

GOD'S RIGHT HAND

In my high school days it was not uncommon to get into an arm wrestling match with another guy. Although I was right handed, I offered to use my left hand against my opponents. They assumed this would be an easy match, but they did not know that my left arm was actually my secret weapon. It had become very strong from my daily chores on our dairy farm using a shovel or pitchfork. Every day I pitched silage or grass in order to feed the cows. Every day during the summer months, I unloaded a whole wagon full of grass by hand into a cart and then unloaded it as I fed the cows. That daily strength training in my left hand enabled me to surprise my arm wrestling opponents.

In the Bible, the term right hand is mentioned 66 times. It is used as a symbol of strength, power, authority, sovereignty, blessing and an oath. This is likely due to the fact that most people are right handed. Before a person testifies in court today, they are asked to place their left hand on the Bible and raise their right hand and swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Abraham also raised his right hand. It occurred after he won a battle to rescue his nephew Lot and his possessions from neighboring kings who had plundered Sodom and Gomorrah. God most High had been his helper. The king of Sodom then offered the booty to him but Abraham declined with these words:

I have raised my right hand to the Lord God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so you will never be able to say, "I made Abraham rich"
- Genesis 14:22-23 NIV

In years gone by in America and some European countries, people would agree on a deal just with a verbal promise and a handshake. Later it progressed to taking oaths and then to signing legal contracts. [Which helps the lawyer's business :)]. In his book "Holy Fire", R.T. Kendall says that there are two levels by which God communicates to man - the promise level and the oath level. Both are equally true but a promise sometimes implies a condition and an 'if', whereas an oath is as good as done and gives us even more assurance from God.

God gave **promises** to Abraham in Genesis 12:2; 15:5 and 17:6 but in Genesis 22:16-17 he gave the same promise but also added these words of an **oath**.... *'I swear by myself'*

God kept his promises to Abraham including the birth of the nation of Israel, which was called the promised land. We have one too, it is a better country - a heavenly one - Hebrews 11:16. It is ours because God raised his right hand toward us. Before we examine that, let us review how God raised his hand for his people in Old Testament times. After God delivered Israel at the Red Sea, they sang the Song of Moses which included these words.....

Your right hand O Lord, was majestic in power.
Your right hand O Lord, shattered the enemy. - Genesis 15:6 NIV

*Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like like you - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders? You stretched out your **right hand** and the earth swallowed them. - Luke 15:11-12 NIV*

*We have heard with our ears, O God; our fathers have told us what you did in their days, in days long ago. With your **hand** you drove out the nations and planted our Fathers; you crushed the peoples and made our fathers flourish. It was not by their sword that they won the land, nor did their arm bring them victory; it was your **right hand**, your arm, and the **light of your face**, for you loved them. - Psalm 44:1-3 NIV*

The beaming face of a parent towards a child can be an encouragement and a sign of favor for them. Over the years I have observed that children who are loved and affirmed by their parents are likely to be high achievers in life. We even see this exemplified in the life of Jesus. Just before he embarked on his 3 1/2 years of public ministry, his Father in heaven affirmed his pleasure and affection for him when he said - ***This is my Son whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.*** We all need cheerleaders who root for us. Thankfully, we have a good one..... God's right hand man. When we behold his face, the glory of God can be seen.

- 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:6

In history, when a high ranking person put someone at his right hand, they were giving them equal authority, honor and dignity to operate on their behalf. In other words.....they were trusted! David had a prophecy about that person.

*The LORD says to my Lord; sit at my **right hand** until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. - Psalm 110:1*

The above verse is the most quoted in the New Testament. God's right hand man even quoted it himself. - Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42-43. Who is this man?

JESUS IS GOD'S RIGHT HAND MAN

*“Let your hand rest on the **man at your right hand**, the son of man you have raised up for yourself. Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name. Restore us, O Lord God Almighty; **make your face shine upon us**, that we may be saved.”
Psalm 80:17-19 NIV*

God's face shone upon Stephen as he faced hostile resistance from the Jewish religious leaders due to his message that Jesus was the Messiah.

All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. - Acts 6:15 NIV

The Sanhedrin were incensed when he recounted Israel's history and chastised them for being like their fathers who always resisted the Holy Spirit and even killed the prophets who prophesied the coming Messiah. Now he passionately pointed them out as the ones that had killed the Messiah!

When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He said: Look, I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. - Acts 7:54-56 NIV

We know from other scriptures, that after Jesus was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven, he **sat down** at the Father's right hand. That was a sign not only that he had completed his initial mission to planet earth and could rest from his labor of love there - but now he could assume his rightful place of authority over all kingdoms and authorities. - Mark 16:19, Ephesians 1:20-23. However, the above passage speaks of Jesus standing, not sitting. Perhaps He wanted Stephen to see Him standing to let him know that he was standing up for him, and that he was ready to welcome him to his heavenly reward.

When we are willing to stand up for Jesus here on earth, it is assuring to know that Jesus is in heaven standing up for us !!

Peter preached this message in the first sermon to the early church.

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. - Acts 2:32-36.

Our new blood covenant inheritance comes from the glorified Jesus and includes blessing and authority from his right hand. On the island of Patmos, John had a supernatural encounter with the glorified risen Lord.

*In His right hand he held seven stars.....Rev. 1:16a
(the 7 stars represent the 7 churches)*

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. Then He placed his right hand on me and said: Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.....Rev. 1:17

The final mention of a right hand in the Bible is something quite different.

*He was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and give all who refused to worship the image to be killed. He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a **mark on his right hand** or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark.....*
- Revelation 13:15-17 NIV

Those who receive the mark of the beast come under his authority. Revelation 13 gives us more details about the beast system. There are two beasts described. The first is a **Leopard-Beast**. He is *blasphemous* v.1, *resembles a leopard, bear and lion* v.2, (see Daniel 7:3-6 re: the world power) He gets his *power, throne* and *great authority from the dragon* v.2,. Has a fatal wound that is healed and thus the whole world is astonished by the beast and follows him v.3. For 42 months he *slanders* God, His dwelling place, those who live in heaven v6. His given power to make war against God's saints and to conquer them. All earth's inhabitants worship the beast except those whose name are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

*This calls for **patient endurance** and **faithfulness** on the part of the saints.*
- Revelation 13:10b

Another beast appears on the scene whose actions are similar to the Leopard-Beast. He is the **Lamb-Beast**. He portrays himself as a Christ-like figure in some ways, but he is a false Christ and deceiver and causes people to accept his mark. He is anti-Christ. Anti means against, but it also can mean 'in place of'. The Lamb Beast seeks the throne of God (because he is empowered by the dragon, Satan himself.).

The book of Revelation has many interpretations, but some things we can be certain of. It reveals the battle of good versus evil and its ultimate conflict and resolution. The battle is for the souls of mankind, but it is also the conflict over power and worship. Lucifer wanted God's throne and he wanted to be worshiped. God quickly cast him out of heaven. Satan's rebellion came to this earth where he has sought those same two things for himself, **power and worship**.

*God wants the best for us. He knows that when we **submit to His authority** and **worship Him**, we will experience Him, enjoy His life and all the benefits that the Lamb of God purchased for us through the shedding of his blood, which includes a **glorious heavenly home**.*

*Those who follow the beast system will end up like animals headed for the slaughter.
They will exist forever in*

ENDLESS DARKNESS WITHOUT GOD where there is
*no love no light no comfort no water no sleep no rest no joy
no friendship no fellowship no music no peace no quiet no hope*

God has better plans for those who follow the Lamb of God.
Jesus came as **Savior** to deal with our past of sin, guilt and shame.
Jesus came as **Lord** to lead us into the promised land of the kingdom of
heaven, which begins now and into eternity.

God is light.....walk in His light

God is love.....live in His love

God is life.....enjoy His life

God is goodreceive all His benefits

God is holyworship Him in awe

God is wise.....follow His wisdom

God is faithful.....walk by faith and not by sight or the 5 senses

Jesus is at God's Right HandBe strong and courageous!

