

A person is shown from the back, with their arms raised in a gesture of praise or worship. They are silhouetted against a bright, multi-pointed starburst light in a clear blue sky. The overall scene is peaceful and spiritual.

Uplifted Hands To Praise the LORD!

A Teaching Outline

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Lifting up holy hands

1 Timothy 2:8

Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.

Besides displeasing God, anger and controversy make prayer difficult. That is why Jesus said that we should interrupt our prayers, if necessary, to make peace with others (Matthew 5:23, 24). God wants us to obey him immediately and thoroughly. Our goal should be to have a right relationship with God and also with others.

He lifted his hands and blessed the people.

Leviticus 9:22

Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings.

Moses said to the people, "This is what the LORD has commanded you to do so that the glory of the LORD may appear to you." Moses, Aaron, and the people then got to work and followed God's instructions. Soon after, the glory of the Lord appeared.

When Moses lifted his hands, Israel prevailed.

Exodus 17:11

So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed.

Aaron and Hur stood by Moses' side and held up his arms to ensure victory against Amalek.

We need to "hold up the hands" of our spiritual leaders as well. Shouldering some responsibility, lending a word of encouragement, or offering a prayer are ways of refreshing spiritual leaders in their work.

Solomon spread his hands toward heaven.

1 Kings 8:22

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven.

In his prayer of dedication, Solomon declared that even the highest heavens cannot contain God. Isn't it amazing that, though the heavens can't contain God, he is willing to live in the hearts of those who love him? The God of the universe takes up residence in his people.

Ezra lifted his hands and bowed low.

Nehemiah 8:6

Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

Nehemiah was motivated by his relationship with God, and he devoted his life to doing God's will in a secular world. Such people are crucial to God's work in all aspects of life.

Lift your hands and say, as I live forever.

Deuteronomy 32:40

'Indeed, I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, as I live forever.

Moses urged the people to think about God's word and teach it to their children.

Lift your hands in the name of the Lord.

Psalm 63:4

So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in your name.

Hiding from his enemies in the barren wilderness of Judah, David was intensely lonely. He longed for a friend he could trust to ease his loneliness. No wonder he cried out, "O God,... My soul thirsts for you... in this parched and weary land." If you are lonely or thirsty for something lasting in your life, remember David's prayer. God alone can satisfy our deepest longings!

I will lift my hands to God's commands.

Psalm 119:48

And I shall lift up my hands to your commandments, which I love; and I will meditate on your statutes.

Obedying God's laws does not inhibit or restrain us. Instead, it frees us to be what God designed us to be. By seeking God's salvation and forgiveness, we have freedom from sin and the resulting oppressive guilt. By living God's way, we have freedom to fulfill God's plan for our lives.

God's Word makes us wise—wiser than our enemies and wiser than any teachers who ignore it. True wisdom goes beyond amassing knowledge; it is *applying* knowledge in a life-changing way. Intelligent or experienced people are not necessarily wise. Wisdom comes from allowing God's teachings to guide us.

I will lift my hands to God's Holy Sanctuary.

Psalm 28:2

Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands toward your holy sanctuary.

David, in his royal position, may have met many who pretended friendship only to meet their own needs. David knew that God would punish these people eventually, but he prayed that their punishment would come swiftly. True believers should be straightforward and sincere in all their relationships.

Lift your hands to the evening offering.

Psalm 141:2

May my prayer be counted as incense before you; the lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

David wisely asked God to keep him from speaking evil—even as he underwent persecution. Jesus himself was silent before his accusers (Matthew 26:63). Knowing the power of the tongue, we would do well to ask God to guard what we say so that our words will bring honor to his

name.

Lift your hands and bless the Lord.

Psalm 134:2

Lift up your hands to the sanctuary and bless the LORD.

This psalm is about a very small group—the Levites who served as Temple watchmen. Singing this psalm, the last of the "songs of ascent" (Psalms 120-134), and the worshipers would ascend the hill where the Temple sat and see the watchmen who protected it day and night. They saw the watchmen's work as an act of praise to God, done reverently and responsibly. Make your job or your responsibility in the church an act of praise by doing it with reverence to God.

Lift your hands to God for the life of your children.

Lamentations 2:19

"Arise, cry aloud in the night At the beginning of the night watches; Pour out your heart like water Before the presence of the Lord; Lift up your hands to Him For the life of your little ones Who are faint because of hunger At the head of every street."

The people's suffering and sin should have brought them to the Lord, weeping for forgiveness. Only when our prideful, independent hearts are broken over sin can God come to our rescue. Just feeling sorry about experiencing sin's consequences does not bring forgiveness. But if we cry out to God in repentance, he will forgive us.

I will lift my heart and hands toward God in heaven.

Lamentations 3:41

We lift up our heart and hands Toward God in heaven.

God disciplined Judah to produce right living and genuine worship. We must not complain about corrective or instructive discipline in our lives but learn from it, trusting God and being willing to change. We must allow God's correction to bring about the kind of behavior in our life that pleases him.

I will stretch my hands to the Lord my God.

Ezra 9:5

But at the evening offering I arose from my humiliation, even with my garment and my robe torn, and I fell on my knees and stretched out my hands to the LORD my God;

Ezra confessed the sins of his people. Although he had not sinned in the way his people had, he identified with their sins. With weeping, he expressed shame for sin, fear of the consequences, and desire that the people would come to their senses and repent. His prayer moved the people to tears (10:1). Ezra demonstrated the need for a holy community around the rebuilt Temple.

The angel stretched his hands toward him who lives forever.

Daniel 12:7

I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who

lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.

"The holy people" seem to be shattered again and again throughout history. God's recurring purpose in this is to break the pride and self-sufficiency of his rebellious people and to bring them to accept him as their Lord.

Lift your hands and your enemy will be cut off.

Micah 5:9

Your hand will be lifted up against your adversaries, and all your enemies will be cut off.

When God rules in his eternal Kingdom, our strength and deliverance will not be found in military might but in God's almighty power. God will destroy all the weapons that people use for security. Armies will not be needed because God will rule in the heart of every person. Instead of being overwhelmed by fear of invasion or nuclear attack, we should have confidence in God.

The deep uttered its voice and lifted high its hands.

Habakkuk 3:10

The mountains saw you and quaked; the downpour of waters swept by. The deep uttered forth its voice, it lifted high its hands.

Habakkuk knew that God was going to discipline the people of Judah and that it wasn't going to be a pleasant experience. But Habakkuk accepted God's will, asking for help and mercy. Habakkuk did not ask to escape the discipline, but he accepted the truth that Judah needed to learn a lesson.

God still disciplines in love to bring his children back to him.

Jesus lifted his hands and blessed his disciples.

Luke 24:50

And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

As the disciples stood and watched, Jesus began rising into the air, and soon he disappeared into heaven. Seeing Jesus leave must have been frightening, but the disciples knew that Jesus would keep his promise to send the Holy Spirit to be with them. This same Jesus, who lived with the disciples, who died and was buried, and who rose from the dead, loves us and promises to be with us always. We can get to know him better by studying the Scriptures, praying, and allowing the Holy Spirit to make us more like Jesus.

The angel lifted his right hand toward heaven.

Revelation 10:5

Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven.

The purpose of this mighty angel is clear—to announce the final judgments on the earth. His right foot on the sea and left foot on the land (10:2) indicate that his words deal with all creation, not just a limited part as did the seal and trumpet judgments. The seventh trumpet (11:15) will usher in the seven bowl judgments, which will bring an end to the present world. When this universal judgment comes, God's truth will prevail.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

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.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

New American Standard Bible

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print