

Upon The Palms Of My Hands

Isaiah 49:13-16



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FOCAL Read Responsively Isaiah 49:13-16 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. {14} **But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.** {15} Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. {16} **Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.**

God loves His people with an undying and everlasting love. He loves His Israel, and He loves His Church. Both Israel as well as the Church were covenant promises that God made to His servant **Abraham**. The Lord told Abraham in **Genesis 12:2-3**, “**I will make you a great nation**”. Though Abraham was childless, and well past his child bearing years, the Lord promised that dear old soul “if you but believe, I will bless”. The Bible tells us that

Romans 4:3 ... Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Abraham believed God. Abraham trusted God with all his heart, and followed the Lord where ever he led. God would make Abraham a great nation when He would call a people out of Egypt called **Israel**. But God would not only promise Abraham a **great nation**, but would also promise “**in you, dear Abraham, shall all the families of the earth be blessed**”. Here the Lord prophesied of His Bride, that Body He would call His **Church**. Though

Israel dominates Old Testament prophecy the Lord always knew that He would raise up for Himself a people from among the Gentiles. God loves Israel, and sent Jesus Christ to be the Savior of Israel *first*. Jesus was born of Israel, born in the lineage of King David, born of a virgin in the Tribe of Judah. The saddest statement in Scripture is that Messiah **came unto His own, but His own people would not receive Him (John 1:11)**. Jesus would be the prophesied **root of Jesse** that came to save God's Israel – yet Israel would not receive Him. God's Israel became unbelieving and ungodly over time. Her religious leaders (like many local Churches today) became more concerned with politics and rituals than they were with loving the Lord their God. Israel became infused with unbelievers who, misunderstanding God, they thought that physical birth gave them right to the Kingdom of God. They couldn't have been more wrong.

Dear friend, **Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness**. No one is *physically* born into the Kingdom of God. No one is saved because their parents happened to be Jews. Jesus Christ told the Jews who boasted in their physical birth:

John 8:42-44 If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. ... Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do...

Those who belong to God's True Israel *love Jesus*. They, like Abraham before them, **saw Jesus as Messiah and rejoiced (John 8:56)**.

True Israel is believing Israel, and believing Israel loves the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Nicodemus – a master teacher of Israel came to see Jesus – the Lord quickly told him **“Nicodemus, you must be *born again*” (John 3:3)**. That first physical birth will not get you into Heaven. The fact that you're a high placed and well respected Jew will not get you into Heaven. **“You must be born again, not of mortal seed, but of immortal, by the Word of God that abides forever” (1 Peter 1:23)**. Dear friend, though we love Israel, the Scripture tells us **“they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Romans 9:6)**. Being born an Israelite will not save you, but being *born again* by faith in Christ will!

A True Church is a believing Church, and a believing Church loves the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just as physical birth as an Israelite does not save you, even so physical birth cannot save the Gentile. Dear friends you are not saved because you grew up in Church. You are *not* saved because your parents are Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Pentecostal or “non-denominational”. Human parentage gives none – absolutely no one - entry into God's Heaven. You can only be a child of God the same way that Abraham was a child of God – you must believe in Jesus Christ. The Scripture tells us:

Galatians 3:26-29 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. {29} And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Are you saved because you were born a “Jew”? No! But you are saved because you were *born again by faith in Christ Jesus*. Are you saved because you are an upper class Gentile, a “Greek”? No! But you are saved because you were *born again by faith in Christ Jesus*. **You are all one in Christ Jesus – if you have believed in Him.** You are one with God. You are **Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise God made to Abraham.** You belong to God, because you called on God and were saved. God says for you, whether you be believing Israel or believing Church, **“Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands”**.

Is your life in His nail scarred hands? If so, rejoice! Sing with the angels of Heaven, and let joy fill your hearts. **“for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted”**. How do we know that God is there with us at all times? Because He has **graven us upon the palms of His hands**.

1. What A Precious Promise God Gives To His Children!

FOCAL Isaiah 49:16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

Have you called upon Jesus Christ and been saved? If so, consider this wonderful sentence. Look at the first word,

“Behold”. This is a word of excitement, a word of astonishment.

All of Heaven and Earth would not be astonished to see the name of God engraved on the palms of His hands, for His Name is Holy (**Psalm 103:1**). God is righteous, and God is right. We would not be astonished to see the names of Michael the Arch Angel, or Gabriel the Arch Trumpeter of Heaven written on the palms of God's hands. These angels, unlike Lucifer, have been faithful and true. Yet the Lord has not written His own Name in His palms, nor the holy angels, but **behold**, He has written the names of those who have believed in Him in that wondrous place. Can you imagine that? When we compare ourselves with God we must say along with **Bildad**:

Job 25:4-6 How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? {5} Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. {6} How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?

We are nothing, yet our little faith causes Infinite God to do the unimaginable. **“Behold, I have graven thee”**. Note that we did not do this great thing, but God – in His infinite mercy – did this.

The text tells us **I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands**. It was not our goodness, our rituals, our prayers, our repentance, or our tears that put our names on His palms.

We who are saved cried out to God,

Psalms 109:26 Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:

and He heard our prayer. Doesn't this thought overwhelm your soul, Beloved of God? He Himself carved your names into His hands! It was not that the clay helped the Potter form it. We had nothing to do with our salvation – He did it all. And our God rejoiced in the doing of it. The Bible says that the Lord spoke into existence the Heavens and the Earth He did so from a distance. He *spoke* and it was. **“Let there be light” and there was light (Genesis 1:3)**. This He did by distance. When He created the Heavens and the earth the Bible tells us **“the morning stars sang together” (Job 38:7)**, yet we do not see God singing over creation. Yet when a soul comes to Him by faith He **engraves us on the palms of His hands**. Those whom He saves the Bible says:

Zephaniah 3:17 He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in his love, He will joy over thee with singing.

God bursts into song when He saves a soul. Our Lord said **(Luke 15:7, 10) ..” joy shall be in heaven over one**

sinner that repenteth”. **“There is joy in Heaven in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth”**.

God is overjoyed to save His people, and each believer is to Him precious indeed. Your Name is in His hands.

You belong to Him, dear believer, if you have called upon the Name of Jesus. We are His possession. **Ye are bought with a price – glorify God! (1 Corinthians 6:20)**.

1 Peter 1:18-19 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; {19} But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

You were purchased by God, you, dear Christian, were bought with a terrible price. God did not pay silver or gold for you, but His own precious Blood. Look in the palms of His hands. The text tells us **I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands**.

In the history of eternity there has never been a time when God has forgiven an unpunished violation of His Law. Never! Never! Look in the palms of His hands and what do you see? Nail scars! *Nail scars!*

Galatians 3:13-14 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, **Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: {14} That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;** that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

These terrible wounds, these **graven marks** cry out to you and to all the angels and saints of Heaven **“It is finished”**. You are graven in the palms of His hands. The holes there remind you that He paid your debt. He paid *all* of your debt. All that is you is in the palms of His hands. Your person, your works, your temptations, your weaknesses, your wants, your *everything* is graven in His hands. There are those who believe that a Christian may be saved one day, lost the next – what utter foolishness! It was God Who engraved you on the palms of His hands. It was Infinite and All Knowing God Who engraved *you* – knowing all about you – on the palms of His hands. It was infinite and never changing God Who engraved mortal you on His immortal hands. The Scripture tells us:

Hebrews 1:10-12 And, **Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: {11} They shall perish; but thou remainest;** and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; {12} And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but **thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.**

The works of God's hands shall perish when He Himself remains. And you, dear believer, are **graven in the**

palms of His hands. But look further.

You are **graven in the palms** of His hands. The palms are protected.

ILLUSTRATE When God smites the enemy with His fist, we who are in His hands are protected. God's people have always been protected. The **Hebrew children** cast into the fiery furnace were safe because they were graven in the palms of God's hands. **Daniel** was as safe as a baby in his crib though he be thrown in with the lions, for he was engraved in the palms of the hands of God. When God looks to His right hand of blessing He sees the graven ones, those who are saved by faith in Christ. When He stretches out His left hand of justice to say **“depart, ye cursed”**, it cannot be the child of God who is cursed, for He sees us in that palm as well. Rejoice, O Christian, for

Hebrews 13:5-6 ... **he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. {6} So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper,** and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

2. Apply This Promise To Your Current Situation

FOCAL Isaiah 49:13-16 ... the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. {14} But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. {15} **Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?**

yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. {16}
Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands ...

There are times in all our lives when God's people lose their focus.

The David who stood before King Saul, willing to battle Goliath, said:

1 Samuel 17:37 ... The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. ...

Yet this same David, once he stops focusing on loving and serving the God of his salvation, allows himself to despair.

1 Samuel 27:1 And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul...

The Elijah, focused on the God of his salvation, cried out to unbelieving Israel:

1 Kings 18:21 ... How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.

The Christ-focused **Elijah** defeated the enemies of God, calling down fire from Heaven. The Christ-focused Elijah saw 450 prophets of Baal put to death. Yet when Elijah lost his focus and looked instead at the threats of

Queen Jezebel he fell into deep and dark despair, saying:

1 Kings 19:4 ... It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

Elijah and David, along with a host of other believers, lose the battle when they begin to compare their trial against their own inabilities. We *are* unable to do, to conquer, to be – but God is *always able*.

ILLUSTRATE If I have a flat tire on my car it is impossible for me to change that tire with no more than my hands. I must rely on a *jack* and a *tire iron* as well as a *level piece of ground* and a *unflat tire*. I cannot do it, but I can correct the problem *through* these tools. So it is with life's trials. So often we lose focus and begin to think about tackling the problem with *our hands*. This is foolish, for we are unable. It was not Elijah's mighty sermon that drew fire down on the prophets of Baal, but it was the faithfulness of God. It was not David's prowess that killed Goliath, but it was the faithfulness of God. When

1 Samuel 30:6 ... David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

He stopped making his own decisions and began to seek God's solution. God loves His people. You are graven on the palms of His hands! Will God **“deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee” (Job 5:19)**, and yet, in an eighth trouble forsake you? Hear God's promise:

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

Can you imagine a mother, bearing and nursing a child, forgetting that child? It is possible – though not probable – that such a thing could occur. But God *will not forget*. He loves those whom He had engraved in the palms of His hands. God said “**a nursing mother may forget – but not I. I will never forget My people**”. God's Israel at times became faithless and sinful, and as a result God punished them. If you have wandered away from God heed His Word, for He has promised:

Isaiah 54:8-10 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. {9} For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. {10} For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

Those whom God has saved He corrects, but He never forsakes them. How can He?

We are graven in the palms of His hands. God is focused on us. If we will be victorious in this life, we

must be focused on Him.

What is the hope of the believer? Heed the Psalmist, who said:

2 Samuel 22:2-4 And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; {3} The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my savior; thou savest me from violence. {4} I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

The hope of the Christian is the sure and certain promise of God. The assurance of the believer is the faithfulness of the Almighty. When trials come do not seek an escape. Surrender instead unto God. Do as the Scripture commands:

1 Peter 5:6-11 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: {7} Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. {8} Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: {9} Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. {10} But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. {11} To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Humble yourselves under His mighty hand, knowing that **you are engraved in the palms of those hands**. Kneel to Him, call upon Him, focus on Him, trust in Him. As the old song states:

**My hope is built on nothing less,
Than Jesus' Blood and righteousness,
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' Name.**

**When darkness seems to hide His face,
I rest on His unchanging grace.
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.**

**On Christ the solid Rock I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand!**

3. Our Text Puts Upon ALL OF Us A DUTY

FOCAL Isaiah 49:16 Behold, **I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands ...**

Consider this, dear believers. If God has **graven you upon the palms of His hands** then we are to be a blessed and fragrant part of everything He touches. Though we are saved by His action – **He engraved us on the palms of His hands**, or as the Apostle put it:

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

{9} Not of works, lest any man should boast.

yet we who are saved work in partnership with Him. God saved us and left us on this earth to be used of Him.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are engraved in the palms of His hands. Everything God touches also touches us. Everything we touch we should touch in His Name.

When God spoke to the Church in the Revelation He repeatedly said:

Revelation 3:1-2 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis I have not found thy works perfect before God.

Revelation 3:8 {to Philadelphia} I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Revelation 3:15 {to Laodicea} I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Rest assured, if we are **engraved in the palms of His hands** then God knows our works. If you are saved then you want to work in partnership with God. If you are

saved, **engraved in the palms of His hands**, then people will see Christ in you.

But if you merely *profess* salvation and are not **engraved in the palms of His hands** then you will never be able to work the works of God. Those who are not His **“profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:16)**. I pray, dear friend, that this is not the case with you. God would have all saved, would have all **engraved upon the palms of His hands**. The Lord is **“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)**. God wants you – but you must come. God wishes to save you – but you must repent. As **C.H. Spurgeon** said:

“The graver's tool was the nail, backed by the hammer. He must be fastened to the Cross, that His people might be truly graven on the palms of His hands. There is much consolation here. We know that what a man has won with great pain he will keep with great tenacity. Child of God, you cost Christ too much for Him to forget you. He recollects every pang He suffered in Gethsemane, and every groan He uttered for you upon the Cross. The graving upon His hands brings to His recollection the redemptive price which He paid down that you might be set free. ... Look straight away now to those dear wounds of Christ; look straight to Him; and if you perish trusting in Christ, you will be the first sinner that ever perished there. ... But it can never be. “Him that

cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.”¹

If you do not know Him, will you not heed His call and come unto Him this very day? May God touch your hearts with His Word!

¹ C.H. Spurgeon, *God's Memorial Of His People* number 3441, preached January 14th, 1915 at Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.