

## HABITATIONS OF PRAISE “The Use of the Hands: Clap!”

Ps 47:1 *For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.*

**Clap**<sup>1</sup> your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. NIV

*What does it mean when we clap? Approval, excitement, welcome, praise, adoration. These meanings are in the Bible also, as well as some other nuances that we might not think of.*

### **Trumpets-**

*The Hebrew word translated “clap” in Psalm 47:1 is also translated “to blow, as in “to blow the trumpet. We find **taqa**”<sup>1</sup> used, among other places, in:*

<i>Num 10:3-8, 10</i>	<i>The silver trumpets</i>
<i>Josh 6:4, 8-9, 13,16, 20</i>	<i>The walls of Jericho</i>
<i>Judg 6:34; 7:18-20, 22</i>	<i>Gideon and the 300</i>
<i>Ezek 33:3, 6</i>	<i>The watchman on the wall</i>

*It may be stretching it to say that the clapping of hands is directly comparative to the blowing of a trumpet, but the association is intriguing.*

### **First (and 2<sup>nd</sup>) Use-**

*We have been studying habitations of praise and the Davidic tabernacle at length. One principle of Biblical interpretation is to look at the first instance or use of a word in Scripture. Often times, the first use gives us a good indication of its scope of meaning.*

Gen 31:25

Jacob had **pitched**<sup>1</sup> his tent in the hill country of Gilead when Laban overtook him, and Laban and his relatives **camped**<sup>1</sup> there too. NIV

*Interesting that the first and second use of this word which is translated as “clap” is used of pitching a tent. This is exactly what we are doing when we praise. We are pitching a tent of manifest habitation for God.*

*Another Scriptural significance of clapping hands (with another) in Scripture is that of entering into covenant.*

### **Striking hands in pledge-**

Job 17:1-3

1 My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.

2 Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?

3 Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that **will strike**<sup>1</sup> hands with me? KJV

Job 17:3

"Give me, O God, the pledge you demand. Who else will **put up security**<sup>1</sup> for me? NIV

“Striking hands, or touching hands, is an Oriental mode of sealing a bargain . . . In the East the parties making a contract touch each other’s right hands, and then each raises his hand to his lips or forehead. Sometimes the hands are simply joined [i.e. a handshake]. The text, then, is **expressive of a covenant** [emphasis added].”<sup>α</sup>

2 Chron 30:6-9

6 throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king [Hezekiah] and from his officials, which read: "People of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that he may return to you who are left, who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria.

7 Do not be like your fathers and brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD, the God of their fathers, so that he made them an object of horror, as you see.

8 Do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were; submit [Heb., lit. *give your hand*] to the LORD. Come to the sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD your God, so that his fierce anger will turn away from you.

9 If you return to the LORD, then your brothers and your children will be shown compassion by their captors and will come back to this land, for the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him." NIV

Gal 2:9

James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. NIV

*This use of clapping hands should not surprise us. We shake hands on a deal and give each other high-fives in approval. When we clap or clasp hands with another, it signifies welcome and covenant. But how does one strike hands with God? The lifting of the hands is the symbolic motion. The clapping of hands would be the symbolic sound of covenant.*

### **The sound of repentance-**

Jer 31:16-20

16 Thus says the LORD: "Refrain your voice from weeping, And your eyes from tears; For your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD, And they shall come back from the land of the enemy.

17 There is hope in your future, says the LORD, That your children shall come back to their own border.

18 "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself: 'You have chastised me, and I was chastised, Like an untrained bull; Restore me, and I will return, For You are the LORD my God.

19 Surely, after my turning, I repented; And after I was instructed, I struck<sup>3</sup> myself on the thigh; I was ashamed, yes, even humiliated, Because I bore the reproach of my youth.'

20 Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For though I spoke against him, I earnestly remember him still; Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD. NKJV

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<sup>α</sup> James M. Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, Logos International, Plainfield, NJ, reprint 1972, p. 236, note 461.

### **The sound of joy-**

Ps 98:8 "Let the rivers **clap**<sup>2</sup> their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;" NIV

Isa 55:9-13 NIV

9 "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

12 You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will **clap**<sup>2</sup> their hands.

13 Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briars the myrtle will grow. This will be for the LORD's renown, for an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed."

*[The Hebrew word used here is **macha**<sup>2</sup>. It means to clap.]*

### **Clapping in warfare-**

*As we have stated numerous times before, worship is warfare. As our praises ascend to God, it sound reverberates in hell, causing torment to the minions of darkness. Listen to Charles Spurgeon:*

*\Topical Sermons (NT Texts)\A Challenge and a War-Charge -- 1 Cor. 15:55-58*

Sing unto him, ye spirits that are redeemed before the throne; lift up your hallelujahs, clap your wings, sweep your harps and say, "All hail! thou vanquisher of death, thou destroyer of the grave!" Let the echo reverberate to the lowest depths of hell, and let the fiends bite their fire-tormented tongues and gnash their teeth in vain, whilst that song is echoed in notes like these, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?"

*Quite the mind picture, is it not?*

*The Proclamation of the King-*

2 Kings 11:12

Jehoiada brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; he presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people **clapped** their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!" NIV

*The Driven Peg of the Kingdom-*

Isa 22:20-24

20 "In that day I will summon my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiyah.

21 I will clothe him with your robe and fasten your sash around him and hand your authority over to him. He will be a father to those who live in Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.

22 I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.

23 I will **drive**<sup>1</sup> him like a peg into a firm place; he will be a seat of honor for the house of his father.

24 All the glory of his family will hang on him: its offspring and offshoots--all its lesser vessels, from the bowls to all the jars. NIV

Rev 3:7

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. NIV

*The Pronouncement of Judgment-*

Ezek 22:13-14

13 "I will surely **strike** my hands together at the unjust gain you have made and at the blood you have shed in your midst.

14 Will your courage endure or your hands be strong in the day I deal with you? I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it. NIV

*Clapping Used in Derision-*

Lam 2:14-15

14 The visions of your prophets were false and worthless; they did not expose your sin to ward off your captivity. The oracles they gave you were false and misleading.

15 All who pass your way **clap**<sup>3</sup> their hands at you; they scoff and shake their heads at the Daughter of Jerusalem: "Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?" NIV

Job 27:23 "Men shall **clap**<sup>3</sup> their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place." KJV

*Clapping, the Sound of Casting Out-*

Ex 10:19

And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind, which took away the locusts, and **cast them**<sup>1</sup> into the Red sea; there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. KJV

Nah 3:16-19

16 You have increased the number of your merchants till they are more than the stars of the sky, but like locusts they strip the land and then fly away.

17 Your guards are like locusts, your officials like swarms of locusts that settle in the walls on a cold day- but when the sun appears they fly away, and no one knows where.

18 O king of Assyria, your shepherds slumber; your nobles lie down to rest. Your people are scattered on the mountains with no one to gather them.

19 Nothing can heal your wound; your injury is fatal. Everyone who hears the news about you **claps**<sup>1</sup> his hands at your fall, for who has not felt your endless cruelty? NIV

*The next use of **taqa**' [after Gen. 31:25] involves the Lord's "casting out" of the locusts from Egypt. This is the removal of a curse. In Nahum, we have the Assyrians compared to locusts. When they are scattered and thrown down, the people clap their hands! . In Exodus and Nahum,*

*we have the removal of locusts (curse, demons, enemies) and the clap of derision over them and praise to God for the liberation.*

*Tent Pegs and Warfare-*

*Once again, I must resort to leaping logic. We have seen that the word used for clap in Psalm 47:1 (the only place, by the way, where we are directly told to clap in praise) is used for the pitching of a tent [the setting of the camp] and the blowing of a trumpet [the calling out and directing of the army]. This same word, **taqa**<sup>1</sup>, is used with reference to the firm establishing of the Messiah, that he would be driven like a peg into a firm place. In Judges, we have this concept of the driven tent peg used graphically in warfare.*

Judg 4:15-21 NIV

15 At Barak's advance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot.

16 But Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim. All the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man was left.

17 Sisera, however, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there were friendly relations between Jabin king of Hazor and the clan of Heber the Kenite.

18 Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come, my lord, come right in. Don't be afraid." So he entered her tent, and she put a covering over him.

19 "I'm thirsty," he said. "Please give me some water." She opened a skin of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him up.

20 "Stand in the doorway of the tent," he told her. "If someone comes by and asks you, 'Is anyone here?' say 'No.'"

21 But Jael, Heber's wife, picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She **drove**<sup>1</sup> the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died.

*At the risk of over allegorizing, we see Jael, the **wife** of Heber (read **Hebrew**), driving the tent peg through Sisera's (read adversary) head. Our praises, clapping included, help crush the serpent's head.*

Gen 3:15

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." NIV

Luke 10:19-21

19 I have given you authority to **trample** on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

20 However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. NIV

*Thayer's definition-*

NT:3961 - **pateoo**, patoo; to tread,

- a. to trample, crush with the feet: Rev 14:20
- b. to advance by setting foot upon, tread upon: Luke 10:19
- c. to tread underfoot, trample on, i. e., treat with insult and contempt: Luke 21:24

*We underestimate the power of derision. More than anything else, satan wants to be taken seriously and given accreditation. We count him something worthy to be walked upon. But look at the correlation from Luke. How is this accomplished? Not by glorying in our authority over the kingdom of darkness, but by praising God for placing us in the kingdom of light, the Kingdom of His Dear Son!*

### **The Clapping of Hands in Prophetic Pronouncement-**

Ezek 6:11

"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: **Strike** your hands together and stamp your feet and cry out "Alas!" because of all the wicked and detestable practices of the house of Israel, for they will fall by the sword, famine and plague. NIV

Ezek 21:1-17 NIV

1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 "Son of man, set your face against Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuary. Prophecy against the land of Israel

3 and say to her: 'This is what the LORD says: I am against you. I will draw my sword from its scabbard and cut off from you both the righteous and the wicked.

4 Because I am going to cut off the righteous and the wicked, my sword will be unsheathed against everyone from south to north.

5 Then all people will know that I the LORD have drawn my sword from its scabbard; it will not return again.'

6 "Therefore groan, son of man! Groan before them with broken heart and bitter grief.

7 And when they ask you, 'Why are you groaning?' you shall say, 'Because of the news that is coming. Every heart will melt and every hand go limp; every spirit will become faint and every knee become as weak as water.' It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign LORD."

8 The word of the LORD came to me:

9 "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'This is what the Lord says: "'A sword, a sword, sharpened and polished-

10 sharpened for the slaughter, polished to flash like lightning! "'Shall we rejoice in the scepter of my son [ Judah]? The sword despises every such stick.

11 "'The sword is appointed to be polished, to be grasped with the hand; it is sharpened and polished, made ready for the hand of the slayer.

12 Cry out and wail, son of man, for it is against my people; it is against all the princes of Israel. They are thrown to the sword along with my people. Therefore **beat**<sup>3</sup> your breast [*KJV- smite upon your thigh*].

13 "'Testing will surely come. And what if the scepter [of Judah], which the sword despises, does not continue? declares the Sovereign LORD.'

14 "So then, son of man, prophesy and **strike** your hands together. Let the sword strike twice, even three times. It is a sword for slaughter- a sword for great slaughter, closing in on them from every side. [prophetic action, see 2 Kings 13:15-20]

- 15 So that hearts may melt and the fallen be many, I have stationed the sword for slaughter at all their gates. Oh! It is made to flash like lightning, it is grasped for slaughter.
- 16 O sword, slash to the right, then to the left, wherever your blade is turned.
- 17 I too will **strike** my hands together, and my wrath will subside. I the LORD have spoken."

*Ezekiel is a great book to read to see how the Lord directs a prophet and how a prophet is involved in the word he receives and delivers. Note the prophetic actions of clapping:*

- Vs. 12 -        *The thigh is smitten with the hand in anguish.*
- Vs. 14 -        *The prophet is told to clap, signifying the striking of the sword. [Read 1 Kings 13:15-20 below.]*
- Vs. 17 -        *The Lord claps His hands in anger [read Ezk. 5:13].*

2 Kings 13:14-20a

- 14 Now Elisha was suffering from the illness from which he died. Jehoash king of Israel went down to see him and wept over him. "My father! My father!" he cried. "The chariots and horsemen of Israel!"
- 15 Elisha said, "Get a bow and some arrows," and he did so.
- 16 "Take the bow in your hands," he said to the king of Israel. When he had taken it, Elisha put his hands on the king's hands.
- 17 "Open the east window," he said, and he opened it. "Shoot!" Elisha said, and he shot. "The LORD's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram!" Elisha declared. "You will completely destroy the Arameans at Aphek."
- 18 Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped.
- 19 The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times."
- 20a Elisha died and was buried. NIV

*The striking of the arrows on the ground by Jehoash at the direction of Elisha is like the clapping of Ezekiel at the direction of the Lord. Our motions **do** mean something. We need to be attentive to the Spirit of God and what He would have us do.*

Ezek 5:13 NIV

"Then my anger will cease and my wrath against them will subside, and I will be avenged. And when I have spent my wrath upon them, they will know that I the LORD have spoken in my zeal.

*The Lord's anger is slow to rise. But once it is up, spending it is what makes it subside.*

### **Clapping in the New Testament-**

1 Cor 4:5

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his **praise**<sup>4</sup> from God. NIV

*Bullinger's Definition-*

**Epainos**<sup>4</sup> – praise upon, applause, commendation, approbation.

*Most uses of this word involve men receiving praise or being praise. This is the only New Testament word that I could find that means applause. Its concept can be found in other places, such as alternate translations.*

*United Bible Society's Handbook Notes-*

Matt 7:7

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. NIV

Matt 7:7-8

In many African cultures people do not normally knock on doors to request the people inside to open them. Quite often, only thieves would knock on doors (waiting to hear any noise inside before entering to steal), so the translators need to say either "ask for the door to be opened" or "clap (or cough, or call) at the door."

Luke 12:8

"I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. NIV

Luke 12:8-9

Acknowledges me is often rendered by a descriptive phrase, cp. e.g. "confesses publicly that he belongs to me" (TEV), 'say openly... that they have believed on me' (Tzeltal), 'approves me' (West Nyanja [central African language], a term explained as "to utter response in chorus, or in a speech approve, by word of mouth or by clapping of hands, the words of the speaker, to...do the part of an approver and say, 'yes, yes, we say so too";

Rev 3:20 An alternative translation model for this verse is:

“Pay attention! I am standing in front of the house and clearing my throat (clapping my hands). If anyone hears me and invites me into the house, I will come (go) in and eat a meal with him.”

*Clapping is a means by which we can drive the tent pegs of the habitation of praise. It is not only a sound of approval and joy. It can also be the sound of driving out (casting out), displeasure, and derision. In prophetic pronouncement, clapping is used in Scripture to signify repentance, anguish, anger, and the slash and thrust of the sword of the Lord. It is praise. It is the proclamation for the King. It is warfare.*

*\Topical Sermons (NT Texts)\The Parable of the Wedding Feast -- Matt. 22:2-4*

We must praise him, for He is "chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." It were treason to be silent when the hour has come to speak of him who is peerless among men and matchless among angels. Clap, clap your hands at the thought of the marriage of the King's Son, for whom his bride hath made herself ready.

*Amen!*