand of God** was on the people to give them unity of mind to carry out what the king and his officials had ordered, following the word of the Lord." 2 Chronicles 30:12

Isaiah 14:26 "This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. 27 "For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?"

**PRAYER OF JABEZ** - Prayer re hand of God - 1Chr 4:10 Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and **that Thy hand might be with me**, and that Thou wouldst keep me from harm, that it may not pain me!" And God granted him what he requested.

**PRAYER OF JEHOSEPHAT** - "O LORD, the God of our fathers, art Thou not God in the heavens? And art Thou not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Thy hand so that no one can stand against Thee. (2Chr 20:6)

## Warren Wiersbe on Hand of God

Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And **the hand of our God was upon us**, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road. EZRA 8:31

*"If you can explain what's going on in your life and ministry, then God didn't do it; so be sure to keep your life on a miracle basis"* Dr. Bob Cook, then president of Youth for Christ, said that at a YFC conference many years ago and I've never forgotten it. Without God's hand upon his people, we could never experience God's power and make progress in our Christian walk and work. If any book in the Bible illustrates this truth, it's the book of Ezra. "The hand of God" was at work for his people in wonderful ways.

**The hand of God directs us.** "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes" (Pr. 21:1). The prophet Jeremiah had predicted that the Jews would be exiles in Babylon for seventy years and then permitted to return to their land (Jer. 25:1-14; 29:10-11). The exiled prophet Daniel understood this fact, and he claimed God's promise and devoted himself to prayer (Dan. 9). The heart of King Cyrus was moved by the Lord and he set the exiles free (Ezra 1:1-4). Their liberty came, not by political pressure, demonstrations, or bribes, but by God's people believing God's promises and praying.

The king's heart was moved by the hand of the Lord and so were the hearts of the Jewish exiles who decided to return to their land (Ezra 1:5). About fifty thousand of them left Babylon and made the long journey to Jerusalem. During their years of exile, many families had become comfortable and preferred to remain in Babylon, but the dedicated remnant stepped out by faith to return to their land and rebuild their temple. The Jews who remained gave generously of their wealth, and King Cyrus returned to the priests the furnishings they would need for the ministry in the temple (vv. 5-8). Only God could get the glory for these remarkable events. We would experience more such events today if we gave ourselves to the Word and prayer (Acts 6:4).

**The hand of God protects us.** In these days of rapid communication and transportation, we think nothing of making long journeys; but in ancient days, the picture was not so bright. Travel was dangerous, for bands of thieves watched the roads for caravans, and it was also uncomfortable and tiring, but the hand of the Lord protected his people. When the people reached Jerusalem, they found themselves surrounded by enemies who did not want Jerusalem rebuilt, and the Lord gave the Jews the insight and courage not to compromise. Satan starts his attack by being a serpent that deceives (Ezra 4:1-5) and if that fails, then he comes as a lion that devours. But the hand of God is powerful and gives us victory.

**The hand of God corrects us.** Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 9-13 tell the sad tale of the Jewish men disobeying God's law and taking pagan wives. If the leaders had allowed this compromise to continue, it would have polluted the nation's "godly seed" (Mal. 2:13-16). The leaders had to exercise discipline, for "whom the LORD loves, He chastens" (Heb. 12:5-6).

If we obey the Lord, his hand will pour out blessing; but if we rebel, his hand will be heavy upon us (Ps 32:3) **May the good hand of the Lord always be upon us as we seek to serve him!**

The right hand of the LORD is exalted; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly. Psalm 118:16

God can use the storms of life to fulfill His will. Is the wind blowing? He is flying on the wings of the wind. Are the clouds thick? He will bring showers of blessing out of them. Don't be afraid of the storm. Storms can come from the hand of God and be the means of blessing

Psalm 78:40-53 The older we get, the more we forget. This is especially true when it comes to our relationship with God. The people of Israel often remembered what they should have forgotten and forgot what they should have remembered! **"They did not remember His power:** the day when He redeemed them from the enemy, when He worked His signs in Egypt, and His wonders in the field of Zoan" (Psalm 78:42,43). How amazing. The Jews had seen God perform ten miracles on their behalf in Egypt. Moses even pointed out that this was the **hand of the Lord**, yet they forgot all about it (Ps 78:54 "So He brought them to His holy land, To this hill country which His right hand had gained.")

## HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS

### Stephen Lang - The Complete Book of Bible Secrets and Mysteries

Well, first off, God doesn't have a body. He is a spirit, and one of the Ten Commandments strictly prohibited making any kind of picture or statue that represented him. (See Exodus 20:4.) While other nations represented their gods in the forms of humans or animals (or sometimes a combination of the two), the Israelites did not, for the true God was invisible—and also too impressive to be represented by any kind of idol. Still, the Bible does refer many, many times to God's "body"—figuratively, that is. So certain events are attributed to the "hand of God," "eyes of God," and so forth. They aren't intended literally, of course, but they are human languages' way of stating that God acts and knows. See what you know about God's "body," beginning in this section with his "hands."

1. What person did Moses warn that the hand of the Lord would send a plague on livestock?
2. In the lifetime of the prophet Samuel, the Lord's hand was against which foreign nation?
3. What great prophet was touched by the Lord's hand while he listened to a harpist?
4. What poor man lamented that he had been struck by the hand of God?
5. What book of the Bible speaks of the Lord's hand holding a full cup of foaming wine?
6. According to Proverbs, whose heart is in the hand of the Lord?
7. What book of the Bible states that eating, drinking, and finding satisfaction in work are from the hand of God?
8. Which prophet stated that Jerusalem had drunk "a cup of wrath" from the hand of the Lord?
9. Who experienced some truly bizarre visions in Babylon when the hand of the Lord was upon him?
10. According to the New Testament, who now sits at the right hand of God?
11. What saintly martyr had a vision of someone standing at the right hand of God?
12. What slyster was struck blind by the hand of God?
13. What book of the Bible states that Christ is interceding for us at the right hand of God?
14. Who told Pharaoh that the plagues on Egypt were done by "the finger of God"?
15. What things were written in stone by the finger of God?
16. Who claimed that he drove out demons "by the finger of God"?
17. Complete this verse from Hebrews: "It is a \_\_\_\_\_ thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
18. According to Isaiah, which of God's hands "spread out the heavens"?

### HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS (ANSWERS)

1. The Egyptian pharaoh (Exodus 9:3)
2. The Philistines (1 Samuel 7:13)
3. Elisha (2 Kings 3:15)
4. Job (19:21)
5. Psalms (75:8)
6. The king's (Proverbs 21:1)
7. Ecclesiastes (2:24)
8. Isaiah (51:17)
9. Ezekiel (1:3; 3:14)
10. Christ, of course (Mark 16:19; Acts 2:33)
11. Stephen, who saw Jesus there (Acts 7:56)
12. Elymas, the fake sorcerer (Acts 13:6–12)
13. Romans (8:34)
14. His court magicians (Exodus 8:19)

15. The commandments given to Moses (Exodus 31:18)
  16. Jesus (Luke 11:20)
  17. Fearful (or, in some translations, dreadful) (Hebrews 10:31)
  18. The right (Isaiah 48:13)
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## THE SOVEREIGN HAND OF GOD

The key, of course, is the hand of God moving among the personalities and particulars of the story. Simply put, the Lord was with Joseph (Genesis 39:21).

Why did Potiphar spare Joseph's life and the warden show favor to Joseph? The answer is that "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases" (Proverbs 21:1). There is nothing to suggest that Joseph tried to manipulate the circumstances to his own ends. He was the object of God's sovereign care—and so are you.

God's Care for Joseph -As I thought about this, my mind went immediately to Psalm 139, that great psalm which tells of God's attending care over the minutest details of our lives.

I want to paraphrase this psalm by putting it in the Lord's voice rather than the psalmist's, and by addressing it to Joseph, in order to answer the question, What would God say to Joseph in that dungeon? In that setting, Psalm 139 reads like this:

"Joseph, I have searched you and I know you. I know when you sit down and when you stand up. I know your thoughts from afar. I discern your going out and your lying down. I'm familiar with all your ways. Before you say anything, Joseph, I know it completely.

"Joseph, I have hemmed you in, behind and before. I have laid my hand upon you. Where can you go from My spirit? Where can you flee from My presence? If you go up to the heavens, Joseph, I am there. If you make your bed in the depths, I am there. If you rise up on the wings of the dawn, if you settle on the far side of the sea, even there My hand will guide you. My right hand will hold you fast.

"Joseph, if you say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me, and the light will become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to Me. The night will shine like the day.

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## How Is The Holy Spirit Related To The Hand?

Gifts are given by the hands. An open hand means favor and blessing. God uses people He has joined to Himself as the channel through whom He pours Himself. This is prepared for in the Old Testament where the presence of the Spirit came upon men sporadically as a foretaste of the permanent indwelling gift under the New Covenant. When He came upon men to give special power and ability, this was called "the hand of God." Why? God was giving Himself. He was extending His personal presence and power in a form usable by man. The Old Testament gives several examples of the Spirit acting through men as "the hand of God":

(1) Ezekiel - And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me (Ezek. 8:1). (See also Ezekiel 33:22; 37:1; 40:1.)

(2) Elijah - And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel (1 Kings 18:46).

(3) Elisha - But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him [Elisha] (2 Kings 3:15).

The hand is the acting power of God. The Holy Spirit is God's cutting edge of redemption, working deep within us where it counts. It is no accident that the Holy Spirit is very often imparted through the laying on of hands. ([Laying The Foundation- James Beall](#))

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**Jon Courson** - Ezra 7:10... and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

Six times we'll hear Ezra say that the good hand of God was upon him. He was definitely one who was in constant touch with the Lord. Ezra prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord. Because it is the Spirit who searches the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:10), it is the Spirit who will teach us how to understand His Word. Ezra pictures this. Not only does the Spirit tell us what to do, but He empowers us to do it (Ephesians 3:16). Lots of people want to learn the Word and teach the Word. Fewer long to follow the Word. But without this, teaching lacks anointing and authority.

The natural question is "What is **this**?" or "What does **for** explain?" and to answer we need to observe the previous passages where we find the powerful truth that **the good hand of the LORD was upon** Ezra..

For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because **the good hand of his God was upon him.** (Ezra 7:9)

**Comment:** The Septuagint rendering (*For Esdras had determined in his heart to seek the law, and to do and teach the ordinances and judgments in Israel.*) is almost identical to the Hebrew rendering. The Septuagint renders the Hebrew word for "good" (tob) with the Greek adjective **agathos** which describes that which is "good" in its character or constitution and beneficial, useful or profitable in its effect. **Agathos** describes that which has the proper characteristics for performing the expected function in a fully satisfactory way. What better way to think of the "hand of Jehovah"! Always sufficient for the need of the moment.

The metaphor of being in someone's **hand** (or having their hand on someone) was common in the OT and spoke of being in the power of that person or entity. In the present context, the picture is one of God's power (His "good hand") being upon Ezra the scribe, not to defeat him but to give him the victory. This same phrase (**hand of his God**) is repeated several times in Ezra and gives us a clue to the "secret" behind his strong leadership, his influence with kings and his soul stirring preaching. Notice the same phrase earlier in this chapter...

**Ezra 7:6** This Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because **the hand of the LORD his God was upon him.**

**Comment:** Why did this pagan king grant Ezra his request? The Scripture clearly states "because the hand of the LORD his God was upon him."

Here are the other occurrences of the phrase **the good hand of the LORD** in the book of Ezra...

**Ezra 7:27** Blessed be the LORD (the result of God's hand being upon him granting him favor was to break out in a chorus of praise and thanksgiving, giving glory to the only One Who should receive glory! As we experience His blessing and hand upon us, may we also imitate Ezra's response!), the God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to adorn the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem, **28** and has extended lovingkindness to me before the king and his counselors and before all the king's mighty princes. Thus I was strengthened **according to the hand of the LORD my God upon me**, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.

**Comment:** This passage makes it clear that it was God Who put such a thing into this pagan king's heart to allow Ezra and his fellow Jews to return and beautify the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. As noted above (Ezra 7:6) Ezra still had to go and ask for this favor (man's responsibility), even though God had placed it in the king's heart (God's sovereignty). To go before such a powerful monarch and ask for such extravagant provisions for his people who were in captivity and whom the king easily could have exterminated took courage. Where did Ezra derive that courage? Read verse 28 again, which clearly states the source of Ezra's strength! There is an interesting principle here that God's blesses but some of his blessings entail men fulfilling their responsibility, the very principle Paul explains in the New Testament (see **notes** Philippians 2:12; 13)

**Ezra 8:18** And according to **the good hand of our God upon us** they brought us a man of insight of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, and his sons and brothers, 18 men;

### **Prayer and Fasting and The Good Hand of the Lord**

**Ezra 8:22** For I was ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, "**The hand of our God** is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him (exactly what Ezra had purposed in his heart in Ezra 7:10), but His power and His anger are against all those who forsake Him." **23** So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter, and He listened to our entreaty.

**Comment:** This passage adds another facet to the Ezra 7:10 principle (set heart, study, do, teach) by emphasizing the role of **prayer and fasting**. This is not surprising because intake of the pure Word into a godly heart will stimulate Word centered, God exalting prayer.

**Ezra 8:31** Then we journeyed from the river Ahava on the twelfth of the first month to go to Jerusalem; and **the hand of our God was over us**, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the ambushes by the way.

Summary of Effect of  
God's Good Hand on Ezra

Ezra 7:6	Provision
Ezra 7:27, 28	Power
Ezra 8:22,23	Protection

## Fear of the LORD and The Good Hand of Jehovah

Here is another passage that teaches a similar truth using a different anthropomorphism (eye instead of hand)...

Behold, the eye of the LORD (cp "hand of the LORD") is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine (blessed = fully satisfied independent of the circumstances). (Psalm 33:18, 19)

**Comment:** Deliverance from evil does not come by military power, manpower, or horsepower but spiritual power. And so we see that the Psalmist amplifies the **Ezra 710 principle** (set heart, study, do, teach, prayer and fasting in Ezra 8:22, 23) with an individual's volitional choice to fear (reverentially awe) Jehovah. (cp Ps 128:1, 2)

### Nehemiah and The Good Hand of Jehovah

Here are the other 2 uses of the phrase "hand of Jehovah" or variation thereof in the life of Nehemiah, another OT saint whom God used mightily to accomplish His work on earth...

**Nehemiah 2:7** And I ([Nehemiah](#)) said to the king (see ISBE article on [King Artaxerxes](#)), "If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, **2:8** and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city, and for the house to which I will go." And the king granted them to me because the **good hand of my God was on me**.

**Nehemiah 2:18** And I told them (the Jews who would help build the wall) how **the hand of my God** had been favorable to me (literally "*the hand of my God that is good upon me*"), and also about the king's words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, "Let us arise and build." So they put their hands to the good work.

### MISSING THE BLESSING OF THE GOOD HAND OF THE LORD

This principle regarding **the good hand of the LORD** is seen in the prophets words to King Asa (who sadly ignored them to his detriment)...

**2Chronicles 16:9** For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that **He may strongly support** (cp "good hand of Jehovah") those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars.

**Comment:** Note that this verse also begins with **for** indicating that the writer is explaining something previously stated, in context explaining why the LORD had delivered Asa's (and Israel's) enemies into his hand or power. Notice how **King Asa** serves as an example (cp 1Cor 10:6, 11) of one who clearly experienced the the good hand of the LORD upon him as king over Judah giving him victories over his adversaries (read 2Chronicles 15:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 2Chr 16:1ff for the historical context). Don't miss how Asa's "success" (cp "good hand of the LORD") was integrally associated with his hearing (and welcoming) the word of Jehovah through the prophet Azariah (cp Ezra's setting his heart to study and practice the Law of the LORD) in 2Chronicles 15. Then contrast the time of blessing ("good hand upon") of Jehovah in 2Chronicles 15:15, with the consequences of refusing to receive and practice the Word of God delivered to King Asa through Hanani the seer in 2Chronicles 16:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. **The upshot** - you can

experience the good hand of the LORD for a season and you can lose it by failing to continue to let the word of Christ dwell in you richly! (see Col 3:16-note) If any may thinks he stands, he had better take heed lest he fall. God is opposed to ("stiff arms"! ) the proud (cp "the heavy hand of Jehovah") but gives grace to the humble ("the good hand").

**Lot**, a **righteous** man (clearly a true believer - see 2Pe 2:6-note; 2Pe 2:7-note; 2Pe 2:8-note; 2Pe 2:9-note) is another sad example of a man who missed the blessing of the good hand of the LORD. In Genesis 13 the growth of the flocks of Abram and Lot led to strife and the need for them to separate. Abram gave Lot "first choice", a choice which resulted in Lot's missing the "good hand of the LORD". Note the progression in the following passages...

**Genesis 13:10** And **Lot lifted up his eyes** and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere—this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah—like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. **11** So **Lot chose** for himself all the valley of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. **12** Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while **Lot settled** in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. **13** Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD.

**Lot looked, chose, and settled** ("became comfortable" rather than living as an alien and stranger - see 1Pe 1:1-note; 1 Peter 2:11-note) and missed the good hand of the LORD. In Genesis 19:16 we see that **Lot** was so **settled** in Sodom that the **hand** of God's angels had to yank he and his whole family out of that moral cesspool! Let us remember Lot's example, lest our looking and choosing in this fleeting life cause us to miss the good hand of the Lord on our life, our family, our ministry! Or as Jesus commanded his listeners in (Luke 17:32) "**Remember** (present imperative = keep on remembering. Why? Because our tendency is to drift, to forget!) Lot's wife" because she lingered and looked back (Ge 19:26) and paid for her disobedience with her life.

May God grant us each grace and mercy so that we as godly men and leaders of our churches and families will not forget these tragic OT examples of men who missed the blessing of the good hand of the LORD! Amen

## **EZRA** **A MAN OF ONE BOOK**

**God's good hand** was clearly associated with the provision, power and protection in Ezra's ministry. And as we see seen the root of divine blessing was that Ezra was a "man of the book" (scratch him anywhere and he "bled Bible"), a man like Apollos who was mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24). Ezra is a worthy model for any preacher who desires to be used mightily by the Lord.

**The Pulpit Commentary** comments on the **good hand of the LORD** upon Ezra writing that...

His (Ezra's) soul felt the quickening touch of the Divine finger, and it kindled with a sacred glow of piety and zeal. He was moved of God to attempt great things, and helped of God to achieve them. His life flowed on like a fertilizing river (Ed: cp Ps 1:2), and did so because "all his springs were in God" (Ps 87:7). Our character may contain much that is excellent, and our lives include much that is honourable, but except the "**hand of the Lord our God be upon us,**" renewing our heart and blessing our life, we shall not be or do that which is pleasing to him or useful to our fellows (Ed: Cp Jesus' words in John 15:5). (The Pulpit Commentary: Ezra. H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.)

**Pastor Steven Cole** introduces his message on Ezra 7:1-28 [The Life that God Blesses \(Pdf\)](#) with the following words...

Over thirty years ago, I read a sermon that has impacted my life as much or more than any of the thousands of sermons that I have read. It is titled, "Expecting the Lord's Blessing," by the late Chinese evangelist Watchman Nee (in Twelve Baskets Full [Hong Kong Church Book Room], 2:48-64). That sermon, based on the Lord's feeding of the 5,000, has affected the entire direction and motivation of my personal life and my ministry. Nee hammers home a simple but profound truth: "Everything in our service for the Lord is dependent on His blessing" (p. 48). He observes that in the feeding of the 5,000, the supply in hand was totally inadequate to meet the demand, and yet the demand was met. He says, "The meeting of need is not dependent on the supply in hand, but on the blessing of the Lord resting on the supply" (ibid.). That leads Nee to ask a question that I want you to ponder seriously: "Do we really prize the Lord's blessing?" (p. 49). Do you really want and seek God's blessing on your personal life, your family, your service for the Lord, and on His church?

We all know the right answer to that question. Few would be so brazen as to say, "No, I don't want God's blessing. I'd rather try to make my own blessings apart from God!" But I don't want you to give a knee-jerk "yes" answer just because it is the obviously correct answer. I want you to think about the implications of the question before you answer.

There are a number of men in Scripture whom God blessed: Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and David are prominent examples. But Ezra is also a man whom God blessed, even though he is not so well known as those other men are. We first meet him in chapter 7 of the book that bears his name. There is a 57-58 year gap between the events in chapters 6 and 7. The temple had been rebuilt under the ministries of Zerubbabel and Jeshua, aided by the preaching of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. The exiles that had returned to Israel during that first wave were either dead or very old by now. They had settled into the land and, as we will see, in many cases had begun to blend together with the pagans of the land. The walls of Jerusalem had not been rebuilt, leaving the city vulnerable to attack. God raised up Ezra and Nehemiah to bring spiritual reform to His people.

Both men were born in Babylon and had close connections with King Artaxerxes. No doubt they both enjoyed comfortable living conditions there. But both men were burdened with the low spiritual state of the exiles that had returned to the land. Both men were willing to give up their comfortable situations in Babylon and endure the hardship and hassles to bring reform to God's people. But how could they accomplish this overwhelming task? The answer occurs in a phrase that first occurs three times in our chapter, and then five times in the rest of Ezra and Nehemiah: God's hand was on these men (Ezra 7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31; Neh 2:8, 18). God's hand is another way of saying God's blessing. God blessed these two men and their labors for Him. If we want His blessing or hand to rest on us, we would do well to study their lives. We could add more factors, but limiting ourselves to Ezra 7, we learn that...

**To have God's hand of blessing on us, we must study and obey His Word, with a view to teaching others and glorifying God for everything.**

That theme is stated in Ezra 7:10, which explains why "the good hand of his God was upon him" (7:9): "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel." The connection between Ezra and God's Word is repeated no less than eight times (Ezra 7:6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 21, 25, 26)! There is a definite correlation between our commitment to know and obey God's Word and His hand of blessing being upon us. ([The Life that God Blesses](#) - if you are not familiar with Pastor Cole's teaching ministry, you might read some of his excellent expositional sermons which function much like commentaries)

One could also read the text of **Ezra 7:10** as stating that Ezra had "**Set his heart firmly**" which gives the idea that Ezra was inwardly determined or resolutely steadfast. He was determined and this determination was directed toward studying, obeying, and teaching God's Law to others—Mark it down! This pattern while not a "formula", is to be sure an inviolable order for a Spirit empowered ministry! You cannot teach with power until you yourself have practiced (obeyed) what you have studied. Do be otherwise deluded (cp James 1:22-note).

We as NT believers, like the OT believer Ezra, must continually set (because the flesh, the world and the devil continually tempt us to "veer off course") our hearts to seek, do, and teach the Word of God, for no one accidentally becomes a faithful student of God's Word. We must each make a **daily deliberate decision** of our will (continual choosing) to lay aside lesser things and/or things that hinder us (see Hebrews 12:1-note) in order to seek the best.

**J I Packer** emphasizes the critical need for each of us to **prepare our hearts** before we seek God in His Word noting that...One of the many divine qualities of the Bible is this: that it does not yield its secrets to the irreverent and censorious.

**Spurgeon** issues a similar caveat declaring that...God sends every bird its food, but He does not throw it into the nest.

One is reminded of **Solomon's** wise advice concerning godly wisdom, noting that...If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures then you will discern the fear of the LORD, and discover the knowledge of God.

## EXTRA REFERENCES

**Spurgeon** - True religion is supernatural at its beginning, supernatural in its continuance, and supernatural in its close. It is the work of God from first to last. There is great need that the hand of the Lord should be stretched out still: that need my reader is feeling now, and I am glad that he should feel it; for now he will look for his own preservation to the Lord who alone is able to keep us from failing, and glorify us with His Son. All of Grace: An Earnest Word with Those Who Are Seeking Salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ.



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That regularity of divine bounty which ought to sustain and increase faith is often the means of weakening it. He whose bread comes to him by a government annuity or a quarterly rent is tempted to forget that God has any hand in it. It ought not to be so. Through the hardness of our hearts, such an ill result does frequently follow from the constancy of a gracious providence. I should not wonder if those Israelites who were born in the wilderness and had gathered manna every morning for years, had also ceased to wonder at it or to see the hand of the Lord in it. Shameful stupidity! But, ah, how common! Many a person has lived from hand to mouth and seen the hand of the Lord in the gift of every morsel of bread. At last by God's goodness he has prospered in this world and obtained a regular income. This income he has received without care and trouble, and shortly he has come to look at it as the natural result of his own industry. No longer does he praise the loving kindness of the Lord. To be living without the conscious presence of the Lord is a horrible state of affairs. Supplied, but not by God! Sustained without the hand of God! It were better to be poor or sick or exiled and thus to be driven to approach our heavenly Father.

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Spurgeon - We believe in a God of purposes and plans, who has not left a blind fate to tyrannize over the world, much less an aimless chance to rock it to and fro. We are not fatalists, neither are we doubters of providence and predestination. We are believers in a God "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." We do not conceive of the Lord as having gone away from the world, and left it and the inhabitants thereof to themselves; we believe in Him as continually presiding in all the affairs of life. We, by faith, perceive the hand of the Lord giving to every blade of grass its own drop of dew, and to every young raven its meat. We see the present power of God in the flight of every sparrow, and hear His goodness in the song of every lark.

An All-Round Ministry: Addresses to Ministers and Students.

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At Burial Hill, Plymouth, Massachusetts, Governor William Bradford's grave is inscribed: Under this stone rests the ashes of William Bradford, a zealous Puritan, and sincere Christian Governor of Plymouth Colony from 1621 to 1657, aged 69, except 5 years, which he declined. "Let the right hand of the Lord awake." [Hebrew] "What our fathers with so much difficulty attained do not basely relinquish." [Latin] America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations.

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On December 3, 1901, in his First Annual Message to Congress, President Theodore Roosevelt stated:

On the sixth of September, President McKinley was shot by an anarchist while attending the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo, and died in that city on the fourteenth of that month... And this was the man at whom the assassin struck! That there might be nothing lacking to complete the Judas-like infamy of his act, he took advantage of an occasion when the President was meeting the people generally... The shock, the grief of the country, are bitter in the minds of all who saw the dark days, while the President yet hovered between life and death. At last the light was stilled in the kindly eyes and the breath went from the lips that even in mortal agony uttered no words save of forgiveness to his murderer, of love for his friends, and of unfaltering trust in the will of the Most High... If the hand of the Lord is heavy upon any country, if flood or drought comes, human wisdom is powerless to avert the calamity. America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations.

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On October 29, 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt issued a Proclamation of a National Day of Thanksgiving:

According to the yearly custom of our people, it falls upon the President at this season to appoint a day of festival and thanksgiving to God. Over a century and a quarter has passed since this country took its place among the nations of the earth, and during that time we have had on the whole more to be thankful for than has fallen to the lot of any people. Generation after generation has grown to manhood and passed away. Each has had to bear its peculiar burdens, each to face its special crises, and each has known years of grim trial, when the country was menaced by malice domestic or foreign levy, when the hand of the Lord was heavy upon it in drouth or flood or pestilence, when in bodily distress and anguish of soul it paid the penalty of folly and a froward heart. Nevertheless, decade by decade, we have struggled onward and upward; we now abundantly enjoy material well-being, and under the favor of the Most High we are striving earnestly to achieve moral and spiritual uplifting. The year that has just closed has been one of peace and of overflowing plenty. Rarely has any people enjoyed greater prosperity than we are now enjoying. For this we render heartfelt and solemn thanks to the Giver of Good; and we seek to praise Him not by words only but by deeds, by the way in which we do our duty to ourselves and to our fellow men.

Now, therefore, I, Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, do hereby designate as a day of general thanksgiving Thursday, the twenty-seventh of the coming November, and do recommend that throughout the land the people cease from their ordinary occupations, and in their several homes and places of worship render thanks unto Almighty God for the manifold blessings of the past year.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington this 29th day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and two and of the

independence of the United States the one hundred and twenty-seventh. Theodore Roosevelt.

By the President: John Hay, Secretary of State. (America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations)

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We prepare our heart. God extends His hand!

Prosperity in this life is due to the good hand of the Lord.

Idea of good hand of the Lord = Pr 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Hand of God on David when he failed to confess - Ps 32:3 When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah. 5 I acknowledged my sin to Thee, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin. Selah.

(Isa 66:14) Then you shall see this, and your heart shall be glad, And your bones shall flourish like the new grass; And the hand of the LORD shall be made known to His servants, But He shall be indignant toward His enemies.

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Exodus 9:3 behold, the hand of the LORD will come with a very severe pestilence on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks.

Numbers 11:23 (AMP)

23 The Lord said to Moses, Has the Lord's hand (His ability and power) become short (thwarted and inadequate)? You shall see now whether My word shall come to pass for you or not.

Deuteronomy 2:15 "Moreover the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from within the camp until they all perished.

Joshua 4:24 that all the peoples of the earth **may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty**, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

All the events since the plagues in Egypt had been intended to glorify the Lord to all the peoples of the earth.

Joshua 22:31 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the sons of Reuben and to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Manasseh, "Today we know that the LORD is in our midst, because you have not committed this unfaithful act against the LORD; now you have delivered the sons of Israel from the hand of the LORD."

Judges 2:15 Wherever they went, **the hand of the LORD** was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were **severely distressed**.

Ruth 1:13 would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me."

1 Samuel 5:6 Now the hand of the LORD was heavy on the Ashdodites, and He ravaged them and smote them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories.

9 After they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city with very great confusion; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.

1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

1 Samuel 12:15 "If you will not listen to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the command of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers.

1Sa 30 The chastening hand of the Lord now rests heavily upon wayward, backsliding David.

Annotated Bible, The - The Annotated Bible - Volume 2: Joshua to Chronicles.

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2 Samuel 24:14 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

Homilist - FAITH IN THE UNSEEN WORLD. David felt that if desolation and death overtook him he would be safe if, when leaving this life, he fell "into the hand of the Lord." With home in view, pilgrimage will be cheered, the heart will be calmed and comforted. With the eternal God for our refuge and the eternal arms underneath us, "forward" may be our fearless watchword. Into the infinite, unailing "hand of the Lord" let us commit ourselves. (Homilist.)

Paisley - How vast and immeasurable are the mercies of God! They reach beyond our vision and soar beyond our calculations. To throw ourselves on God's mercies is always the softest of beds. Always make this right choice.

1 Kings 18:46 Then the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.

2 Kings 3:15 "But now bring me a minstrel." And it came about, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him (Elisha).

1 Chronicles 21:13 David said to Gad, "I am in great distress; please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are very great. But do not let me fall into the hand of man."

Ezra 7:6 This Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the LORD his God was upon him.

It was no small work that the good Ezra had undertaken. To lead a great expedition across the inhospitable desert; to convoy the sacred vessels and a large treasure of gold and silver; to set-magistrates and judges over all that great district beyond the river--this was no slight task, and he needed strength. But in the simple language of his heart the good hand of his God was upon him, and that was sufficient to nerve and strengthen him.

**Ralph Davies** - Note that according to this verse the Law of Moses is a divine gift ("had given") and apparently complete. Here also we meet the first "hand of Yahweh" clause. So in this verse we have an assembly of realities: **a completed revelation** (torah of Moses) and **an ongoing providence** (hand of Yahweh), this **latter operating in conjunction with human ingenuity/initiative** ("all his request").

Ezra 7:9 For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God was upon him. 10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

**Cole** - To have God's hand of blessing on us, we must study and obey His Word, with a view to teaching others and glorifying God for everything. That theme is stated in Ezra 7:10, which explains why "the good hand of his God was upon him" (Ezra 7:9): "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel." The connection between Ezra and God's Word is repeated no less than eight times (Ezra 7:6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 21, 25, 26)! There is a definite correlation between our commitment to know and obey God's Word and His hand of blessing being upon us.

God's protection upon the group is acknowledged here. We need Divine protection for every trip, not just the long ones. "The hand of the Lord his God upon him" (Ezra 7:6). This explains the success of Ezra. God enabled him and caused the king and others to favor him.

Analytical Bible Expositor - Analytical Bible Expositor - Ezra-Job.

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**Henry Morris** - Ezra (Ezra 7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31) and twice in Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2:8, 18). Both writers emphasize that their own remarkable accomplishments were by the protecting and enabling grace of God.

Seemingly, the **power** and the **blessing** which served Ezra so signally was all from "the king," but **really it was all from Ezra's "God," whose will disposed the king's heart, whose providence guided every step, and whose power and Spirit** gave efficiency and success to every plan and effort. **And so it is in all human planning and effort. The success is just in the measure of "God's hand upon us." If we rise up to build, and do not first enlist His gracious approval, providential interposition, and Spirit's agency, our best efforts will miscarry or prove disastrous.** If we plan a revival, and put in requisition the agencies, and will the conversion of sinners, we shall be sadly disappointed, if we do not first, by prayer and preparation, array God the Lord on our side, and **get hold of His "outstretched arm of salvation."** It is easy to work, and glorious are the results -- all human agencies so readily fall into line and aid us -- when the hand of the Lord our God is upon us. The application, the lesson, is therefore obvious --

1. Prayer lies at the foundation of all wise planning and all successful effort to advance Christ's kingdom in the world.
  2. God's hand must be upon us -- His providence must be enlisted in our behalf -- there must be co-operation between the Divine and the human.
  3. The secret of declension, of abounding evil, of the lack of converting power in the Church, of the dearth of revivals, is to be found in the fact that God's hand is not upon us, because of the lack of faith and prayer. (J. M. Sherwood, D. D.)
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**Phillip Ryken** - 2. The Secret of Ezra's Success - Ezra was a great man—one of the all-time heroes of the faith. He had the will to lead; he had a heart for holiness; he had a mind for biblical truth. If we want to follow his example, we should ask what made him so great and so good. What was the secret of Ezra's spiritual success?

In one sense, it was the grace of God, of course, and the Bible is careful to point this out. Why did Ezra find favor in the eyes of the king? "The hand of the Lord his God was on him" (7:6). How was he able to make his journey back to Jerusalem? "The good hand of his God was on him" (7:9). Where did he find the courage to lead the people of Israel? Ezra speaks of God's "steadfast love" and testifies, "the hand of the Lord my God was on me" (7:28). Ezra was a man under the hand of God.

It is only the gracious hand of God that enables a man or a woman to fulfill his or her calling in ministry. It is the hand of God that gives courage for spiritual leadership, humility for corporate repentance, and wisdom for teaching God's Word. Praise God for the hand of guidance that has brought you to your present place of service, for the hand of providence that will supply all your needs, for the hand of discipline that will train you in righteousness, and for the hand of comfort that will sustain you through trials. The hand of God is on you for blessing.

But there is another side to all this. Ezra had the hand of God on him, but at the same time he had to be faithful to his calling. He was not a marionette, dangling uselessly until God pulled his strings. He was a human being, with a mind, a heart, and a will that was made to glorify God. Therefore, he needed to be faithful to the sacred trust that God had given him. He needed to train his gifts for ministry and then put them to good use.

Ezra did that. This is obvious from all the good that he accomplished. But the Bible also shows us what was inside the man, giving us an intimate glimpse into Ezra's approach to life and ministry. Do you want to know what enabled him to exercise such an influential ministry? Look again at Ezra 7:10: "Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." This verse is one of the Bible's best summaries of what it means to be a faithful servant of God's Word. It is a wonderful verse for pastors, for seminary students, for theology professors—really, it is a wonderful verse for everyone. I know this from experience because I embraced this verse early in my time at seminary. I wrote it out on a note card and tucked it into the little Bible I carried in my briefcase. From time to time I would pull it out and meditate on it or pray over it. Over time, God used it to shape my understanding of what it meant to be a student and a teacher, a husband and a pastor. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he can use it to shape your life and ministry, too. The logic of this verse is impeccable. There were three things that Ezra was committed to doing, and he had them in the proper order, like "A-B-C" or "1-2-3." In fact, Ezra had them in the only order that makes any sense: he had his heart set on studying, doing, and teaching the Word of God. This was his heart commitment, the direction of his life, the settled intention of his soul.

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Ezra 7:28 and has extended lovingkindness to me before the king and his counselors and before all the king's mighty princes. Thus I was strengthened according to the hand of the LORD my God upon me, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me.

Context - Ezra 7:27 Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to adorn the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem,

Would that we might also be quick to discern the movement of the Most High. Would that we might see the good hand of God as He works for us. Ezra acknowledged that God strengthened him. He said, "I was strengthened as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me." Did not the Lord Jesus say, "All power is given unto Me, \* \* Go"? Is not the hand of God upon us? Are we not able to do all things through Him who strengtheneth us? Power belongeth unto God, and when we are panoplied with God, we have all power, according to the working of His mighty power. Think you that the apostle Paul wrought in his own strength. Far be it. He said concerning himself: "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling \* \* but in demonstration of the Spirit and power." "Power belongeth unto God." (Ps 62:11) Let us then go forward strengthened in the strength of His might.

I was strengthened as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me" (Ezra 7:28). Ezra praises God for the Divine dynamic he received for his work. He could not have performed all his work without this enabling power. Analytical Bible Expositor - Analytical Bible Expositor - Ezra-Job.

**Kieran Beville** - But what does it mean to have the gracious hand of God upon an individual or a people? It is a truly awesome thought to contemplate that the hand of the Almighty might be involved in our affairs on earth. It is not, in fact, that his hand is involved in our affairs; rather, he is operative in his concerns and we may be instrumental in those purposes. This phrase 'for the hand of the LORD his God was on him' speaks of the reality that God protects his people and provides for them. It also speaks of the certainty that he promotes his purposes through his people.

**The hand of God speaks of his almighty power.** He is omnipotent. Isaiah reminds us of the awesome majesty of God, 'Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of

the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?’ (Is. 40:12). This is a vivid picture of the consummate ease with which the almighty God created the universe. When we consider this it is astounding that such a God takes a personal interest in his people. He is the same God who says to his people, ‘See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands’ (Is. 49:16).

His power has not diminished. There is reproof in the Lord’s rhetorical question to Moses, ‘Is the LORD’s arm too short?’ (Num. 11:23). God directs that question to all his people as he did in the time of Jeremiah: ‘I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?’ (Jer. 32:27). Given the way the question is put it would be impossible to answer anything other than ‘certainly not!’ That is the answer that faith demands. He is the creator and the one who sustains all life as Job tells us: ‘In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind’ (Job 12:10).

**The hand of God is an anthropomorphic term for the creative power and providential care of God.** His people are the beneficiaries of his particular bountiful benefaction. It is also a term that relates to the power of God to punish. God is merciful and mighty but he is also perfectly holy and just. A day of judgement is coming when he shall judge the living and the dead. That will be a glorious day for those whose sins are covered by the precious blood of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. But for those outside the covenant of that blood it will be a terrible day because it will be the beginning of conscious torment and eternal separation from God. Thus the writer to the Hebrews reminds us, ‘It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God’ (Heb. 10:31).

**In an earlier chapter, ‘Union, Uniformity, Unity’,** we considered how effective true unity may be in progressing the aims of the Almighty. We remarked then that such unity is to be highly prized indeed. As we consider the hand of God on these people we must be aware that it was his hand that caused unity to prevail. Before ever the remnant embarked on the project of returning and rebuilding, God took the initiative, stirred their hearts and gave them that heavenly concord of purpose. So we read, **‘Also in Judah the hand of God was on the people to give them unity of mind** to carry out what the king and his officials had ordered, following the word of the LORD’ (2Chr. 30:12).

**Above all, the phrase ‘the hand of God’ speaks of his unquestionable authority and unlimited ability. We are reminded in the book of Daniel, ‘He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?” ’** (Da 4:35).

**Knowing that our God is such a God ought to instill security and confidence in our hearts. Remember the words of Jesus, ‘I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand’** (John 10:28). **Let us never forget that it is this God who holds and beholds his beloved.** (Kieran Beville - Exploring Ezra)

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Ezekiel 8:1 (AMP)

1 AND IN the sixth year [of the captivity of King Jehoiachin], in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house [a captive of the Babylonians] with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me.

"The hand of the Lord God fell there upon me" (Ezekiel 8:1, 2). God made it plain to Ezekiel that he had a mission for him. Analytical Bible Expositor - Analytical Bible Expositor - Isaiah to Ezekiel.

Ps 62:11 Once God has spoken; Twice I have heard this: That power belongs to God; (Ps 68:34 Ascribe strength to God) (Ps 29:1 (A Psalm of David.) Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.) (Ps 96:6 Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.7 Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.) (1Chr 16:28 Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.29 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him; Worship the LORD in holy array.

Ezra 8:18 And according to the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of insight of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, and his sons and brothers, 18 men;

Steven Cole - We see Ezra's humble trust in God in his thankful acknowledgement that these men joined the group because of "the good hand of our God upon us." He recognized that God had to put it on the hearts of His people to be willing to serve, even in the tasks that were not so flashy.

Ezra 8:22 For I was ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, "The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him, but His power and His anger are against all those who forsake Him."

Ezra 8:31 Then we journeyed from the river Ahava on the twelfth of the first month to go to Jerusalem; and the hand of our God was over us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the ambushes by the way.

The sovereignty of the Lord also is manifest in the leading of His people in various ways. The return under Cyrus was prompted by the moving of their spirit to do so (Ezra 1:5). Ezra and Nehemiah both refer to the lordship of Yahweh over them by the interesting expression "the hand of the Lord his God was upon him/me" (7:6, 9; 8:18, 22, 31; Neh. 2:8). The hand of God, as is particularly clear in Ezekiel, 6 is a metonymy for His power. Translated into ultimate terms it is a way of referring to divine sovereignty, the control by Yahweh over all facets of life. A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament.

Neh 2:8 and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city, and for the house to which I will go." And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me. (cp Pr 21:1)

Steven Cole - "So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king... " It had to be a silent, instantaneous cry of "Help, Lord!" Or, "Lord, give me wisdom now!" This quick sentence prayer rested on four months of extended praying. It shows that Nehemiah depended on the Lord in every situation. As Neh 2:8 shows, Nehemiah didn't attribute the king's favorable response to good luck. Rather, "the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me." As Proverbs 21:1 states, "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord. He turns it wherever He wishes." Or, as Hudson Taylor said, "It is possible to move men through God by prayer alone" (cited by Charles Swindoll, *Hand Me Another Brick* [Thomas Nelson Publishers], p. 43). One reason God makes us wait on Him is to teach us to depend on Him in prayer. If He immediately granted everything we ask for, we'd grab the goodies and forget God. But when we wait on God in prayer, we learn to seek God Himself and to depend upon Him in ways that we never would learn any other way. And, when the answer finally comes, we realize that it is because of one reason: "the good hand of our God was upon us." Thus we give Him all the glory He deserves.

Jon Courson - Nehemiah's quick prayer was indeed a powerful prayer, for the king granted all three of his requests. I find it interesting that in Ezra 8, we read that when Ezra prepared to go to Jerusalem, he determined not to ask the king for anything because the hand of God was upon him. Here, years later, Nehemiah comes on the scene and asks the king for supplies, also because the hand of God was upon him. Who was right? Ezra or Nehemiah? They both were because God uses different personalities to accomplish His perfect purposes.

Neh 2:18 And I told them how the hand of my God had been favorable to me, and also about the king's words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, "Let us arise and build." So they put their hands to the good work.

Job 12:9 "Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this

Psalm 75:8 For a cup is in the hand of the LORD, and the wine foams; It is well mixed, and He pours out of this; Surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs.

Psalm 118:15 The sound of joyful shouting and salvation is in the tents of the righteous; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.

16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted; The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.

John Phillips - The theme of the rejoicing is given: "The right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly. The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly." Look at that right hand of His. It is a pierced hand, engaged now in a priestly work, raised at God's right hand in answer to all the accusations of the evil one against the people of God. Satan cannot get anywhere near the throne with his venomous charges because that hand is upraised to silence every word he utters.

Biblical Illustrator - The right hand of the Lord" represents His power in its loftiest manifestation, its sovereignty, its resistlessness, its omnipotence.

The Strength for Protection (Psalm 118:13-16)

"Thou hast thrust sore at me... but the Lord helped me... The Lord is my strength and song... the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly... the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly" (Psalm 118:13-16). Strength/power was evident in the protection of the psalmist.

o The strength of the attack. "Thou hast thrust sore at me" (Psalm 118:13). The strength of the protection is seen in the strength of the attack. The attack was a severe one, but the protector was able to protect in spite of the powerful attack.

o The strength of the assistance. "The Lord is my strength and song... salvation... the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly" (Psalm 118:14-16). The word translated "valiantly" means strength. Divine help is powerful help.

Analytical Bible Expositor - Analytical Bible Expositor - Psalms.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Ecc 2:24 There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen, that it is from the hand of God.

Solomon made it clear that not only were the blessings from God, but even the enjoyment of the blessings was God's gift to us (Ecc. 2:24).

Isaiah 19:16 In that day the Egyptians will become like women, and they will tremble and be in dread because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which He is going to wave over them.

Isaiah 25:10 For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain, And Moab will be trodden down in his place As straw is trodden down in the water of a manure pile.

Isaiah 41:20 That they may see and recognize, And consider and gain insight as well, That the hand of the LORD has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Isaiah 62:3 You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, And a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Isaiah 66:14 Then you will see this, and your heart will be glad, And your bones will flourish like the new grass; And the hand of the LORD will be made known to His servants, But He will be indignant toward His enemies.

Jeremiah 51:7 Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, Intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; Therefore the nations are going mad.

Ezekiel 1:3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and there the hand of the LORD came upon him.)

Ezekiel 3:14 So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away; and I went embittered in the rage of my spirit, and the hand of the LORD was strong on me.

22 The hand of the LORD was on me there, and He said to me, "Get up, go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you."

Ezekiel 8:1 It came about in the sixth year, on the fifth day of the sixth month, as I was sitting in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell on me there.

Elmer Towns refers to "the Hand of the Lord (God)" as one of the magnificent names of the Holy Spirit. (Ezek 8:1, Job 12:9, Isa 41:20 referring to creation - That the hand of the LORD has done this, And the Holy One of Israel has created it. ) This is "anthropomorphic" language-describing the divine in terms of the human. Scripture uses several such word pictures, speaking of the Holy Spirit creating life (see Job 12:9), bringing matter into existence (see Ps. 102:25), shaping the stellar heavens (see Ps. 8:3) gathering the physical land mass (see Ps. 95:5), creating man (see Ps. 119:73) and arranging the physical geography of the world (see Isa. 41:18-20). An understanding of the Holy Spirit's work in creation in this context should encourage a sense of celebration (see Ps. 92:4) and a humbling of one's self before the hand of God (see 1 Pet. 5:6).

**Matthew Henry** - He felt the power of God opening his eyes to see the visions, opening his ear to hear the voice, and opening his heart to receive both: The hand of the Lord was there upon him. Note, The hand of the Lord goes along with the word of the Lord, and so it becomes effectual; those only understand and believe the report to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed. The hand of God was upon him, as upon Moses, to cover him, that he should not be overcome by the dazzling light and lustre of the visions he saw, Ex. 33:22.

Ezekiel's ability to do this was far exceeded by the intransigence and hostility of his hearers, so the Lord brought to pass the third element of the call and commission-He placed His hand on him (3:14; cf. 1:3; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1). The "hand of the Lord" is always a metaphor for His power. In this case the hand lifted the prophet up (3:12; cf. 8:3; 11:24; 40:1; 43:5) to transport him to the place where the captives lived (3:15) and to provide him encouragement despite the bitterness of his assignment (v. 14). When he was overcome by the anticipation of the task and the burden of being the watchman of the Lord (vv. 15-21), Ezekiel again was revived by the hand of God who raised him up (v. 22), revealed to him his glory (v. 23), and promised to fill his mouth with words when the time of proclamation came (v. 27).

A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament.

Ezekiel 33:22 Now the hand of the LORD had been upon me in the evening, before the refugees came. And He opened my mouth at the time they came to me in the morning; so my mouth was opened and I was no longer speechless.

Ezekiel 37:1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones.

Ezekiel 40:1 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was taken, on that same day the hand of the LORD was upon me and He brought me there.

The phrase, "The hand of the Lord was upon him," or came upon me, is found seven times in Ezekiel, in Ezek 1:3, 3:14, 22, 8:1, 23:22, 37:1, 40:1.

These three elements-vision, word, and power (or hand)-appear pervasively in Ezekiel's descriptions of his call and of Yahweh's self-revelation. The vision is the abstract message itself, the word is its interpretation, and the power is the means by which the message is effectually communicated. For the hand of the Lord to come on the prophet is to assure him of the Lord's affirmation and enablement. A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament.

In Ezekiel the Spirit interacts with the living beings (cherubim), the prophet, and the people of God, leaving Jerusalem but promising to return. The spirits of the four living beings, located within the wheels, depart Jerusalem with the Spirit and glory of God (Ezek. 1:20-21; 10:17-20). The Spirit moves the prophet and inspires him with the Word of the Lord. The Spirit, also identified as "the hand of the Lord," profoundly affects the spirit of the prophet, giving him visions and revealing God's glory (Ezek. 2:2-4, 12-16; 3:24-27; 8:3-4; 11:1-5, 24; 40:1-3). The false prophets could also claim to be inspired but by their own spirits (Ezek. 13:2-3). Although the people of God treated the name of the Lord profanely, God promises to regenerate them in order to vindicate the holiness of his name. They would receive "a new heart and a new spirit," being enabled to obey the Lord because his Spirit would dwell within them (Ezek. 36:22-32).

In the vision of the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel sees the Spirit of the Lord put "the breath" back into the dead people of Israel. The recreation account of Ezekiel 37:1-14 thus recalls the creation account of Genesis 2:7. Although the Spirit of the Lord had departed from the temple, he will return with the divine glory, restoring the people of God (Ezek. 39:29; 43:4-5).

The correlation between the divine Spirit and the prophetic Word is also affirmed by other prophets (Mic. 3:8; Zech. 7:12; cf. Isa. 40:7-8). Those prophets who claim the Spirit but lack the Word are false (Jer. 5:13). Recalling the prayer of Moses in Numbers 11:29 for a universal prophetic ministry, Joel foresees a day when the Spirit would come upon all people, regardless of gender, age, or social status (Joel 2:28-29). Finally, among the Minor Prophets, the Spirit is identified with divine judgment on the one hand (Mic. 2:7) and covenant restoration and rebuilding of the temple on the other (Hag. 2:3-5; Zech. 4:6; Mal. 2:15). A Theology for the Church.

Luke 1:66 All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

The aid in the development. "The hand of the Lord was with him" (Luke 1:66). One will not do much for God if the hand of the Lord is not upon one. The work which John the Baptist had to do required great help from God. But when God calls, God enables. Many do not perceive the need of the hand of the Lord upon them for service. They think by manipulation and clever schemes they can accomplish much for God. Scripture, however, says, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). To serve God adequately we must have Divine help. Analytical Bible Expositor - Analytical Bible Expositor - Luke.

Acts 11:21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord.

Ivor Powell - Every person became aware that supernatural power worked through the visitors, but Luke expressed his convictions with the words, "The hand of the Lord was with them" (v. 21). Daily, large audiences listened to the gospel, and additional converts embraced the faith. They "turned unto the Lord;" that is, they renounced their former deeds and, forsaking idolatry, followed Christ. That was Christianity at its best. People whose profession of faith is not followed by a transformation of life style are shallow, unconvincing, and dangerous.

The power for the saving. "The hand of the Lord was with them" (Acts 11:21). Unless the Lord is helping, all the preaching in the world will not do much good. Churches have resorted to all manner of promotional schemes to attract a crowd and get decisions. They ought instead to seek the "hand of the Lord" to be upon them. Analytical Bible Expositor - Analytical Bible Expositor - Acts.

If chapter 11 gives a history which might clothe Paul with honours, and give grounds for him to boast: chapter 12 gives us a dealing of the Lord which reduced him to "nothing." No doubt it was necessary that the leading man in the Christian course should be introduced into things which it was not lawful to reveal. It was needful, too, to strengthen him in a special way-giving him to realise, above others, what was the portion of all: the possible state for every saint to enjoy, though, in the state of things, unspeakable also. But to follow this, and consequent upon it, the discipline came which had the effect of emptying Paul of every vestige of human strength, reducing him to the condition of a will-less, powerless vessel, so that he might be fitted thus to be wielded and used by the hand of the Lord who did so. A Chosen Vessel.



This made the prophet Isaiah, after long preaching, cry out, that he had laboured for nought, and in vain; and this made him cry to God, 'to rend the heavens and come down,' that the mountains, or rocky hills, or hearts, might be broken, and melt at his presence (Isa 44:4, 64:1, 2). For he found by experience, that as to this no effectual work could be done, unless the Lord put to his hand. This also is often intimated in the Scriptures, where it saith, when the preachers preached effectually to the breaking of men's hearts, 'the Lord wrought with them; the hand of the Lord was with them,' and the like (Mk 16:20; Ac 11:21). Now when the hand of the Lord is with the Word, then it is mighty: it is 'mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds' (2 Cor 10:4). The Acceptable Sacrifice.

The great number of believers at Antioch was due to the ministry of the Spirit. It is said, "The Acts 11:21.

Luke 1:66. hand of the Lord was with them;" and this marked expression may be the equivalent here of the Spirit's power, as it appears to be, when used of the forerunner of Christ, who from birth was peculiarly filled with the Holy Ghost. Grand metaphor indeed to express the active operation of the Spirit!-THE HAND OF THE Lord. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and a sword needs a hand to grasp, hold, and wield it; the truth of God is a hammer, and needs a hand to give effectiveness to its blows. If vessels are to be molded and fitted for service, a hand must do the shaping and filling and carrying. Surely wherever the gospel is triumphant it is the Holy Spirit who is the hand of the Lord, breaking hard hearts with his hammer, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit with his sword, molding vessels unto honor for the Master's use upon his potter's wheel.

A T Pierson - The Acts of The Holy Spirit.

Acts 13:11 "Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand.

(Job 12:9) "Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this, (Job 12:10) In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?

New Testament makes frequent mention of the hand of God, which tells us of the works of God in our world. He is the Creator of the world (Heb. 1:10). (Heb 1:10) And, "THOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING DIDST LAY THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THY HANDS;

In His strong right hand He holds believers (John 10:29; Acts 11:21). Into God's hands Christ committed His spirit as He died on the cross (Luke 23:46). Jesus Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God (5:31; 7:56; Heb. 8:1). The entire destinies of people and the world are in the hand of God (Acts 4:28). For this reason God's hands will execute judgment on the world (10:31).

The hands of Christ, which were pierced, could heal any ill and give sight to any blind eye. How good it is to know that we may find shelter in the safe hand of God. "He's got the whole world in His hands."

Everything was laid in the hand of God. When all is in His hands, than all is well! May we never forget that our God is a sovereign Lord. He is in absolute control of every situation of life - Eph. 3:20; Ex. 3:14. Therefore, we can have confidence placing our all in His hands! Are you bound in the spirit to do something? If so, commit it to the hand of the Lord and get to it! He will see to whatever needs you may have along the way, Gen. 24:44. He will see you through until the race is run and your course is finished!

We plow the fields, and scatter

The good seed on the land,

But it is fed and watered"

By God's Almighty Hand.

The Book of Common Prayer contains many beautiful paraphrases of Scripture, among which is this comforting line taken from Psalm 95:7: "For He is the Lord our God: and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand."

One of the greatest of these was penned by Augustus Toplady (1740-78):

My name from the palms of His hands

Eternity will not erase;

Impressed on His heart it remains

In marks of indelible grace.

1Pe 5:6 - Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, The word "therefore" points back to the fact that God gives grace to the humble. Here in verse 6, Peter was assuring his readers that they could always be assured that God is good. He is great. He is strong. He has a mighty hand. He chooses the time and place for everything. All that takes place in our lives takes place under the mighty hand of God. This gives us the assurance that God is always in control. The idea of control is seen in the hand of God. The person whose hand we are in controls our destiny. The word "mighty" (krataios) speaks of the powerful hand of God.

Trusting God implies humility. The word "humble" (tapeinoo) means to make low, to reduce to lower circumstances, or to assign a lower rank or place. It means to behave in an unassuming manner. Humility before God causes us to have a proper estimate of ourselves. We come to realize that we are powerless without God.

Humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God is the cure for self-sufficiency. It is the cure for self-righteousness. It is also the cure for self-will.

If we are to best discover God's will for our own lives, we must stop struggling spiritually and emotionally to please God. We only make it hard on ourselves and we will probably move further away from God's perfect will. The best way to serve God is to submit our lives to his control. The more we yield ourselves to his power, the more power God makes available for service. It is a case of "If you lose, you win, if you give in to God, you will not give out."

We can feel safe and secure under the mighty hand of God. We know that God is concerned about us because of his continued manifestation of his presence and power in our lives. The readers of this letter could trust the power of God because God is the only one who can take nothing and create a world. He is the only one who can give life and order to his world.

There was once a little girl who listened attentively as her father read the family devotions. She seemed awed by her parents' talk of God's limitless power and mercy. "Daddy," she asked, "how big is God?" Her father thought for a moment and answered, "Honey, I do not know how big God is, but I do know he is always bigger than your needs."

I want us to know that we can always trust God's power. We have evidence that God is concerned about us because of his presence. We have evidence that God is concerned about us because of his power. God knows all about us and is in position to help us as no one else can. He knows just how much we can stand. Jesus reminds us that his grace is sufficient for us (2 Corinthians 12:9). God gives us adequate strength for every test. This should encourage us to put our trust in God. It should cause us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

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**Hand in Scripture** - In secular Greek the hand was frequently mentioned. Aristotle called the hand "the tool of tools." Besides using it for working, the Greeks also were given to shaking hands. Since a ruler proved his power in hand-to-hand combat, a hand also symbolized power. As Greek mythology developed, the hands of the gods assumed importance. It was the hands of the gods which allegedly protected people. When a person was unusually blessed, it was assumed that the gods had laid their hands on him. In the Septuagint the hand often referred to God's activities in the world. More than 200 times the hand of God is mentioned in the Old Testament. It is God's hand which created the world. When blessing came on the Jewish nation, it was God's hand at work. Even in punishment, godly Jews saw the hand of God. When Jesus met a man with a withered hand, He restored that hand immediately (Matt. 12:10-13; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-10). Indeed the hands of Jesus were often busy doing miracles of healing (Mark 6:2).

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### **Ray Pritchard - Providence is the "invisible hand" of God**

The doctrine of God's providence is really a combination of four other attributes:

Sovereignty-He is in control

Predestination-He is in charge of how everything turns out

Wisdom-He makes no mistakes

Goodness-He has our best interests at heart

In the words of R.C. Sproul, "God doesn't roll dice." Nothing happens by chance. Ever.

Think of providence as "the invisible hand" of God moving through the circumstances of life.

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### **The Protecting Hand of God**

On a frigid Christmas night in 1776 George Washington, along with 2,400 men and 18 cannons, was ferried across the freezing Delaware River. The daring offensive took the Hessian mercenaries serving with the British completely by surprise. A British loyalist tried to alert the Hessians, but their drunken commander refused to interrupt a card game to receive the message. More than one hundred Hessians were killed or wounded, and nearly one thousand taken prisoner. Not a single American life was lost.

Why had Washington and his army left behind the warmth of home and hearth? We know that Washington sensed the guiding and protecting hand of God in the struggle to establish a new nation, and like other Americans he longed to make a fresh start after years of colonialism.

See: Deuteronomy 20:3-4; 2 Chronicles 32:7-8 (6000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truth)

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### **Put Your Hand into the Hand of God**

The last message in my commencement address ten years ago was that "faith is essential." I read these lines:

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown," and he replied, "Go

out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way." Those words, penned by British author M. Louise Haskins and spoken by King George VI of England in his 1939 Christmas message to the British Empire, describe the type of faith we need to cope with adversity. It is the type of faith that has helped me to realize that opportunity always exists.

Many years ago, King George VI of England addressed the British commonwealth on New Year's Eve at a moment in history when the whole world stood on the brink of uncertainty. Despondency and uncertainty filled the air. The king's own body was racked by cancer. Before that year was over, his life ended. Unaware of his own physical maladies, he uttered these memorable words:

"I said to the man at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light that I might walk safely into the unknown.' And he said to me, 'Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. It shall be to you safer than the light and better than the known.' " (6000 Plus Illustrations for Communicating Biblical Truth)

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The hand of the Lord - Nothing can be disposed of without the good pleasure and providence of God, who hath the life and breath of all creatures, men as well as others, in His hand.

I. The present hand of God upon everything. 1

. This is one of the doctrines which men believe, but are constantly forgetting.

2. This is a fact of universal force.

3. A truth worthy of perpetual remembrance.

Child of God, see where thou art. Thou art completely in the hand of God. Thou art absolutely and entirely, and in every respect, placed at the will and disposal of Him who is thy God. Art thou grieved because of this? Does this doctrine trouble thee? Let your conversation be as becometh this doctrine. Speak of what thou wilt do, and of what will happen, always in respect to the fact that man proposes, but God disposes. To the sinner we say, Man, you are in the hand of God. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

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A significant number of texts refer to the "hand of God" in various contexts. Basically, this concept refers to divine power and authority. For example, in regard to his people, Yahweh is said to "lift up his hand" against them as punishment for their rebellion against him (cf. Eze. 44:12). Sometimes "the hand of the Lord" was against them (e.g., Ex 16:3; Lev. 26:25; Jdg 2:15; Ru 1:13; Isa. 5:25; Eze. 20:15). The covenant curse is in view in Ex 16:3; Lev. 26:25. In a related sense, Yahweh is said to deliver his people "into the hands of ... (their enemies)" as a punishment for their sin. This is particularly true at the time of the judges (cf. Jdg 2:14; 3:8 ff.); and the exile of both Israel and Judah (cf. Hos. 2:10; Ps 106:41; Jer. 20: 4 ff.; 32:25 ff.; Eze. 11: 9; 39:23; Ezra 9: 7). The "hand of Yahweh" is also stretched out against the enemies of his people in judgment - for example, the Canaanites (cf. Dt 2:15; Jos. 7: 7; Jdg 1: 4); the Philistines (cf. 1Sa. 5: 6 ff.; Eze. 25:16); Egypt (cf. Ex 3:20; 7:4 ff.; Isa. 11:15); and enemies in general (cf. Isa. 9:12, 17; Mic. 5: 9). "The hand of the Lord" is also referred to in regard to the prophetic endowment of the Spirit of God in preparation for the prophet to receive the divine word. This specific usage, however, is restricted to the prophet Ezekiel (cf. Eze. 1: 3; 3:14; 8:14; 37:1; 40:1). Other general references to the "hand of God/Yahweh" include his bringing Israel out of captivity "with a mighty hand" (Eze. 20:34); David pleading with God to "stay his hand of judgment" (2Sa. 24:16); and God's "good hand of mercy" (Ezra 8:18ff.; Neh. 2:18). See also Ex 15:17; Ec 2:24. God's "hands" are also indicated in contexts referring to divine creativity (e.g., Job 10: 8; Ps 119:73; Pr 31:31; Ec 2:11; Isa. 19:25; 64:8); as well as divine protection (e.g., Job 12:10; Ps 10:14; 73:23; Ec 9: 1; Jer. 31:32). Note especially the cry of the psalmist in Ps 31:5 Into Thy hand I commit my spirit;, anticipating the climax of Jesus' death on the cross: "Into your hands, I commit my spirit." Still in the context of divine initiative, there are a number of references to Yahweh delivering his people "out of the hands of (their enemies)" - for example, Egypt (cf. Ex 13: 3; Dt 1:27; Jdg 6: 9); Philistia (cf. 1Sa. 7:13, 14); and enemies in general (cf. 1Sa. 12:11; Eze. 13:23). See also Ps 18: 1; 31:15; 71:4.

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Ken Hemphill - God is the owner, man is the manager, and therefore man's labor is from the hand of God.

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Touched by the Master's Hand

"Now the hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening." Ezekiel 33:22

Sometimes as the day wears on there is a gloominess about our souls for we feel the chastening of the Lord. We should rejoice in such chastening for it is only His own loved ones which He chastens. Oh if only chastening brings my Lord I rejoice, I kiss the rod because of the One whose hand holds it and uses it.

But let us remember the hand of the Lord is upon us more often in mercy than in judgment. Judgment is His strange work.

Mercifulness is His daily occupation. His hand upon us-to encourage.

How encouraging is the touch of His hand! Just to know He's there, my Saviour who died for me that is the greatest encouragement I could have. But what is He there for?

A very present help in trouble. His encouragement is more than a match for all my discouragement.

O Lord let me feel your hand of encouragement this day.

His hand upon us-to enable.

What a mess we make of ourselves and our service. We have not learned that without Him we can do nothing. When we come to the end and like the prodigal reach ourselves (remember he came to himself) then His blessed hand touches us with the grace of enablement and we cry out joyfully, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

With that touch all things are within our capability.

His hand upon us-to entertain.

Entertainment is not a sole gift of the world as the devil would like us to believe. Christ right royally entertains his friends with the touch of the Master's hand. The feast that hand spreads, the wine that hand presents, the pleasures that hand creates produces an entertainment this old world never dreamt of.

Where His hand is at work there is fullness of joy unspeakable, and right there at His right hand there are pleasures for ever more.

Lord touch me this day with Thy Hand.

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## **July 9. Ian Paisley - A Text a Day Keeps the Devil Away**

### **The Dry Bones Sermon**

#### **Ezekiel 37:1-10 (part one)**

To do the work of God we require:

##### **I. Divine Ordination**

"The hand of the Lord was upon me" verse 1

The one thing essential is the hand of the Lord upon the preacher.

Elijah attended no school of the prophets but the hand of the Lord was upon him.

Elisha graduated neither from Bethel School of the prophets nor Jericho School of the prophets but the hand of the Lord was upon him. John the Baptist's only university was the wilderness but the hand of the Lord was upon him.

##### **II. Divine Separation**

"and carried me out" verse 1

We must be separated in order to do God's work in God's way. We must take the Separatist Position. Affiliation, incorporation, federation with ecumenicals must cease. That separation must be total-full-without exceptions.

##### **III. Divine Motivation**

"in the Spirit of the Lord" verse 1

We need to be motivated only by God's Spirit. The hand of the Lord puts us under the direction of the Spirit of God and makes us captive to the Word of God.

The Spirit of God never leads us contrary to His own Word. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God.

##### **IV. Divine Humiliation**

"set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones" verse 1

Down amongst that which bore the curse and made the prophet ceremoniously unclean.

We must sit where they sit but still hate the garments spotted by the flesh.

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## **Falling Into the Hand of the Lord - Ian Paisley - A Text a Day Keeps the Devil Away**

"And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait; let us fall now into the hand of the Lord: for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." 2 Samuel 24:14

### **Trouble of Our Own Making**

"I am in a great strait"

Many of our troubles are of our own making. Much of our food is of our own baking. When we choose the path of disobedience we reap the harvest of punishment. So it was with David. So it is with us.

### **Treatment of Our Own Choosing**

"Let us fall now into the hand of God"

How would we be treated? We should always choose to fall into God's hand. In the greatest of troubles we are better to let go and let God. Falling into God's hands is always a soft fall.

### **Testimony of Our Own Experiencing**

"for His mercies are great"

How vast and immeasurable are the mercies of God! They reach beyond our vision and soar beyond our calculations. To throw ourselves on God's mercies is always the softest of beds. Always make this right choice.

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8. Conquering Leader-Ezra 8:31, 32. Ezra not only started on his journey to Jerusalem, but he got there, and he was able because of the "hand of God" to lead his host, to keep from being ensnared, and conquered by the way.

1000 Bible Study Outlines: Study Helps and Sermon Outlines.

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God said to Edom, "I will bring you down." In this saying Obadiah reminded all of us that no one is ever beyond the reach of God. Every person is responsible for his actions, and every person is within reach of the disciplining hand of the Lord.

365-Day Devotional Commentary, The.

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### **Hand of God In Ezra 7-8:15-32**

1. A Ready Leader- 7:6. "Ready" means "skilful" or quick. The word comes from a root which means to flow easily, to be liquid, hence to be prompt, to answer, to do. There was no hesitation or trepidation. To be ready in the things of God shows we are in touch with the God of the things.

2. Supplied Leader-7:6. Behind the king's granting him "all his request" is "according to the hand of his God." Earthly stores come from the Lord's cupboard.

3. Prepared Leader-7:10. Before Ezra taught others he "prepared" himself, and he "prepared" himself by the best possible means, namely, "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord."

4. Recognised Leader. The King of Persia recognised that Ezra was a man who was instructed in the commandments and law of God-see the frequent references to the fact in 7:11, 12, 21, 23, 25, 26. When we recognise God by our obedience to His Word He will cause others to recognise us to our honour.

5. Thankful Leader-7:27, 28. Ezra praised "the Lord God of our fathers," and acknowledged all that came to him through the king was from "the hand of the Lord my God."

6. Associated Leader-8:15-20, 24-30. A leader must have someone to lead, and each and all go to make the sum total of success. "The priests" and "the people," the "men of understanding" and the "man of understanding," the sons of Levi, and "all who were expressed by name" were required in the Lord's work and worship.

7. Prayerful Leader-8:21-23. Mark the expressive words: "To seek of Him a right way," "The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him," "Besought our God for this, and He was entreated of us."

8. Conquering Leader-8:31, 32. Ezra not only started on his journey to Jerusalem, but he got there, and he was able because of the "hand of God" to lead his host, to keep from being ensnared, and conquered by the way.

You never know where God will lead you, but if the Lord leads you, thank God for where he's leading you.

365 Days in the Presence of God: Daily Devotions from the Sermons of Dr. Frank Ray.

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Numbers 11:23 (ESV)

23 And the LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not."

Numbers 11:23 (HCSB)

23 The LORD answered Moses, "Is the LORD's power limited? You will see whether or not what I have promised will happen to you."

Joshua 4:23-24 (AMP)

23 For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up for us until we passed over,

24 That all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty and that you may reverence and fear the Lord your God forever.

Note Joshua's words of dedication when the heap of stones was set up at Gilgal. God had dried up the river as He earlier dried up the Red Sea, "so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God" (v. 24).

365-Day Devotional Commentary, The.

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Joshua 22:30-31 (ESV)

30 When Phinehas the priest and the chiefs of the congregation, the heads of the families of Israel who were with him, heard the words that the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the people of Manasseh spoke, it was good in their eyes.

31 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the people of Manasseh, "Today we know that the LORD is in our midst, because you have not committed this breach of faith against the LORD. Now you have delivered the people of Israel from the hand of the LORD."

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Judges 2:12-16 (AMP)

12 And they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, Who brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods of the peoples round about them and bowed down to them, and provoked the Lord to anger.

13 And they forsook the Lord and served Baal [the god worshiped by the Canaanites] and the Ashtaroth [female deities such as Ashtoreth and Asherah].

14 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He gave them into the power of plunderers who robbed them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could no longer stand before their foes.

15 Whenever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn to them; and they were bitterly distressed.

16 But the Lord raised up judges, who delivered them out of the hands of those who robbed them.

Ruth 1:13 (AMP)

13 Would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; it is far more bitter for me than for you that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.

1 Samuel 12:14-16 (ESV)

14 If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well.

15 But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.

16 Now therefore stand still and see this great thing that the LORD will do before your eyes.

2 Samuel 24:14 (ESV)

14 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."

2 Kings 3:14-16 (ESV)

14 And Elisha said, "As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, were it not that I have regard for Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would neither look at you nor see you.

15 But now bring me a musician." And when the musician played, the hand of the LORD came upon him.

16 And he said, "Thus says the LORD, 'I will make this dry streambed full of pools.'

1 Chronicles 28:19-20 (ESV)

19 "All this he made clear to me in writing from the hand of the LORD, all the work to be done according to the plan."

20 Then David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the LORD God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished.

Psalms 118:14-16 (AMP)

14 The Lord is my Strength and Song; and He has become my Salvation.

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents and private dwellings of the [uncompromisingly] righteous: the right hand of the Lord does valiantly and achieves strength!

16 The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly and achieves strength!

Ezekiel 3:14-15 (ESV)

14 The Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit, the hand of the LORD being strong upon me.

15 And I came to the exiles at Tel-abib, who were dwelling by the Chebar canal, and I sat where they were dwelling. And I sat there overwhelmed among them seven days.

Ezekiel 3:22-23 (ESV)

22 And the hand of the LORD was upon me there. And he said to me, "Arise, go out into the valley, and there I will speak with you."

23 So I arose and went out into the valley, and behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, like the glory that I had seen by the Chebar canal, and I fell on my face.

Ezekiel 37:1-2 (ESV)

1 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones.

2 And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry.

Acts 11:21 (ESV)

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.

Acts 13:11 (ESV)

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.