



*The Hand Of God*

*Is Upon You*

*A Teaching Outline*

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## God's Hands on People

### The hand of God on Ezekiel

#### **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.)

The name *Ezekiel* means "God is strong" or "God strengthens." In a very real sense, this sums up the basic message of the book: that in spite of the captivity, God's sovereign strength prevails, and he will judge his enemies and restore his true people.

#### **Ezekiel 3:22**

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 recognized his helplessness before God and fell face down in his presence. Sometimes our prosperity, popularity, or physical strength blinds us to our spiritual helplessness. But nothing we do on our own can accomplish much for God. Only when God is in control of our wills can we accomplish great tasks for him. The first step to being God's person is to admit that you need his help; then you can begin to see what God can really do in your life.

#### **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.

This vision illustrates the promise of chapter 36—new life and a nation restored, both physically and spiritually. The dry bones are a picture of the Jews in captivity—scattered and dead. The two pieces of wood (37:15-17) represent the reunion of the entire nation of Israel that had divided into northern and southern kingdoms after Solomon. The scattered exiles of both Israel and Judah would be released from the "graves" of exile and one day regathered in their homeland, with the Messiah as their leader. This vision has yet to be fulfilled. Ezekiel felt he was

speaking to the dead as he preached to the exiles because they rarely responded to his message. But these bones responded! And just as God brought life to the dead bones, he would bring life again to his spiritually dead people.

### **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 building of the Temple envisioned a time of complete restoration to the exiles, a time when God would return to his people. The Temple was built from 520 to 515 B.C. (see Ezra 5-6) but fell short of Ezekiel's plan (Haggai 2:3; Zechariah 4:10).

This vision of the Temple has been interpreted in four main ways:

- (1) This is the Temple Zerubbabel should have built from 520 to 515 B.C. and is the actual blueprint Ezekiel intended. But due to disobedience (43:2-10), it was never followed.
- (2) This is a literal Temple to be rebuilt during the millennial reign of Christ.
- (3) This Temple is symbolic of the true worship of God by the Christian church right now.
- (4) This Temple is symbolic of the future and eternal reign of God when his presence and blessing fill the earth.

Whether the Temple is literal or symbolic, it seems clear that this is a vision of God's final perfect Kingdom. This gave hope to the people of Ezekiel's time who had just seen their nation and its Temple destroyed with no hope of rebuilding it in the near future. The details given in this vision gave the people even more hope that what Ezekiel saw had come from God and would surely happen in the future.

## **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.

This prophecy's date corresponds to 592 B.C. The message of chapters 8-11 is directed specifically toward Jerusalem and its leaders. Chapter 8 records Ezekiel being taken in a vision from Babylon to the Temple in Jerusalem to see the great wickedness being practiced there. The people and their religious leaders were thoroughly corrupt. While Ezekiel's first vision (chapters 1-3) showed that judgment was from God, this vision showed that their sin was the reason for judgment.

## **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.

Near the beginning of his ministry, Ezekiel had been unable to speak except to give specific messages from God (3:26, 27). After Ezekiel's prophecies came true and the false prophets were exposed, Ezekiel was again able to talk freely. No longer needing to prove himself, he was free to offer God's message of restoration and hope.

## **The hand of the Lord was on Elijah**

### **1 Kings 18:46**

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

After killing Baal's prophets, Elijah ran from the furious Queen Jezebel. He fled to Beersheba, then into the wilderness, and finally to Mount Sinai. There, like Moses centuries earlier, he talked with God.

Elijah ran the six miles back to the city in order to give Ahab a last chance to turn from his sin before joining Jezebel in Jezreel. His run also ensured that the correct story of what happened would reach 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.

In Old Testament times music often accompanied prophecy (1 Chronicles 25:1).

### **The hand of God on Jabez**

## **1 Chronicles 4:10**

Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that You would bless me indeed and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that You would keep me from harm that it may not pain me!" And God granted him what he requested.

Jabez is remembered for a prayer request rather than a heroic act.

In his prayer, he asked God to

- (1) Bless him,
- (2) Help him in his work ("expand my territory"),
- (3) Be with him in all he did, and
- (4) Keep him from trouble and pain. Jabez acknowledged God as the true center of his life.

When we pray for God's blessing, we should also ask him to take his rightful position as Lord over our work, our family time, and our recreation. Obeying him in daily responsibilities *is* heroic living.

Jabez prayed specifically to be protected from trouble and pain. We live in a fallen world filled with sin, and it is important to ask God to keep us safe from the unavoidable evil that comes our way.

But we must also avoid evil motives, desires, and actions that begin within us. Therefore, not only must we seek God's protection from evil, but we must also ask God to guard our thoughts and actions. We can begin to utilize his protection by filling our mind with positive thoughts and attitudes.

### **God's hand is on the Son of Man.**

#### **Psalm 80:17**

Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, upon the son of man whom you made strong for yourself.

"The son of your choice" is probably not the Messiah but Israel, whom God calls elsewhere his "firstborn son" (Exodus 4:22). The psalm writer is making a plea that God would restore his mercy to Israel, the people he chose to bring his message into the world.

### **The hand of God was upon David**

#### **1 Chronicles 28:19**

"All this," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern.

David advised Solomon not to be frightened about the size of his task as king and builder of the Temple. Fear can immobilize us. The size of a job, its risks, or the pressure of the situation can cause us to freeze and do nothing. One remedy for fear is found here: Don't focus on the fear; instead, get to work. Getting started is often the most difficult and frightening part of a job.

## **The hand of God was with the child.**

### **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.

Zechariah praised God with his first words after months of silence. In a song that is often called the *Benedictus* after the first words in the Latin translation of this passage, Zechariah prophesied the coming of a Savior who would redeem his people and predicted that his son, John, would prepare the Messiah's way.

All the Old Testament prophecies were coming true—no wonder Zechariah praised God! The Messiah would come in Zechariah's lifetime, and his son had been chosen to pave the way.

## **The hand of God was with Ezra**

### **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.

### **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.

Eighty years after the first exiles returned to Jerusalem (2:1), Ezra himself returned. This was his first trip, and it took four months. The Temple had been standing for about 58 years. Up to this point in the narrative, Ezra had remained in Babylon, probably compiling a record of the events that had taken place.

Why did he have to ask the king if he could return? Ezra wanted to lead many Jews back to Jerusalem, and he needed a decree from the king stating that any Jew who wanted to return could do so.

This decree would be like a passport in case they ran into opposition along the way. The king's generous decree showed that God was blessing Ezra (7:6, 28). It also indicated that Ezra was probably a prominent man in Artaxerxes' kingdom. He was willing to give up this position in order to return to his homeland and teach the Israelites God's laws.

Ezra demonstrates how a gifted Bible teacher can move God's people forward. He was effective because he was a well-versed student of the law of the Lord and because he was determined to obey those laws. He taught through both his speaking and his example. Like Ezra, we should determine both to study and to obey God's W

### **He was strengthen according the hand of the Lord**

#### **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.

Ezra praised God for all that God had done for him and through him. Ezra had honored God throughout his life, and God chose to honor him. Ezra could have assumed that his own greatness and charisma had won over the king and his princes, but he gave the credit to God. We, too, should be grateful to God for our success and not think that we did it in our own power.

#### **Ezra 8:18**

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;

Ezra's progress back to Jerusalem was halted while he waited to recruit Levites. God had called these men to a special service, and yet few were willing to volunteer when their services were needed. God has gifted each of us with abilities so we can make a contribution to his kingdom work (Romans 12:4-8). Don't wait to be recruited, but look for opportunities to volunteer.

Don't hinder God's work by holding back. "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another" (1 Peter 4:10).

### **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.

Every object used in Temple service was dedicated to God; each was considered a holy treasure to be guarded carefully and set apart for his special use. *Stewardship* means taking special care of whatever God has entrusted to you. This means considering what God has given to you as being *from* him and for his use. What has God entrusted to your care?

### **The hand of God was upon Nehemiah**

### **Nehemiah 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.

After his prayer, Nehemiah asked the king for permission to go to Judah. As soon as he got a positive answer, he began asking for additional help. Sometimes when we have needs, we hesitate to ask the right people for help because we are afraid to approach them. Not Nehemiah! He went directly to the person who could help him the most. Don't be reluctant to ask those who are most able to help. They may be more interested and approachable than you think. God's answers to prayer may come as a result of our asking others.

Nehemiah had position, power, and many good organizational skills, but he acknowledged that God's gracious hand was upon him. He knew that without God's strength, his efforts would be in vain. Do you acknowledge God as your power source and the giver of your gifts?

## **Nehemiah 2:18**

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.

Spiritual renewal often begins with one person's vision. Nehemiah had a vision, and he shared it with enthusiasm, inspiring Jerusalem's leaders to rebuild the walls.

We frequently underestimate people and don't challenge them with our dreams for God's work in the world. When God plants an idea in your mind to accomplish something for him, share it with others and trust the Holy Spirit to impress them with similar thoughts. Don't regard yourself as the only one through whom God is working. Often God uses one person to express the vision and others to turn it into reality. When you encourage and inspire others, you put teamwork into action to accomplish God's goals.

**The hand of God gives favor to all who seek him.**

## **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 and the people traveled approximately 900 miles on foot. The trip took them through dangerous and difficult territory and lasted about four months. They prayed that God would give them a safe journey. Our journeys today may not be as difficult and dangerous as Ezra's, but we should recognize our need to ask God for guidance and protection.

Before making all the physical preparations for the journey, Ezra made spiritual preparations. Their prayers and fasting prepared them spiritually and showed their dependence on God for protection, their faith that God was in control, and their affirmation that they were not strong enough to make the trip without him. When we take time to put God first in any endeavor, we are preparing well for whatever lies ahead.

Ezra knew God's promises to protect his people, but he didn't take them for granted. He also knew that God's blessings are appropriated through prayer, so Ezra and the people humbled themselves by fasting and praying. And their prayers were answered. Fasting humbled them because going without food was a reminder of their complete dependence on God. Fasting also gave them more time to pray and meditate on God.

Too often we pray glibly and superficially. Serious prayer, by contrast, requires concentration. It puts us in touch with God's will and can really change us. Without serious prayer, we reduce God to a quick-service pharmacist with painkillers for our every ailment.

### **The hand of God touched Daniel**

#### **Daniel 10:10**

Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.

Daniel was frightened by this vision, but the messenger reassured him. Daniel lost his speech, but the messenger's touch restored it. Daniel felt weak and helpless, but the messenger's words strengthened him. God can bring us healing when we are hurt, peace when we are troubled, and strength when we are weak. Trust God to minister to you as he did to Daniel.

### **Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.**

#### **1 Peter 5:6**

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

Both young and old can benefit from Peter's instructions. Pride often keeps older people from trying to understand young people and keeps young people from listening to those who are older. Peter told both young and old to be humble and to serve each other. Young men should follow the leadership of older men, who should lead by example. Respect those who are older than you, listen to those younger than you, and be humble enough to admit that you can learn from others.

We often worry about our position and status, hoping to get proper recognition for what we do. But Peter advises us to remember that God's recognition counts more than human praise. God is able and willing to bless us according to his timing. Humbly obey God regardless of present circumstances, and in his good time—either in this life or in the next—he will honor you.

Carrying your worries, stresses, and daily struggles by yourself shows that you have not trusted God fully with your life. It takes humility, however, to recognize that God cares, to admit your need, and to let others in God's family help you. Sometimes we think that struggles caused by our own sin and foolishness are not God's concern. But when we turn to God in repentance, he will bear the weight even of those struggles. Letting God have your anxieties calls for action, not passivity. Don't submit to circumstances but to the Lord, who controls circumstance.

**An invitation is given to open your heart's door.**

**Rev. 3:20**

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

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