

## **HABITATIONS OF PRAISE**

### **“The Use of the Hands: Lift!”**

Ex 17:8-16

8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. NIV

Deut 25:17-18

17 Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt.

18 When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and cut off all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. NIV

Ex 17:9-16

9 Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."

10 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill.

11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.

12 When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up--one on one side, one on the other--so that his hands remained steady till sunset.

13 So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

15 Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner.

16 He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD. The LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation." NIV

*If this were the only record we had of hands being lifted to heaven in supplication, it would be sufficient. In this record, Jehovah God reveals a redemptive quality of his nature, that He is our Banner, our deliverer, the one who fights our battles, our covering. Something happens to us when we lift our hands to God. The action of investing our bodies in supplication causes a deeper commitment in our hearts and souls.*

Ps 143:3-6

3 The enemy pursues me, he crushes me to the ground; he makes me dwell in darkness like those long dead.

4 So my spirit grows faint within me; my heart within me is dismayed.

5 I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done.

6 I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah NIV

*Solomon's dedication of the Temple-*

1 Kings 8:22-23, 38, 54

22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven

23 and said: "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below-you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way

38 and when a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel-each one aware of the afflictions of his own heart, and spreading out his hands toward this temple-

54 When Solomon had finished all these prayers and supplications to the LORD, he rose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven. NIV

*The lifting of our hands is an outward expression of the internal lifting up to God of our hearts and souls. Why should I have to, you might ask, if it is in my heart, why should I lift my hands? Well, let me ask you, where does the Spirit of God abide in you? In our hearts. If He is there, why should we have to speak in tongues? It is a matter of obedience.*

*Not until the dark ages did the common posture of prayer with outstretched hands get replaced by the common kneeling-with-folded-hands posture. It had more to do with cultural custom than it did with church practice or truth. Explain the binding process in feudal society.*

*One of the first prominent theologian of the Christian Church, Tertullian (160 AD – 230 AD), had this to say about the practice of worship in the church of his day, "In our case, not only do we raise our hands, we even spread them out, and taking our model form the Lord's passion, even in prayer we confess to Christ."*

*The lifting up of the hands was so prevalent a custom among Christians that the synagogue stopped its use among lay people as a reaction to it! Listen to what the great preacher, Charles Spurgeon, says about raising hands:*

*"Uplifted hands have ever been a form of devout posture, and are intended to signify a reaching upward towards God, a readiness, an eagerness to receive the blessing sought after. We stretch out empty hands, for we are beggars; we lift them up. For we seek heavenly supplies; we lift them towards the mercy seat of Jesus, for there our expectation dwells."*

*Two prominent Hebrew words translated "praise" or "to give thanks" mean to stretch out the hand or to extend the hands in thanksgiving. We have not realized the prominence of the lifting of the hand because we read "praise" and do not realize that it means to lift the hand in adoration. These two words are yadah [3034] and towdah [8426]. Yadah is used 114 times in the Old Testament and towdah 32.*

Ps 9:1

I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. NIV

Ps 28:7

7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song. NIV

Ps 138:1

I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; before the "gods" I will sing your praise. NIV

*See the heart and hand connection? Do we sometimes feel foolish lifting our hands up? Maybe. Do we always feel like lifting them? No, it's a sacrifice.*

Ps 50:14-15

14 Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High,

15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me." NIV

Ps 141:2

May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice. NIV

*This is all well and good, you might say, but this is all in the Old Testament. OK!*

*Jesus lifted his hands:*

Luke 24:50-51

50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. NIV

Rev 10:1-7

1 Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven. He was robed in a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery pillars.

2 He was holding a little scroll, which lay open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land,

3 and he gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders spoke.

4 And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said and do not write it down."

5 Then the angel I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven.

6 And he swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created the heavens and all that is in them, the earth and all that is in it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said, "There will be no more delay!

7 But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets." NIV

Heb 12:12 "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;" KJV

*If those don't convince you, here's one you will have to blind yourself to avoid.*

1 Tim 2:8

I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. NIV

*One will never understand the importance of the lifting up of the hands through study or teaching. Like most of worship, it is something that we learn in the doing. We need to be obedient to the Lord and **do it**. It is in the doing of it that we will receive a revelation of its sheer necessity.*

Lam 3:40-41

40 Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the LORD;

41 Let us lift our hearts and hands To God in heaven. NKJV

*Amen!*