
faint for hunger in the top of every street." He cries out in Lamentations 3:40-41, *"Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens."* Surely, God has dedicated men and women TODAY who will enter into this kind of zealous intercession for their nation's great needs.

Hebrews 12:6-7, *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"* Verse 11 says, *"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised (obedient) thereby."* The writer of Hebrews then immediately exhorts God's people to LIFT UP THE HANDS which HANG DOWN. This shows a reverence and willingness to yield unto the working of God's sovereign purposes in one's life. Isaiah 55:8-9 says that His thoughts and His ways are higher (wiser) than our thoughts and ways. Giving glory to God in the midst of difficult circumstances is a great test of faith and obedience. The writer of Psalms 88 pens these words in verse 9, *"Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS UNTO THEE."* Psalms 143:6 cites a similar sterling example of submissive overcoming faith. *"I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty (weary) land."*

A contrasting perspective to the many victorious examples of lifting up hands to God is found in Proverbs 6:10-11, *"Yet a little sleep, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth (a robber) and thy want as an armed man."* What a picture of pride, spiritual lethargy, and defeat.

AN IMPORTANT FINAL THOUGHT

A critical truth relative to believers lifting up their hands unto the Lord involves respect for the Word of God (the Bible). Psalms 119:48, *"My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved: and I will mediate in thy statutes."* In the time of Judah's restoration from Babylon, there was a great hunger to hear the Word of God. Nehemiah chapter eight details how the scribe Ezra ministered unto the people in an open public forum. When he opened the book, all the people stood up. When Ezra thanked and blessed the Lord, all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with LIFTING UP OF THEIR HANDS; and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord. What a joy it is to see people in this hour render the same respect for God's Holy Word.

The lifting up of hands before God is an often emphasized bible truth. Habakkuk 3:10 declares how the depth of the sea utters its voice and lifts its hands (gigantic waves) to God on high. **How much more should man...who is a much higher and enlightened realm of God's creation.**

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LIFTING UP OF HANDS

By Robert Hooley

*I will therefore that men pray
every where, lifting up holy
hands, without wrath and
doubting.*

1 Timothy 2:8

Is the lifting up of hands a viable, scriptural form of worship today? Does God's Word encourage this phenomena for all believers? If so, what is its purpose and biblical significance?

Psalms 134 begins with the challenge, "Behold, bless ye the Lord, ALL ye servants of the Lord..." Verse two then specifies one way this is accomplished. "Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord."

Hebrews chapter nine reveals that the tabernacle Israel built in Moses' day was patterned after a heavenly edifice. The innermost part was called the Holy of Holies. Here, Israel's high priest entered once yearly to offer a blood sacrifice upon the mercy seat to atone for the nation's sins. This scene was repeated yearly. Old testament sacrificial offerings served as a foreshadow of a perfect sacrifice to come: the death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross of Calvary. Hebrews 9:12 reveals after His resurrection, Jesus ascended into the heavenly Holy of Holies and presented His own blood upon the mercy seat. Hebrews 10:12 says, "...after he had offered ONE SACRIFICE for sins for ever, sat down on the right-hand of God." Verse 14 declares, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Scripture reveals that at opposite ends of the mercy seat dwell two cherubim (angels). Their **uplifted** wings testify of reverence and obedience toward Almighty God. These angelic servants are continuously and gloriously bearing witness to God's merciful plan of salvation made available to mankind.

Israel's great King David speaks about the lifting up of his hands in Psalms 141:2. Like the cherubim, he links this act to his testimony of the sacrifice upon the

altar. In Psalms 63:4 he writes, "Thus will I bless thee while I live. I will lift up my hands in thy name." Lifting up our hands in worship involves a confession of our faith in the substitutionary death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Leviticus 9:22 says after Aaron, Israel's high priest, presented sacrificial offerings, he extended his hands toward the people and blessed them. Today, believers serve a greater high priest than Aaron, his name is Jesus Christ. Luke 24:50-51 identifies his final act following the forty days he was upon earth after His resurrection. "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he LIFTED UP HIS HANDS, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Today, servants of God rightly follow this same pattern in blessing others.

OTHER RELEVANT TRUTHS

In Genesis 14 a coalition of eastern nations attacks cities in the plain of Jordan including Sodom and Gomorrah. They take goods and captives including Lot, Abraham's nephew. Abraham leads a small, but highly trained army to recover the captives and goods. The King of Sodom meets Abraham upon his victorious return. He offers to reward him monetarily, but Abraham refuses to take even a thread or shoe latchet. He didn't want it said that an earthly king had made him rich. Abraham was making it clear that the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, was his source; the one worthy of praise. He says in Genesis 14:22, "...I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth." The Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He is our ultimate source today, and worthy of our uplifted hands in acknowledgment and thanksgiving.

Shortly, after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, the Amalekites fought against them at Rephidim. Joshua led Israel's soldiers in the battle. Moses went to the top of a hill with the rod of God in his hand. Exodus 17:11 says, "...When Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." Moses' brothers, Aaron and Hur, then found a stone for Moses to sit upon. They helped hold his hands up until the going down of the sun. The results are recorded in verse 13, "And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." Here is a clear example how lifting up of hands, in conjunction with believing prayer, constitutes a powerful spiritual weapon.

The Apostle Paul expounds on this important truth in I Timothy 2:8, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." I Kings chapter eight records the lengthy prayer of King Solomon at the dedication of Israel's Temple in Jerusalem. Verse 22 declares, "And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven." Verse 54 states, "And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying...he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven." In Second Samuel 22:35, David speaks about God teaching his hands to war. Humbly lifting up hands to God in prayerful intercession is one way we also learn to be victorious in spiritual warfare.

The great prophet Jeremiah was deeply burdened about the weakened spiritual condition of Judah. To his fellow countrymen, he cries out in Lamentations 2:19, "Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: LIFT UP THY HANDS toward him for the life of thy young children, that