

Names of Christ - The Arm (Quality: Good)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 September 1991

Preacher: Matrunola, Kenneth (1937-1994)

[0 : 0 0] I want to speak for a little time before we turn to prayer, taking up another of the names of our God, particularly of Christ in the Old Testament.

We've been looking on Thursdays for a little time on several of these names that are true of our dear Saviour. And last week we were thinking of Christ as the rock, the rock that followed Israel in the wilderness, the rock of our salvation, the rock of Israel.

And when we came to look at the rock, I said to you that as we consider the great rocks that are in the earth, we marvel at their hardness, we marvel at their strength, and that sense of their durability, that they have lasted and will last through the years.

And God, in the use of rock as one of his own names, is condescending to employ that figure, causing us to see that he is the eternal God, that he is that rock, that he is that one who is strong on the behalf of his people.

Now what we come to look at tonight is very similar in the respect that we have various things which belong to creation, and yet which God has been pleased to show have a peculiar meaning, and a peculiar relation to himself, that he is pleased to speak of his dear Son.

[2 : 0 0] Now I refer to names of Christ in the Old Testament that we may not have thought were names of the Lord.

I think of the arm, and indeed the hand, and the right hand of the Lord. And I believe that there are scriptures which show that the arm, and the hand, and the right hand of the Lord are more than descriptions, but that they are names of Christ.

Remember how in Romans 1.20 the Apostle says that the invisible God has shown himself by the visible things, the things which are seen his invisible power and Godhead are clearly seen.

And in these visible things of creation we see the power of our God. And there is a sense in which in many respects the created order speaks forth the majesty of God.

And there is a sense in which the Lord's people, as Peter in his first epistle and in the fourth chapter, and at the eleventh verse reminds us that all things for those who are in Christ, they speak forth the glory of God.

[3 : 3 4] 1 Peter 4 and the eleventh verse. 2 Peter 5 and the eleventh verse.

1 Peter 5 and the eleventh verse.

1 Peter 5 and the eleventh verse.

We think of the hand as that which is able to do those things which set upon, and to do those things that are intricate things.

We think of the right hand as the hand ordinarily of dexterity, the right hand of power. If you are a right hand in person, then there are things that you can do more easily with the right hand than with the other.

[5 : 36] And this is the thought that is conveyed when we think of the arm and the right hand. The right hand of the right hand. Now we've got to take these things and we've got to consider them in relation to deity itself.

And in the eighty-ninth psalm, we have in the thirteenth verse, the scripture that gives us warrant to begin to look at the arm and the hand of the right hand pertaining to God himself.

The eighty-ninth psalm and the thirteenth verse. Thou hast a mighty arm. Strong is thy hand. And high is thy right hand.

Now we know that this is of God, that this is speaking of God, it's the figure, it's the employment of something familiar in the created order, and the use of that in order that we might understand certain truth concerning the nature of God, that we might have some opening up of the name of God.

It's not that God is possessed of a body, God is spirit. John 4.24, one of the great scriptures that open up to us the character of the God that we worship.

[7 : 06] God is spirit. They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. And in the confession of our fathers, the Westminster Confession, it says, God is without body, parts and passions.

There is, of course, that great mystery of the incarnate God, but that is a separate significance, that God in the person of his Son assumed a true humanity, that he might represent us, that he might stand as the surety of his people.

But God in his higher nature, God as he is to be understood, his spirit, without body, parts and passions, so when we read of God in any setting forth of his character that employs figures that belong to the created order, such as the arm of the hand and the right hand of a man, if that is attributed to God, it is a figure.

It is not to be taken literally. It is God's condescension to us that by so allowing himself to be considered and thought upon, that we might learn concerning him and his nature.

The arm of God is that arm of power. The arm of a man speaks his capacity to do certain things. What of our God?

[8 : 38] And in the Old Testament, in thirteen places, not only does it mention the arm of God, but it also describes the arm of God as a stretched out arm.

He has a stretched out arm. In other places, he has a strong arm. In the psalm that is before us, the 89th psalm, and in that 13th verse, he has a mighty arm.

I myself, he says through Jeremiah, will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and in fury and in great wrath.

He has an outstretched arm. He has a strong arm. He is mighty to do. In the 136th psalm, in the 12th verse, you have the arm of the Lord as that outstretched arm with a strong hand.

And with a stretched out arm, God brought out Israel from among them, from Egypt. His mercy endureth forever. God is possessed of an arm and an arm of strength.

[9 : 58] And he is possessed of the hand in the figure. And the hand speaks of that intricacy of application, that fulfillment of God's will, which calls for design and calls for absolute accuracy.

My life's minutest circumstances, the hymn writer, subject to his eye. And that our minutest circumstances might further the design and purposes of God.

So it is as though his hand is fashioning, his hand is causing these things to be. Psalmist in the 8th Psalm speaks of the heavens made by God's fingers, when he considers the heavens, the work of God's fingers.

Because if God's fingers are set forth in the figure as making the heavens, then think what his hand does, his strong hand.

Think what that outstretched arm performs. And then think of the right hand, which is speaking of the excellency of his work, and the sufficiency of his power.

[11 : 15] Not only has he a hand able to do every part of his will, in every detail of his providential ordering of things, but he has that which is a right hand, a right hand of his power.

And this is a glorious figure of his power, which is in himself. Power belongeth to God.

Christ is the power of God, including in his concordance. He says against the right hand that this signifies all the effects of his omnipotence.

See it in the 15th chapter of Exodus, when there has been a mighty display of the right hand of God's power.

The bringing of his people through the Red Sea, the dividing of the waters, the deliverance from the pursuing army of Pharaoh. And in the song of Moses and the children of Israel on the other side of the sea, there is in the 6th verse, Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power.

[12 : 34] Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in certain of the Psalms, the 17th Psalm and that the 7th verse, Show thy marvelous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand, them which put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them.

And if there was a saving of the old Israel from captivity, and all that that involved in Egypt, there is typified by that the salvation of God's Israel, the Israel of faith.

O thou that savest by thy right hand, them that put their trust in thee. The 20th Psalm also speaks of the right hand of God in the 6th verse.

Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed. He will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.

And even in that 44th Psalm, which speaks of the past, and how God was with the people, the nation in past days, and the prayer of the Psalmist is that God will again come and be with his people in their needy times.

[13 : 57] You have in the 44th Psalm, in the 3rd verse, they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them, but thy right hand and thine arm on the light of thy countenance, because thou hast the favor unto them.

And in all this language, you see, there is that which is setting forth under the figures of the arm of the hand of the right hand of a man. There is that which is speaking of the absoluteness of God.

Now it may be that you say that surely this is all very well, but this is descriptive of God. When he speaks of the arm, or his hand, or the right hand of his power, it is descriptive of the one who is Jehovah, the one who is God alone, the one who is the Almighty.

And we are not to see it beyond a description, but remember this, that in the Word of God, where there are those descriptions of God, those attributes of God set forth, the thing that is set before us in that attribute, not only is true of God, but God is that thing.

And you find that this is repeatedly the case when you look up the wisdom of God, that God is wisdom. Christ is not only the power of God, but the wisdom of God.

[15 : 34] And when you consider the truth, that God is the God of truth, you find that God is truth. And Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

And even justice, the justice of God is that which belongs to God. It is not just that it is an attribute, but God is that just one.

And the holiness of God, God is that holy one that inhabits eternity. The lofty one that inhabits eternity, and whose name is holy. The holy one of God, and Christ is that holy one of God, who could not seek a option.

And God raised him upon the third day from the dead, for it was not possible that he should be holden by it. And what I'm seeking to show to you is that we are not, I believe, simply in these cases.

And we'll have further reason to point this out, and I think to give clear evidence of it from the word of God. In these cases, the arm and the hand and the right hand of God, it is not just descriptive, but it is an assertion of God and who he is and what he is.

[16 : 55] And I think that in particular, these scriptures that we looked at just a moment ago from the Psalms, Psalm 17 and 20 and 44, that surely it was patented and even hearing these scriptures read, examining what the word of God says in these places, does it not show more than an attribute?

Does it not set forth God himself who is, who is that arm of strength, who is that hand, who is possessed of the right hand of power?

I think of the 44th sermon, that third verse again, they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm, say them, but thy right hand and thine arm and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst the favor unto them.

And in there, where we started off in the 89th Psalm and in that 13th verse of the Psalm, thou hast a mighty arm, strong is thy hand, high is thy right hand.

You see in the 15th verse, blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. And I believe that there is this setting forth of the very name of deity that is according to those mighty attributes, his power, the detail of his power, who rules over all things, so that the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as the rivers of water, he turneth it, whithersoever he will.

[18 : 45] What a mercy it is to know the good hand of our God was upon us, as Ezra declares, was repeatedly the experience of those that went back from captivity to Jerusalem.

The good hand of our God was upon us. What a mercy that we do not know the heavy hand of his displeasure upon us, as it will be upon those that are the wicked.

Now then, let us seek to come more specifically to Christ in this name and by these titles, the arm and the right arm and the hand, the right hand of our God.

Now, in Deuteronomy 7, and at the 19th verse, in Deuteronomy 7, and in the 19th verse of the chapter, this is what we read.

The setting is Moses speaking of the deliverance again from Egypt. Thou shalt not be afraid of them, but shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh and unto all Egypt, the great temptations which thine eyes saw and the signs and the wonders and the mighty hand and the stretched out arm whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out.

[20 : 15] So shall the Lord thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid. The mighty hand and the stretched out arm whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out.

yet in the Acts of the Apostles and in the 7th chapter, in the address of Stephen, Acts 7, 35 and 36, this Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge?

The same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness 40 years.

He brought them out. The arm of the Lord in Deuteronomy 7. The Lord thy God brought thee out.

He brought thee out. And we have seen from Acts 7 and I referred to it on two previous occasions that it clearly speaks of Christ and the angel that spoke to Moses out of the bush and the angel that was with them in the wilderness was the rock that followed them.

[21 : 35] It was Christ with his people. And therefore, I say that we can see surely a connection there that in the mighty hand and in the stretched out arm whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out that it was Christ that brought them out.

and Christ is that arm and that power of God put forth for his people. Now in Isaiah 53 and in the familiar opening verse of the 53rd chapter of Isaiah I suggest to you there that there is even clearer evidence that the arm of the Lord is a title and that the title is a title of Christ.

Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed for he shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground.

He hath no form nor comeliness and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. And there is the clear identification in Isaiah 53 with Christ and the sufferings of Messiah.

Who hath believed our report to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed. And I think that that is a most expressive statement not just of the power of God to whom is the power of God revealed but to whom is the Christ of God revealed as the arm of God that arm of God that brought the people out of the wilderness that arm of God that delivers his people in every generation from the powers of darkness from the mighty that hold them fast bound.

[23 : 32] Now then what of the 77th Psalm of the 15th verse of the 77th Psalm a Psalm of Asaph Psalm 77 verse 15 Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people the sons of Jacob and Joseph and thine is there in italics which makes it all the more emphatic in the original the thine is there in order that we can read it and understand it the more easily but it would mean that thou hast thine arm redeemed thy people thou hast the arm redeemed thy people the sons of Jacob and Joseph and in the preceding verse and the following verses you see that this is full of God and the work that he has wrought for his people in redemption in bringing them out of Egypt bringing them into the wilderness and threw it into the land of promise thou art the God that doest wonders thou hast declared thy strength among the people thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people the sons of Jacob and Joseph

Selah the waters saw thee oh God the waters saw thee and were afraid and you see there that if it is God that has redeemed his people with the arm and who is the redeemer of God's people it is the arm of the Lord who is the redeemer of God's people we say there is the salvation in any other none other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved we are saved by the arm the arm of the Lord has saved us Christ has saved us the 51st of Isaiah the 51st chapter of Isaiah and in the ninth verse Isaiah 51 9 awake awake put on strength o arm of the Lord o arm of Jehovah awake as in the ancient days in the generations of old art thou not it that hath cut

Rahab and wounded the dragon now Rahab stood for the powers the Egypt but Egypt in its wickedness is typical of the world and the world is under the god of this world Satan and it's not a difficult transition from Rahab and the dragon to the old serpent and the fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 3 15 that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head and the arm of the Lord that is invoked awake awake put on strength o arm of the Lord awake as in the ancient days in the generations of old art thou not it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon the outstretched arm has done down the dragon has obtained the victory art thou not it which hath dried the sea the waters of the great deep and hath made the depths of the sea away over for the ransom to pass over therefore the redeemed of the

Lord shall return and I believe that that most emphatically again speaks of the one who has wrought righteousness for his people the one who has come to deliver the one who delivered in that day long sins of Moses the one who is the deliverer in that he was manifest to destroy the works of the devil the one who by his strength translates us from the kingdom of Satan and brings us into his own dear realm that he might rule over us and that he might be our great defender he it is he it is that divided the sea and made the way for the ransom to pass over and then still in Isaiah but in the 62nd chapter and in the 8th verse in the 62nd and in the 8th verse the Lord hath sworn by his right hand and by the arm of his strength meditate on that if you will consider that does that simply mean that he has sworn by his right hand and by the arm of his strength that he is simply sworn by those parts as it were and yet he is without bodily parts and passions is this just a statement of the swearing of the law that is in a figure that cannot be understood because

God Paul says in Hebrews 6 because God could swear by no greater he hath sworn by himself and he is he is surely in that verse swearing by his right hand and by the arm of his strength it is in terms of the covenant that he has established the covenant upon which our salvation depends that was transacted between the father and the son is it not that the Lord Jehovah the father has sworn by his right hand and by the arm of his strength by that one who is the arm of the Lord by that one who is the right hand of his power Christ the power and the wisdom of God I believe it speaks of deity I believe it speaks of the covenant and then also this and the last of these scriptures the one that was in our passage of

[29 : 39] Exodus 33 in the 33rd chapter of Exodus and in that end of the chapter that we read when Moses is given this memorable experience when he has the assurance concerning the presence of God that notwithstanding the sinfulness the great exceeding sinfulness of the nation notwithstanding the breaking of the tablets of the law that was given at Sinai God's presence will go with them still God will not forsake his people and Moses asks this great favor show me thy glory show me thy glory and he said I will make all my goodness pass before thee and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom

I will show mercy and he said thou canst not see my face for there shall no man see me and live and the Lord said behold there is a place by me and thou shall stand upon a rock and it shall come to pass while my glory passeth by that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by and I believe that it was in the showing forth of the glory of God in such a way as Moses could receive it as a mere man he could not stand before the ineffable brightness of God's glory there had to be something that interposed and there was in the mercy of God and in the very disclosure of his goodness to Moses what greater evidence of the nature of God's goodness and the very character of grace that there was this hand put upon

Moses and if you see something of the hand in these scriptures as being Christ himself then I venture to say that the glory of God was mediated to Moses on that occasion through Christ and he who was the mediator of the law for so was Moses knew the greater mediatorial work of Christ who put his hand who was a hand that interposed so that what he saw on that occasion of the glory of God face of Jesus Christ and you remember that in Numbers 12 when Aaron and Miriam became jealous of Moses for the authority that he had and were murmuring and saying that he was no different from others why could not others do the things that Moses was doing in Numbers 12 8 when God is vindicating his servant Moses and the divine authority that belonged to him with him will I speak mouth to mouth even apparently and not in dark speeches and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold wherefore then were you not afraid to speak against my servant

Moses this man saw the similitude of God the similitude of God is that one that shows forth the character of God Hebrews 1 and the third verse the son of God being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person Moses saw the glory of God how could Moses see the glory of God when the hand was upon him if it were not that it was the hand of God that covered him it was the mediator himself that showed him all the glory that he could take in and it reminds us that all our dealings with God the God of glory are through the mediator the mediator of the new covenant and except that his hand be upon us and his hand about us then our God would be as a consuming fire I say that there are in some of these titles there are deep things and we are those that are to search the scriptures and it is one of the wonderful things that continually in the word of

God we are shown new things we don't want the new things which are untrue things we want those things which come freshly to us as the spirit of God opens them up and I certainly believe in meditating upon the arm of the Lord the outstretched arm the strong hand of the Lord the right hand of our God I believe that this is much more in these scriptures not in every case but in certain cases and ever the context and the setting will declare the difference but in such scriptures we've looked at the arm of the Lord speaks of one who is as the arm of the Lord who has that hand which is good towards his people and who has a right hand of power for the saving of his people and for the deliverance of his people and for the succoring of them and the supporting of them no wonder

[35 : 06] David could say let me fall into the hand of the Lord let us fall into the hand of the Lord in any trial because if we fall into the hand of the Lord it is to fall into the hand of Christ it is to fall into his gracious care and keeping and we've never been out of it so we can never be hurt by it and even if it be a chastising hand for sometimes it must needs be that the hand will bear the rod of chastisement upon his people it is as many as I love he says I rebuke and chasten whom the Lord loveth he chasten and scourgeth every son that he receiveth and I would rather see in those times for no chastisement is joyous but it is grievous at the time it is afterward it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby but all to see the rod in the hand of Christ to know that it is that which he is applying because of the love that he bears to learn then that it is good for us to be in his hand to know the security of the hand of the

Lord Christ is the keeper of his church my sheep hear my voice and I give unto them eternal life neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand and that you see again if it's viewed in terms of the very name of God it is not just descriptive there is a union there is that whole notion of union by grace which is a great mystery how we love the hymns of John Kent that speak of the union between Christ and his church and that union which is an eternal union none can separate us none can pluck us from the strength of Israel's hands and you see there is that in the use of hand which is more than simply expressive of strength but there is that which speaks to us of union we are one one with Jesus what a mystery that is to know that he is in us and we are in him there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ

Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit by eternal union one there can be no severing of the church from the hands of Christ because the church is his by an indissoluble union a union which he has sealed union which he has shown by his sufferings and death cannot be ended oh then that we might ask this question also are we in this union are we those that know the arm of the Lord stretch forth for our salvation preacher would say who hath believed our report to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed oh that the arm of the Lord might be revealed that we might see God's power in Christ Christ the power of God Christ the wisdom of God and then we shall know that keeping we shall know that blessedness the good hand of our God upon us all all those trials that come are greatly sweetened because we know that the hand of the

Lord that holds us is the hand of omnipotence underneath are the everlasting arms there is that support that can never end well may these things be sanctified to us thank God that the heavy hand of judgment never will fall upon the Lord's people he chastens but he does not bring any penal hand upon his people because they are in Christ by eternal union one and Christ has made them his payment God cannot twice demand first at our bleeding surety's hand and then again at mine or that we might then be those that see a little of the wonder of the Old Testament and the full deity of Christ how can it be that these Unitarians and modernists deny the deity of

Christ in the Old Testament well of course they deny the Old Testament many of them they have got no time for it except as a historic document that is full of inconsistencies and errors they say they do not see all scripture given by inspiration of God and profitable for doctrine and for reproof for correction for instruction in righteousness part of the instruction through these scriptures of the Old Testament is to see the greatness of our God see these lovely names see him as the Lord of hosts see our Savior as Adonai the Lord see him as the rock of our salvation see him as that outstretched arm of the Lord that has delivered us and will keep us and bring us to our ultimate destination there to see his face and never never sin from the rivers of his grace to drink endless pleasures in well may God bless these few thoughts may they be preparatory to prayer that we might come in prayer before such a God who has an arm and a hand and a right hand of power to do

[41 : 22] God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think or think you