

# Isaiah 49:16-Inscribed on His Hands

## INDELIBLE GRACE: INSCRIBED ON THE PALM OF HIS HANDS.

Indelible means that which cannot be removed, washed away, blotted out, canceled, effaced or erased and thus speaks of that which is unforgettable, lasting and cannot be lost or annulled. Such is the grace of God in Isaiah 49:16, one of the most beautiful expressions of God's everlasting love in all of Scripture.

Have you ever wondered if God has forgotten or abandoned you? Even now perhaps you feel like David who cried out to God his Rock, "Why have you forgotten me?" (Ps 42:9-[note](#)) Perhaps like Israel of old you are saying "My way is hidden from the LORD. My cause is disregarded by my God." (Isa 40:27) You find yourself in your own personal Pilgrim's Progress "slough of despond," bogged down in the "spiritual quicksand" of seemingly endless adversities and afflictions which keep dragging you deeper into despair. I understand for that is where I am as I write. But even better Jesus understands for on the Cross, He cried "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mt 27:46, Ps 22:1-[note](#)) Jehovah Rapha, the Great Physician, understands for "He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered and is able to come" to our aid as we are tempted (Heb 2:18-note) having given us spiritual truth in Isaiah 49:16 that like the balm of Gilead can heal our souls of what Spurgeon calls that "unbelief which often makes us talk about God forgetting us when He does nothing of the kind. We know not which most to wonder at, the faithfulness of God or the unbelief of His people. He keeps His promise a thousand times, and yet the next trial makes us doubt Him. He never fails; He is never a dry well; He is never as a setting sun, a passing meteor, or a melting vapor; and yet we are as continually vexed with anxieties, molested with suspicions, and disturbed with fears, as if our God were the mirage of the desert." Father, by Thy Spirit grant us grace to sing in faith "There amidst the love and glory/ He is waiting yet/ On His hands a name is graven/ He can ne'er forget." (Francis Havergal)

Ancient Zion (a picture of Israel) still smarting from the pangs of exile in Babylon cried out "Jehovah has forsaken me" to which God responded "Can a woman forget her nursing child? (Ed: Not usually, but some have.) Can she feel no love for the child she has borne? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold! I have inscribed (engraved) you on the palms of My hands. Your walls are continually before Me." (Isa 49:14-16). C H Spurgeon, who preached three sermons on Isaiah 49:16 reminds us that "These words apply, first of all, to God's ancient people, the Jews (the accurate interpretation), but they are equally true of all believers (a valid application)." Spurgeon adds that the phrase "'I have graven thee' does not say, thy name. Our name is there, but that is not all: I have graven THEE! See the fullness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee upon His own palms?"

Scripture records "Neither shall any man snatch them out of My hand (or) out of My Father's hand." (Jn 10:28-29) "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." (Isa 49:16) "My times are in Thy hand." (Ps 31:15-[note](#)) Vance Havner refers to these passages as "having the situation well in hand. Here is security for time and eternity. The palm of the hand is a well-protected place and that hand can fold into a fist if threatened! Not only ourselves but our times, all our circumstances, the day in which we live, the happenings of our lives—all these are under His control. Sometimes they are beyond our control, but "He's got the whole world in His hands." He not only leads us by His hand, He keeps us in His hand." J I Packer calls us to affirm the truth that "I am graven on the palms of His hands. I am never out of His mind. All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me. I know Him, because He first knew me, and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, One Who loves me; and there is no moment when His eye is off me, or His attention distracted from me, and no moment, therefore, when His care falters (cf Mt 10:30-31)." Do you believe the beautiful words of the hymn "Before the throne of God above/ I have a strong and perfect plea/ A great high Priest Whose Name is Love/ Who ever lives and pleads for me/ My name is graven on His hands/ My name is written on His heart/ I know that while in Heaven He stands/ No tongue can bid me thence depart." Hallelujah! (Bancroft)

As Kay Arthur says "If you are God's child by covenant, a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, this is the truth you must cling to when you feel abandoned: You are inscribed on the palms of His hands! For the feelings are just that—feelings. Feelings that are very real, feelings that you must deal with. But remember reality. Reality is the fact that a covenant has been cut on your behalf. Your feelings will betray you—overwhelm you cripple you—if you do not decide, by the gut-level determination of faith, that "feel it or not" you will trust your Covenant God. Put on the music ... the hymns of the faith ... the choruses of trust. Sing whether you feel like it or not. Sing whether you can sing or not. Sing until your feelings conform to reality." In fact sing Toplady's "A Debtor to Mercy Alone" - "My name from the palms of His hands/ Eternity will not erase/ Impressed on His heart it remains/ In marks of indelible grace/ Yes, I to

the end shall endure/ As sure as the earnest is given/ More happy, but not more secure/ The glorified spirits in heaven." As Spurgeon says "If you will think of those hands of which the Lord says, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands," you may rest assured that nothing can come from those hands but what infinite Wisdom directs, and infinite Love has ordained. Rejoice then, O Christian that God's love does not fail in the furnace, but is as hot as the furnace, and hotter still."

Normally in ancient times a slave would bear the brand mark of his master, but in Isaiah 49:16 we see an act of ineffable divine condescension in which the Master inscribes the servant's name on His palm! Charles Wesley applied this Scripture to Christ, writing, "Arise, my soul, arise, shake off thy guilty fears/ The bleeding Sacrifice in my behalf appears/ Before the Throne my Surety stands/ My name is written on His hands." Amen! What are these marks but the marks of indelible grace, tangible manifestations of God's covenant cut with us on Calvary's Cross, covenant marks testifying today and throughout eternity "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you, so that we may confidently say, the Lord is my Helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" (Heb 13:5-6). For God to forget us or abandon us, the scars inscribed in the palm of His hands must disappear! Perish all thy doubting thoughts! Beloved of the Father (1Jn 3:1), see the Savior spread out His hands before us with our own name inscribed in His scarred palms. Surely we are not for even a moment forgotten, but are loved faithfully and forever by our great God!

Come with me to that moment in eternity where John is weeping and lamenting that there is no one to open the scroll (Rev 5:4-5-note), writing expectantly "I saw between the throne with the four living creatures and the elders a Lamb standing, AS IF SLAIN, (same verb in Greek of Ex 12:6 describing the perfect lamb Israel was to "slay at twilight"! cf Jn 1:29, 1Co 5:7) (Rev 5:6, 5:9, 12-note; Rev 13:8-note). Transported into the future, John saw those scars indelibly inscribed by the nails that once impaled Him to the old rugged Cross, scars that will forever be the brand marks of God's everlasting covenant, yes, even the scars that bear our names beloved. Inscribed forever. Eternally secure. Precious pictures of passion perfected for His treasured possessions to marvel at throughout eternity. And so the Lamb Who was slain has not forgotten our name, for He cannot forget what is immutably inscribed in the palm of His hands throughout eternity! Spurgeon encourages us to "Look at the nail-print, that is His memorial, His forget-me-not, and by it He says to thee "Forget thee I will not, I cannot, thy name/ Engraved on my heart doth forever remain/ The palms of My hands whilst I look on I see/ The wounds I received when suffering for thee."

Now come with me and gaze expectantly with eyes of faith at future grace (1Pe 1:13-note), that glorious day in eternity future, when we are seated around the Table of the Lord, celebrating the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. John testifies "Blessed (fully satisfied independent of circumstances) are those who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb." (Rev 19:9-note, cf Lk 14:15, 13:29, 22:28-30, Mt 8:11) Now turn to the parable in Luke 12 which records a glorious passage (Lk 12:37-note) that many commentators such as John MacArthur [note] describe as a "remarkable statement (that) pictures Christ, at His return, ministering as a Servant to believers!" Alexander Maclaren has a sermon on this one verse entitled "[Servant-Lord](#)." The esteemed 19th century commentator Johann Bengel called Luke 12:37 the greatest promise in God's Word, for in it we see a prophetic picture of the Gentle, Humble Jesus, the Servant Lord, condescending to "gird Himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and (He) will come up and wait on them." (Lk 12:37, cf Jesus girding Himself at His First Coming - Jn 13:4-5) As He gives you the bread, you recall His words to the disciples at the Last Supper: "I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God" (Lk 22:16) and "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." (Mt 26:29, Lk 22:18) And as His glorified hands reach out (cf Rev 1:16-17-note) to give you the bread, you see on them the nail-pierced scars, those marks of indelible grace, marks of His eternal covenant (Heb 13:20-note). And then with even greater awe and amazement, you see your name there and you recall His precious promise now made perfect: "I have inscribed you on the palm of My hands." And you bow humbly in worship and adoration and wonder at the Messiah's Meekness and Majesty.

"May our God bring home to you a sense of your safety in Christ Jesus! May He assure you that your name is graven on His hand and whisper in your ear the promise, "Fear not, I am with thee." Look upon Him, the great Surety of the covenant, as Faithful and True (Rev 19:11-note), and, therefore, bound and engaged to present you, the weakest of the family, with all the chosen race, before the Throne of God (Col 1:22-note, 2Cor 4:14-note, Ep 5:27-note, cf Jude 24); and in such a sweet contemplation you will drink the juice of the spiced wine of the Lord's pomegranate, and taste the dainty fruits of Paradise. You will have an antepast of the enjoyments which ravish the souls of the perfect saints above, if you can believe with unstaggering faith that "faithful is He Who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass." Amen (1Thes 5:24-note) (Spurgeon)

Play "Before the Throne of God Above" by Selah

Note especially the lines "My name is graven on His hands,

My name is written on His heart."

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_xUK2Dx5RkY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xUK2Dx5RkY) - Selah

Here is the same song by Shane and Shane

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrYVTpsAGYk>

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON ISAIAH 49:16

**Note:** There is some duplication so use these notes "as is." These notes are a compilation of background information in preparation for the article "Indelible Grace: Inscribed on His Hands." Most of these notes are of a "devotional flavor" rather than a purely expository flavor.

### Hymns, et al...

A Debtor to Mercy Alone  
My name from the palms of His hands  
Eternity will not erase;  
Impressed on His heart it remains,  
In marks of indelible grace.

Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given;  
More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in heaven."

by Augustus Toplady

Our name is engraven upon His own hands,  
Our witness in heaven eternally stands;  
The nearest and dearest and choicest to Him,  
Without spot or wrinkle without or within.

The tables and tablets of brass and of stone  
With their deeply cut letters are soon overthrown;  
But none can erase the indelible names  
Of those He redeems and eternally claims.

Names and Titles of Jesus Christ - Names and Titles of Jesus Christ – The Indescribable Christ: A–G.

"If Jesus is ours we have a true friend,  
Whose goodness endures the same to the end;  
Our comforts may vary, our frames may decline;  
We cannot miscarry; our aid is divine.  
The hills may depart and mountains remove,  
But faithful thou art O fountain of love!  
The Father has graven our names on thy hands;  
Our record, in Heaven eternally stands."

Before the throne of God above  
I have a strong and perfect plea.  
A great high Priest whose Name is Love  
Who ever lives and pleads for me.  
My name is graven on His hands,  
My name is written on His heart.  
I know that while in Heaven He stands  
No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair  
And tells me of the guilt within,  
Upward I look and see Him there  
Who made an end of all my sin.  
Because the sinless Savior died  
My sinful soul is counted free.  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there the risen Lamb,  
My perfect spotless righteousness,  
The great unchangeable I AM,  
The King of glory and of grace,  
One in Himself I cannot die.  
My soul is purchased by His blood,  
My life is hid with Christ on high,  
With Christ my Savior and my God!  
Charitie Lees Smith (1863)

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The hills may depart, and mountains remove,  
But faithful thou art, O Fountain of Love.  
The Father has graven our names on thy hands,  
Our building in heaven eternally stands.  
W. Hammond

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More than conquerors! There our Captain stands,  
While our names are graven upon His hands;  
Though the pow'rs of darkness against us frown,  
We shall win the fight, and shall wear the crown.

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Long the blessed Guide has led me  
By the desert road;  
Now I see the golden towers--  
City of my God.

There amidst the love and glory,  
He is waiting yet;  
On His hands a name is graven,  
He can ne'er forget.  
Francis Havergal

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Fatherlike He tends and spares us;  
Well our feeble frame He knows.  
In His hands He gently bears us,  
Rescues us from all our foes.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Widely yet His mercy flows.  
Henry Lyte

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"Thousands in the fold of Jesus,  
This attainment ne'er could boast;  
To his name eternal praises,  
None of these shall e'er be lost."  
Deeply graven  
On his hands their names remain."

Spurgeon

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Dread not the things that are ahead,  
The burdens great, the sinking sands,  
The thorns that o'er the path are spread,  
God holds the future in His hands.

God holds the future in His hands  
And every heart He understands.  
On Him depend,  
He is your Friend,  
He holds the future in His hands.  
James Rowe

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"Let not Satan make thee craven;  
He can threaten but not harm.  
On My hands thy name is graven,  
And thy shield is My strong arm.  
How, then, could it ever be  
I should not remember thee,  
Fail to build thy walls, My city,  
And look down on thee with pity?"

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"Thousands in the fold of Jesus,  
This attainment ne'er could boast;  
To his name eternal praises,  
None of these shall e'er be lost.  
Deeply graven  
On his hands their names remain."

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4 Jesus, I throw my arms around,  
And hang upon Thy breast;  
Without a gracious smile from Thee  
My spirit cannot rest.

5 Oh! tell me that my worthless name  
Is graven on Thy hands;  
Show me some promise in Thy book,  
Where my salvation stands!

Isaac Watts

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I love thy church, O God!  
Her walls before thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of thine eye,  
And graven on thy hand.  
Classical Study Bible, The.

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In light of the grandeur and glory of the truths of God's unshakable love for us in Christ, we would do well to sing the words of George Matheson's hymn to Him Who has loved us with an everlasting love...

O Love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee;

I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

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Arise, my soul, arise; shake off thy guilty fears;  
The bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears:  
Before the throne my surety stands,  
Before the throne my surety stands,  
My name is written on His hands.  
He ever lives above, for me to intercede;  
His all redeeming love, His precious blood, to plead:  
His blood atoned for all our race,  
His blood atoned for all our race,  
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.  
Five bleeding wounds He bears; received on Calvary;  
They pour effectual prayers; they strongly plead for me:  
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,  
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,  
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"  
The Father hears Him pray, His dear anointed One;  
He cannot turn away, the presence of His Son;  
His Spirit answers to the blood,  
His Spirit answers to the blood,  
And tells me I am born of God.  
My God is reconciled; His pardoning voice I hear;  
He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear:  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
And "Father, Abba, Father," cry.

#### CHORUS

O my soul, arise  
Behold the risen Christ  
Your Great High Priest  
Your spotless sacrifice  
O my soul, arise  
God owns you as His child  
Shake off your guilty fears  
My soul, arise

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1 Redeem'd offender, hail the day  
That sees thy sin forgiv'n:  
Jesus hath borne thy guilt away,  
And pleads for thee in heav'n.  
2 Imprinted on his hands thou art  
In characters of blood;  
The stream that issu'd from his heart  
Shall waft thee safe to God.  
3 For me vouchsaf'd th' unspotted Lamb,  
His Father's wrath to bear:  
I see his feet, and read my name  
Engraven deeply there.  
4 Forth from the Lord his gushing blood  
In purple currents ran:  
And ev'ry wound proclaim'd aloud

His wond'rous love to man.  
 5 My faith looks back and sees him bleed;  
 A thorny crown he wears,  
 To set upon the sinner's head  
 A shining crown of stars.  
 6 Saviour, I fain would take the wreath,  
 To thee, my centre, move,  
 In all the lowliness of faith,  
 In all the heights of love.  
 7 Thy righteousness my robe shall be,  
 Thy bitter death my hope:  
 For my offence upon the tree  
 My Lord was lifted up.  
 8 For me the Saviour's blood avails,  
 Almighty to atone:  
 The hands he gave to piercing nails  
 Shall lead me to his throne.  
 Toplady

SPURGEON - How appropriately Christ can say this when he looks on the nail-prints, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands"! As I said this morning, Jesus can give nothing, he can take nothing, he can do nothing, he can hold nothing, without remembering his people (WITHOUT SEEING THE MEMORIALS OF MY CHOSEN PEOPLE): "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

Our Lord Jesus has his own memorials of us, even as he has given us a memorial of himself. The prints of the nails constitute forget-me-nots of a peculiarly personal and abiding kind: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands": Isaiah 49:16. By these marks he sees what he has already suffered, and he pledges himself to do nothing apart from those sufferings, for his hands, with which he works, are pierced. Since he thus bears in his hands the marks of his passion, let us bear them on our hearts.

SPURGEON - Yet it is a sweet thing to be able to trace the hand of God in our affliction, for nothing can come from that hand towards one of his children but that which is good and right. If you will think of those hands of which the Lord says, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands," you may rest assured that nothing can come from those hands but what infinite wisdom directs, and infinite love has ordained.

"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 never forget thee." "I have graven thee upon my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Rejoice then, O Christian, in the second thought, that God's love does not fail in the furnace, but is as hot as the furnace, and hotter still.

ea, graven on the palms of his hands." You are not forgotten of him; is not that good news? When somebody comes to you in a foreign land, you like to hear him say, "When I was at your home, they were all talking about you, and they all sent loving messages to you. I saw your portrait in a locket, and I could tell that you were not forgotten." You are glad to hear that; and Jesus has your names graven on the palms of his hands, and he is pleading for you before the mercy-seat, you are not forgotten up there.

There is no forgetting a thing that is written on the palms of your hands. You cannot do any work but you see it there; and God cannot do any work without seeing his children's names.

Are they not blessed pledges to lay hold on—his lovingkindness and his tender mercies? With such promises you will be sure to prevail.

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ou may rest assured that nothing can come from those hands but what infinite wisdom directs, and infinite love has ordained.

He will never forget those whose memorials are thus perpetually with him. May the living blessing of the ever-living Savior be with you to-day and for ever! Amen.

Luke 12:37 "Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them."

Note the role reversal—the master now serves the servants!

ESV Study Bible "in view the end-time messianic banquet (Lk 13:29 "And they will come from east and west, and from north and

south, and will recline [at the table] in the kingdom of God." 14:15–24; 22:27–30; Rev. 19:9).

MacArthur "This remarkable statement pictures Christ, at His return, ministering as a servant to believers."

Nelson Study Bible - In a reversal of the servant image, Jesus pointed out that the faithful servant will be served by Jesus on His return. Faithfulness will be rewarded.{Radmacher, Earl D.; Allen, Ronald Barclay; House, H. Wayne},

NET Note - He...will come and wait on them is a reversal of expectation, but shows that what Jesus asks for he is willing to do as well; see John 13:5 and 15:18–27, although those instances merely foreshadow what is in view here.

MacDonald - This is a very touching suggestion that He who once came into this world in the form of a bondsman will graciously condescend to serve His people again in their heavenly home. The devout German Bible scholar Bengel regarded verse 37 as the greatest promise in all God's word.

J C Ryle comments that "This is perhaps one of the most wonderful promises made to believers in the New Testament. It must probably be interpreted figuratively. It means that there is no limit to the honor and glory which the Lord Jesus will bestow on those who are ready to meet him at his second coming."

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In light of this great truth that God does not forget us, may the Spirit of the Living God enable each of us to "Bless the LORD O my soul and FORGET none of His benefits" in Christ Jesus. Amen (Ps 103:2) Whenever Israel forgot who they were and what God had done for them, they lapsed into sin and paid dearly for their disobedience. Gratitude is a key element in the Christian life. Instead of imitating Israel and forgetting God's blessings and ignoring his counsel (Ps. 106:13), let's praise him and celebrate his goodness to us. God doesn't forget us, and there's no reason why we should forget him.

Context of Isa 49:16 - Israel (depicted as "Zion") was in an hour of distress and discouraged by her exile to Babylon cried out "The LORD has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me." (Isa 49:14)

Most of us have had the experience of writing something on our hands so that we might not forget it later. But we only do this if it is something important. The problem with men writing on their hands is that the ink washes off and can't remember the important item! When God Who needs no help with His memory engraves us on the palm of His hands, we are on His palms as eternal "reminders." Have you ever seen somebody write something on their hand so that they would not forget something. Maybe a telephone number, or something from the store. You only write it on your hand if it is important. The only problem with this system is that when you wash your hands what you wanted to remember gets washed away.

As I was reading my Bible this week I came across a verse that reminded me of how important we are to God.

Isaiah 49:16 - See, I have written your name on my hand.

We are important enough to God that He is willing to write our name on His hand. God's hands never get dirty and He never has to wash them. That means that He writes our name on his hand it is there forever.

God never forgets us and He always loves us.

A mother may be true, her affection may be as pure and as strong as earth can furnish but she may forget. But here is somebody who always has us in everlasting remembrance. We are kept right before His eyes all the time -- graven upon the palms of His hands.

Spurgeon on maternal love -

"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 not I forget thee." The affection of a right-minded mother for her tender and helpless offspring is one of the strongest that is experienced by human beings. But, though strong, very strong, it may, alas! give way. It is, at best, only a creature's love, and therefore changeable; while that love which is exercised by God towards His believing children is, like Himself, unchangeable. These words prove, and were designed to prove, most conclusively, that the love of the Divine Father towards His adopted sons and daughters is not a fluctuating or changing thing. What other, or what lower interpretation can we put upon the words, "YET WILL NOT I FORGET THEE?"

Normally in ancient times a slave would bear the brand mark of the master, but here we see an act of ineffable divine condescension in which the Master inscribes the servant's name on His palm. Charles Wesley applied this Scripture to Christ, writing, "Arise, my soul, arise, shake off thy guilty fears, The bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears. Before the throne my Surety stands; My name is written on his hands." What are these marks but the marks of indelible grace, a tangible manifestation of God's covenant with us, the



covenant mark testifying throughout eternity "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you, so that we may confidently say, The Lord is my Helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" (Heb 13:5-6). For God to forget us and/or abandon us, the scars inscribed in the palm of His hands would must needs disappear! Beloved, see the Savior spread out His hands before us with our very name inscribed in His scarred palms. We are loved profoundly and eternally by God!

Try it now, believing and expecting that the Lord will hear you. You see, he has set you apart for himself, you belong to him, you are his treasure, his jewel, the signet on his finger, the delight of his heart, your name is graven on the palms of his hands; do you think he wishes you to be in this miserable state? Oh, no; he has sent the Comforter to deal with just such as you are! One Person of the Divine Trinity has undertaken the office of comforting the people of God; therefore he must want you to be happy and comfortable. Cry to him to bring you up out of your low estate.

Spurgeon - Beloved believer, you were graven on the hands of Christ even then. Oh, that the Lord would direct you into the antiquity of his love. It shall make you greatly prize that love to think that it had no beginning, and shall never, never have an end.

Oh, blessed memory of God! "Yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee," says he, "upon the palms of my hands." There is no forgetting a thing that is written on the palms of your hands. You cannot do any work but you see it there; and God cannot do any work without seeing his children's names. He can do no work of judgment without seeing their names; and therefore he spares his people. He can do no work of bounty but what their names are on his hands; and therefore he says, "Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." His hands are branded with the names of his beloved, and it is not possible that he can forget them. The Lord has a loving memory. He cannot forget his own. Think of words like these — "I remember thee, the love of thine espousals". "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me". "The Lord thy God will not forsake thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them."

God cannot forget any of his people, sorrowful or sinful though they may be.

Spurgeon on graven thee upon the palms of my hands - O Christian, that is a firm foundation, cemented with blood, on which thou mayest build for eternity! Ah, my soul! thou needest no other hope but this. Jesus, thy mercy never dies; I will plead this truth when cast down with anguish,--Thy mercy never dies. I will plead this when Satan hurls temptations at me, and when conscience casts the remembrance of my sin in my teeth; I will plead this ever, and I will plead it now,--"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, My beauty are, my glorious dress."

It is as if God is saying to us "I cannot work, I cannot even open the palm of my hand without seeing the memorials of my chosen people: 'I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. For God is full of kindness to his people, and cannot forget them. Oh, that they would never forget Him! (cf "Forget none of His benefits" Ps 103:2)'" (Spurgeon)

Spurgeon on eternal security - Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee upon His own palms?

HOW has He engraved us on His hands?

We ask for proof of His love,

His care,

His remembrance

and we are ushered by Isaiah into the New Testament.

Enter an upper room all locked against possible enemies.

See a little group of disciples and this time Thomas is with them.

COMES JESUS in the midst.

Of course – the evidence is there in Jesus

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" JOHN 20

38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. LUKE 24 38

And that evidence is there still for John records a heavenly picture in Revelation 5:6...

Beloved, let us with eyes of faith "Come see His hands and His feet,

the scars that speak of sacrifice,

hands that flung stars into space,

to cruel nails surrendered." (Graham Kendrick)

The only man made things in heaven are the scars in the hands of Jesus, the wounds in his feet, the wound in his side. (Zech 13:6)

Spurgeon said, "Jesus can give nothing, he can take nothing, he can do nothing, he can hold nothing, without remembering you!"

My brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He has always had you in His mind. He has always loved you. His hands prove it.

He knows everything about you and He still loves you. your personality, your circumstances, your trials, your sins, your temptations, your wants, your works, your weaknesses, everything about you is known to Him--He has graven YOU upon His own palms.

Charles Wesley wrote a hymn about this verse:

Arise, My Soul, Arise

Arise, my soul, arise. Shake off thy guilty fears.

The bleeding sacrifice In my behalf appears.

Before the throne my Surety stands,

Before the throne my Surety stands;

My name is written on His hands.

Those hands that were pierced for us at His crucifixion fulfil the Prophet's words beyond expectation.

See! says God – I have engraved you on the palms of these hands.

By such a work of love does God write you and me on His hands

- by the wonder of His creation

- by the wonder of His sustaining work

- by the miracle of His restoring work

but most of all by the work of Christ upon His cross

My name from the palm of his hands

Eternity will not erase;

Impressed on his heart it remains,

In marks of indelible grace. Toplady

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A MOTHER'S LOVE - I have read recently where a mother followed her worthless, profligate son until he was incarcerated for life, then at the door of the prison she insisted upon having a little hut where she lived and spent her days as near to him as she was permitted, and when he was dead and buried in that prison yard she insisted upon her dead body being laid in the same place of shame, hoping that in death her bones might touch his unworthy dust. She followed him and followed him until everybody said, "Let him go," but, no, her mother heart never released itself from him until it was still in death.

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Philpot- If cast down, remember this, that to be cast down, is not to be cast away. For his own wise purposes; God often allows his

people to be cast down; but he never casts them away. Has he not promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you?" Heb 13:5 Has he not said, "I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me?" Isa 49:16 It is expressly declared--"The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance." Ps 94:14 We may doubt and fear, and even say with David in the very Psalm before us, "Why do you cast me off?" or even plead with him, "O God, why have you cast us off forever?" The Lord still answers--"I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God."

Spurgeon - "He uses the most kind and endearing terms towards us to show that his love will never die away. Glory be to his holy name for this! Is not his love better than wine?"

The wounds of our Lord are the tokens of his love.

Look at the nail-print, that is his memorial, his forget-me-not, and by it he says to thee,—

"Forget thee I will not, I cannot, thy name

Engraved on my heart doth for ever remain:

The palms of my hands whilst I look on I see

The wounds I received when suffering for thee."

Can you imagine it, that God who is greater than immensity, whose life is longer than time, that God the all-boundless One, should love you? That he should think of you, pity you, consider you, this is all very well; but that he should love you, that his heart should go out to you, that he should choose you, that he should have graven you on the palms of his hands, that he should not rest in heaven without you, that he should not think heaven complete until he brings you there, that you should be the bride, and Christ the Bridegroom, that there should be eternal love between him and you, oh, as you think of it, lift up your hands with adoring wonder, and say, "Thy love to me was wonderful."

Even as he loves his own dear Son, so he loves us. We are in his heart; we are graven upon the palms of his hands; and, therefore, when he comforts, it is in so fond a manner that we cannot but be cheered. With all the tenderness a mother feels, God feels for us, and so he comforts us as a mother comforts her child.

he thinks of us constantly. He says that he has graven our names upon the palms of his hands, as if to show how continually we are before him. David said, "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me;" and our Saviour said to his disciples, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him," proving that he had thought about them, and had looked upon them with a careful eye, and observed all their necessities. Yes, God does in very deed and of a truth think upon his people, and his thoughts concerning them are very numerous.

I have graven thee on the palms of my hands," says he. Let us engrave his name upon the tablets of our hearts.

Think, for a minute, if he had forgotten you — forgotten you in your merriest moment, ay, in your holiest moment, what would have been your portion? If God had suspended the outflow of his grace, and left you to yourselves, what had been your fate! Oh, my God, my God, if thou hadst once forgotten me, where had I been? But he never has forgotten us. He is not forgetting us at this moment. He says to each one, however wandering "I do earnestly remember thee still." He will never forget us. The dying thief said, "Lord, remember me"; and Jesus did remember him. He cries, "I remember thee, the love of thine espousals." Lord, dost thou remember me? Then would I smite my heart to think I ever should have forgotten thee.

Oh, how can we forget when God is our diadem of glory? It is our highest privilege that he is ours and we are his. God is our beauty, the honor and excellence of all his saints. It is this that makes us illustrious in the eyes of cherubim and seraphim — that God is ours and we are his. God is our joy, our only joy, our overflowing joy. He that knoweth God hath heaven within his spirit even now. Come, let us not forget again, but let us bind the glorious name of Lord about our heart. May the sweet Spirit do it now, for Jesus Christ's sweet love's sake, for Jesus Christ's sweet love's sake. Amen.

Jesus bore the scars of Calvary in the palms of his hands, His blood inaugurating the New Covenant.

The city walls of Jerusalem, or Zion, never forgotten by God because He has an everlasting covenant with Israel.

Oh, how sweet it is to believe our names were on Jehovah's heart, and graven on Jesus' hands before the universe had a being! May not this electrify a man of joy, and make him dance for very mirth? Chosen of God ere time began.

The Lord remembers what he did when he swore that he would save his people, and when he gave Christ to make the covenant sure.

Are you discouraged? Downcast? Do you feel that God has rejected you?

The people of Israel felt that God had forgotten them in Babylon; but Isaiah pointed out that God would never forget them, as a loving mother would not forget her little child.

Life Application Study Bible.

To reassure Zion and prove the point in an even stronger way, God opens his hand and challenges Zion to "observe, see" (hēn) an image that was permanently "engraved" (hāq) on the palm of God's hand. This is not a tattoo on the back of his hand, and it is not something written with weak ink that can fade or be erased; this is permanently carved

New American Commentary - New American Commentary – Isaiah 40-66: Volume 15b.

H W Smith - God of all comfort - It is with too many, alas, just as it was with Israel of old. On one side God said to Zion: "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"; and on the other side Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." And then God's answer came in those wonderful words, full forever of comfort enough to meet the needs of all the sorrows of all humanity: "Forget thee! Can a mother forget? Yea, perhaps a mother may forget, but I cannot. I have even graven thee upon the palms of my hands, so that it is impossible for me to forget thee! Be comforted, then, and sing for you."

Spurgeon - The next piece of good news is that Jesus is pleading for you. Remember how he said to Peter, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Jesus has thy name upon his breastplate--yea, "graven on the palms of his hands." You are not forgotten of him; is not that good news? When somebody comes to you in a foreign land, you like to hear him say, "When I was at your home they were all talking about you, and they all sent loving messages to you. I saw your portrait in a locket, and I could tell that you were not forgotten." You are glad to hear that; and Jesus has your names graven on the palms of his hands, and he is pleading for you before the mercy-seat, you are not forgotten up there.

The Lord's mission is to reveal His love to the discouraged (vv.15-23). His love can be compared to the love of a mother for her nursing child. Could a mother forget to feed and nourish her baby? Could she abandon and have no love for the child? Not likely! But even if she did, God will not forget His people (v.15), for they are engraved, actually carved and chiseled, on the palms of His hands. This means that God's people are permanently in His hands, under His care, protection, and provision. But this is not all: those protected inside Jerusalem's walls are ever before Him. They are always in His sight, and they will stand forever before Him as a memorial. He will always be with His people, looking after them and the Holy City.

Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Isaiah II.

Spurgeon (Neither Forsaken nor Forgotten - Isa 49:16) - My object, in speaking upon the familiar and precious words of our text, is just this. Sometimes, you and I get into the same sad condition as Zion was then in, and we fancy that God has forgotten us, so I want to show you that, if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord gives to us an answer similar to that which he gave to sorrowful Zion, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." I suppose that Zion came to this conclusion because she was in banishment. She was away from the land that flowed with milk and honey, and she was suffering in exile. Is this the conclusion to be drawn from all suffering? Does the vine say, "The vine dresser hath forsaken me because he prunes me so sharply"?

Spurgeon prayer - May our God bring home to you a sense of your safety in Christ Jesus! May he assure you that your name is graven on his hand; and whisper in your ear the promise, "Fear not, I am with thee." Look upon him, the great Surety of the covenant, as faithful and true, and, therefore, bound and engaged to present you, the weakest of the family, with all the chosen race, before the throne of God; and in such a sweet contemplation you will drink the juice of the spiced wine of the Lord's pomegranate, and taste the dainty fruits of Paradise. You will have an antepast of the enjoyments which ravish the souls of the perfect saints above, if you can believe with unstaggering faith that "faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

NOT ME REMEMBERING COVENANT BUT GOD REMEMBERING! -

"And I will remember my covenant." — Genesis 9:15

Mark the form of the promise. God does not say, "And when ye shall look upon the bow, and ye shall remember my covenant, then I will not destroy the earth," but it is gloriously put, not upon our memory, which is fickle and frail, but upon God's memory, which is infinite and immutable. "The bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant." Oh! it is not my remembering God, it is God's remembering me which is the ground of my safety; it is not my laying hold of his covenant, but his covenant's laying hold on me. Glory be to God! the whole of the bulwarks of salvation are secured by divine power, and even the minor towers, which we may imagine might have been left to man, are guarded by almighty strength. Even the remembrance of the covenant is not left to our memories, for we might forget, but our Lord cannot forget the saints whom he has graven on the palms of

his hands. It is with us as with Israel in Egypt; the blood was upon the lintel and the two side-posts, but the Lord did not say, "When you see the blood I will pass over you," but "When I see the blood I will pass over you." My looking to Jesus brings me joy and peace, but it is God's looking to Jesus which secures my salvation and that of all his elect, since it is impossible for our God to look at Christ, our bleeding Surety, and then to be angry with us for sins already punished in him. No, it is not left with us even to be saved by remembering the covenant. There is no linsey-wolsey here—not a single thread of the creature mars the fabric. It is not of man, neither by man, but of the Lord alone. We should remember the covenant, and we shall do it, through divine grace; but the hinge of our safety does not hang there—it is God's remembering us, not our remembering him; and hence the covenant is an everlasting covenant.

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John MacDuff - Or, take the other emblem; every individual Christian is engraved — -where? Not on the mountains, for though called 'everlasting,' — they are to 'depart;' not on the hills — for they are 'to be removed;' not on the heavens — for they are to 'vanish as a scroll;' not on the sun — for it is to grow dim with age; on no part of outer nature — on no pillar or cornice or wall of the Almighty's palace; for years would corrode the inscription, time would obliterate it. They have a more imperishable place upon the Hand of God. From that, nothing can erase them! The Patriarch's prayer is answered; they are "engraved as with an iron pen and lead in the Rock for ever;" but that rock is the Rock of Ages!...

The vessel may be tossed by angry storms; but let her steer, not by human landmarks — earthly beacon-lights — but by these two bright constellations here given us: telling of the love of God's Heart, and the power of His Arm — and she will be brought to the desired haven!

Or, in the case of the individual believer, does a cold shadow at times fall across his sunlit path, tempting him to doubt the rectitude of God's ways, and the faithfulness of His promises? Let him trust that inviolable, unforgetting Love. Like Ezekiel's monster wheels, God's providences may be often baffling; but they are "full of eyes." They are not shifting, capricious, untended, unregulated. The eyes of love and power are there; and in their complex evolutions and revolutions they are working out some grand end for His own glory and for His people's good. All else may perish, all else may prove unfaithful. The trusted may requite with base treachery; the 'summer friend' may abandon and forsake in the winter of adversity; the golden prop on which we leaned may give way; the tree under whose shadow we sat, may have its roots sapped and undermined by the stream; brother may be estranged from the early love of brother; the fond embrace of sisters may be among the mingled memories of the past; even the mother may be a traitor to her tenderest instincts and her dearest trust — smiles may be merged into frowns, and love into cold hatred; "They may forget — yet," says Jehovah, "I WILL NOT FORGET YOU!"

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Winslow? - How precious is this truth to the child of God! Human thoughts change; mind itself fails, and with it fades from memory countenances that were familiar, and names that were fond, and scenes that were sacred. Human thoughts that cluster and cling so warmly and closely around us today, before many weeks are past, attracted by new objects of interest, or absorbed by new engagements of time, have fled and gone, and we are alone and forgotten. But there is ONE whose thoughts of us never change, whose mind never ceases for a moment to think of us. "O Israel, you shall not be forgotten of me," is His own loving declaration. Directing us to a mother—the last earthly home of human tenderness, sympathy, and love—He tells us, "She may forget, yet will not I." Beloved, whatever fluctuation you find in human thought, or change in human affection, God's thoughts of love, and care, and faithfulness, are changeless. Have they ever darted into your heart like solar beams, causing that heart to sing for joy? Then, though in darkness, loneliness, and sorrow you are led to exclaim, "Has the Lord forgotten to be gracious?" God still bears you in His thoughts and on His heart. Relatives may forget, friends may forget, the saints may forget, but your God never can. He thinks of you at this moment as lovingly, as carefully, as from all eternity. Once in the thoughts of your covenant God, you are in those thoughts forever. Be not cast down, then, if God appears to forget you. "My way is hid from the Lord," says the desponding Church. "No," says God; "I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me." Amid all your mental wanderings, your fickle, faint thoughts of Him, He still remembers you. In the multitude of your anxious and perplexed thoughts within you, awakened by a sense of your ungrateful oblivion of God, or by His trying and mysterious dealings, let this comfort delight your soul, that He never forgets you. But let us particularize some of God's thoughts of His saints.

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Thomas Brooks - He loves you with an everlasting love—Jer. 31:8, 'Where he loves, he loves to the end.' John 13:1. As people engrave the mark, name, or picture of those whom they dearly love and entirely affect, upon some stone which they wear at their bosoms, or upon some ring which they wear on their finger, so has God engraved Zion upon the palms of his hands; she was still in his eye, and always dear to his heart, though she did not think so.

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Ruth Bryan - "Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne." Revelation 5:6. Alas! those wondrous wounds. Have they left immortal scars? Will You, through all eternity, wear those marks of Your matchless love? And will You, in those blissful realms, dissolve our souls in holy rapture and adoring love, by saying, "Look at My hands and My feet—it is I Myself!" Surely, if anything could add beauty to that glorious form, it would be, in the eyes of love, those deep engravings, "I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands." And surely You, O Beloved, are engraved on the table of this longing heart. Set, oh, "set me as a seal upon Your heart, as a seal upon Your arm," too. Oh, grant another glimpse of Your surpassing charms! Let me—

"Behold the God who died for man;

And praise You more than angels can."

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Wiersbe - There are times when you wonder if God really cares about you, but He assures you that you are not forgotten. You are His beloved child (v. 15; Ps. 27:10), and He will never forget your name (v. 16).

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E Stanely Jones -

Isaiah 49:16 says: "Behold, I have graven you on the palms of my hands." We are not chalked on God's hands, nor painted on; we are graven. If we were chalked or painted on His hands, He could wash His hands of us. If we are graven on His hands, however, as a sculptor engraves a name in granite, then we are literally on His hands forever.

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Wiersbe -

God is compassionate and comforts us as a mother comforts her children (66:13). Isaiah pictures Israel as a nursing child, totally dependent on the Lord who will never forget them or forsake them. The high priest bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his shoulders and over his heart (Ex. 28:6–9), engraved on jewels; but God has engraved His children's names on His hands. The word "engraved" means "to cut into," signifying its permanence. God can never forget Zion or Zion's children.

Zion seems like a forsaken and barren mother, but she will be so blessed of God that there will be no room for her children! They will be like beautiful bridal ornaments, not decrepit refugees from Captivity. Once again, the prophet looked ahead to the end of the age when the Gentiles will honor Jehovah and Israel, and kings and queens will be baby-sitters for Israel's children!

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Kimberly L. Clayton-

We are not forgotten. We are inscribed on the palms of God's hands. Every day in Washington, D.C., people visit the Vietnam Memorial, searching for a name etched into the wall bearing so many names. They trace their fingers over the letters, touching something deeper than name alone. Not forgotten. Remembered. Inscribed. Still, not all names are there, for even our best memorials are limited. Not so the palms of God: every name is written, everyone is included. What joy to find your own name and names of those you love on God's outstretched palm!

Might tattoos be an apt metaphor for God's inscribed hands? Indeed, people who get tattoos often want to indicate membership in a group, a way of life; or to make permanent note of an event or a person. However, an ink is being developed today that makes tattoo removal easier and less painful. Our loyalties, our loves change. Not so with God. The covenant holds. We are inscribed on the palms of God's outstretched hands, hands that guide us toward freedom and welcome us home.

Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary - Feasting on the Word – Year A, Volume 1: Advent through Transfiguration.

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Constable -

49:15 God's response to His "wife's" complaint was to assure her of His unfailing commitment to her. Human mothers may possibly neglect the children that they cared so much for that they nursed, though this is unnatural. They may even stop showing compassion to the children that they carried in their wombs for nine months, though this is inconsistent. Yet Yahweh would never, ever forget (abandon) His chosen people (cf. Ps. 27:10).

"This is one of the strongest, if not the strongest expression of God's love in the Old Testament, and is often compared with Jeremiah 31:20." (Young)

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KJV Bible Commentary -

So permanent is God's relationship to His people that He promises, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. The verb *shaqaq* means to carve or cut into, hence, to engrave. Some have attempted to view it as a tattooing; however, it should be noted that this practice is strongly condemned in Leviticus 19:28. While it is possible that the forbiddance of the practice does not necessarily prohibit its use as a figure of speech, the implication of the passage would seem to favor engrave. However, the fact that they are engraved upon the palms would seem to favor the idea of being tattooed into the skin itself. In either case, the indication of the passage is that God's relationship with us is such that He is inseparably united to His people. That the verse teaches the security of the believer is more than obvious.

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MacDonald - In the meantime, the city of Zion is portrayed as feeling that her Lord has forgotten her. Jehovah's answer is that a mother may forget her nursing baby, but He will never forget His city. Zion is inscribed on the palms of His hands, and her walls are never out of His mind. We instinctively compare the reference to the palms of Jehovah's hands with the lovewounds borne by Christ for us. A great English Christian poet expressed it beautifully:

My name from the palms of His hands

Eternity will not erase;

Imprest on His heart it remains

In marks of indelible grace.

—Augustus Toplady

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J Vernon McGee -

What beautiful assurance God gives them that they are not forsaken of Him! Israel may forsake Him—as they are doing yet today—but God will never forsake them.

My friend, if you still have doubts that God will restore Israel, I submit this section to you for your careful study.

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John Oswalt - God then uses a second image to impress on the despairing Zion that he could not have possibly forgotten her. She is inscribed on his palms—more specific than "hands," perhaps denoting intimacy and immediacy. Here is the opposite of the normal practice. Instead of the master's name being written on the servant's hand, the servant's name is written on the master's hand. This is the divine condescension that we have come to expect throughout the book. The master does not expect the servant somehow to attain his height; rather, the master comes down to the servant's place (11:1–4; 30:18; 57:15–16; 66:2). This is an expression of the same kind of passionate devotion that the Israelites will express toward God (44:5); the act of a young lover whose thoughts and feelings are solely of the beloved. Forget her? The most fascinating thing in the world, written everywhere, is her name, even on one's hands.

(

The New International Commentary on the Old Testament)

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"Do you think I've forgotten you?" the Lord asks His people. "Look at My hands. You are engraved upon them."

Whenever I am tempted to think God has forgotten me, I need only to go to the Cross of Calvary, for there I'm reminded that He engraved me on the palm of His hands when in them He absorbed nails and paid the price for my sin.

To reassure Zion and prove the point in an even stronger way, God opens his hand and challenges Zion to "observe, see" (hēn) an image that was permanently "engraved" (ḥāqāq) on the palm of God's hand. This is not a tattoo on the back of his hand, and it is not something written with weak ink that can fade or be erased; this is permanently carved into his metaphorical flesh. The object engraved on the palm of God's hand is a drawing of the walls of Jerusalem, but it is useless to speculate about which walls were engraved—were these partially broken down walls or the glorious walls of the future city (63:18; 65:17-19)? When one has something engraved on his hand, it indicates an important relationship with someone who is very dear (Isa 44:5). No one engraves the name of an enemy or a casual friend on his hand. Having something like this on one's hands provides a constant reminder of the one who is loved because the engraving on the hands would be "continually before me" (Ps 16:8; 50:8). This engraving was written on the powerful hands that created the heavens and the earth (48:13), so it is very comforting for the audience to know that Jerusalem is carved on the almighty hands that can accomplish great things.

New American Commentary - New American Commentary – Isaiah 40-66: Volume 15b.

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Benson - Mine eye and heart are constantly upon thee. "This is certainly an allusion," says Bishop Lowth, "to some practice, common among the Jews at that time, of making marks on their hands or arms by punctures on the skin, rendered indelible by fire or staining, with some sort of sign, or representation of the city or temple, to show their affection and zeal for it. It is well known that the pilgrims at the holy sepulchre get themselves marked in this manner with what are called the ensigns of Jerusalem. Maundrell, p. 75; where he tells us how it is performed: and this art is practised by travelling Jews all over the world at this day." See also Vitringa and Michaelis's notes. Or the allusion may be merely to the common practice of men, who use to put signs upon their hands or fingers, of such things as they especially wish to remember. Thy walls are continually before me — The ruins and desolations of my church are always in my thoughts, nor shall I forget or neglect to repair them, and grant her deliverance from her enemies, and protection at the proper time.

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Calvin "I cannot forget thee without forgetting myself."

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Guzik - a. Can a woman forget her nursing child: Though bizarre accounts of unspeakable cruelty surface from time to time, everyone knows that a woman will never forget her nursing child. Yet the LORD says, Surely they will forget, yet I will not forget you. The LORD's affection for His people is greater than the devotion a woman has for her nursing child!

b. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands: This has obvious and beautiful fulfillment in the nail-scarred hands of Jesus. As Jesus told Thomas in a post-resurrection appearance, look at My hands (John 20:27). When we see the nail-scarred hands of Jesus, we see how He has inscribed us on the palms of His hands. With such love, how could God ever forget His people?

c. Your walls are continually before Me: The walls refer to the walls of the city of Jerusalem, which figuratively speak of the health, the strength, the prosperity, and the security of God's people. God is always mindful of the condition of His people, despite the objections of a doubting Zion.

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Stedman - That is God's word that he will not forget his promises to Israel. Paul takes this up in Chapters 9, 10 and 11 of Romans, and asks the question, "Has God cast off his people whom he knew?" Romans 11:2 a KJV). His answer is, "Absolutely not." God will fulfill these promises.

Here Jehovah reminds them, "Though you may feel neglected and forgotten, I cannot cast you off. I will never forget you, 'Can a mother forget her sucking child?'" Proverbially, of course, mother love is the strongest love of all. Many mothers continue to love their children no matter what they do. But it is unfortunately true that mothers can forget their children. This week the papers were filled with an account of a mother in New York who systematically suffocated all nine of her children. Mothers can forget their children, but God cannot: "Behold, I have inscribed you, engraved you on the palms of my hands." We are reminded of that scene in the gospels when Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared to his frightened disciples, huddled together in the upper room, and said to them, "Behold, my hands and my feet and see that it is I," Luke 24:39). Those wounds in his hands were marks of love and their very names were engraved in his hands.

Though this passage is addressed to Israel (Zion) as a nation, we Christians have a right to claim these promises for ourselves. In Hebrews 12 the writer says we believers have not come to Mt. Sinai, the mountain that cannot be touched, to the intolerable sound of the trumpet and the darkness, etc. "But," he says, "we have come to Mouny Zion and to the city of the living God, to the heavenly



Jerusalem," (Hebrews 12:22 RSV). Therefore these promises apply to us on a spiritual level.

This entire section is a great word for discouraged hearts. If you ever feel like God has forgotten you, that he has turned his back on you? Perhaps you have made mistakes and you think that God is going to punish you all the rest of your life. In our prayer requests this morning there is an appeal for a man who feels forsaken, discouraged, defeated. Many people feel that God has totally forgotten them.

"Can a woman forget her sucking child," &c. There cannot be a figure more tender, more comprehensive. It is the figure of a helpless babe: there is the tenderness of the tie; there is the helplessness of the child; and there is the very posture of the child; and they are all full of great and important truth; and yet according to those last words--"they may forget; yet will I not forget thee"--this is not enough. As though the Lord would say, If My love were not more than this, it would not be enough to secure thee." ... "They are borne upon the heart of the great High Priest. He forgets not the work of grace that is in them. He forgets not the trials of His saints. He forgets not the returns of His people. He forgets not the walk of His saints. He forgets them not in death." (J H Evans)

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Christ knows His disciples individually. "Jesus said unto her, Mary!" He addressed her by the old familiar name. The friend of former days was still individually dear. So Jesus knows all His disciples personally. "I have engraved you on the palms of My hands." The good Shepherd "calls His own sheep by name." The High Priest carries their memorial on the sacred breastplate. So He appeals to us. Are we in sorrow, inconsolable, forgetting Him who sends it for our good? He reminds us of His presence, saying—Mary! Are we fearing some danger as though we had no Almighty Friend to protect us? He places Himself between us and it, and says—Mary! Are we becoming worldly, restraining prayer, toying with temptation, looking at some forbidden fruit until it becomes pleasant in our eyes? Jesus, in a tone of faithful remonstrance, says—Mary!

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John Flavel - Though he be in the highest glory in heaven, he does not forget us; he has graven us upon the palms of his hands; we are continually before him. He thinks on us, when we forget him. The whole honor and glory paid him in heaven by the angels, cannot divert his thoughts one moment from us; but every trifle that meets us in the way, is enough to divert our thoughts from him. Why do we not abhor and loathe ourselves for this? What! Is it a pain, a burden, to carry Christ in our thoughts about the world? As much a burden, if your heart be spiritual, as a bird is burdened by carrying his own wings.

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By the expression, "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands," God seems to say, "I have done so much for you that I can never forget you." When a memorial is engraven on a man's hand, then it is connected with the man's life.

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Biblical Illustrator - Are you tempted to question the Lord's goodness toward you, perhaps thinking He has forgotten you? We all can fall into this slough of despond when we encounter "times of deep affliction, of dark and mysterious providences", "periods of deep spiritual temptation," Some laxity in our spiritual walk.

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God remembering His people

This figure suggests--

I. CONSTANT REMEMBRANCE. It is impossible not to observe that which is written on the hands. If writing were on the face, it would not be seen, on the breast it would not be observed. But the hands are always before us.

II. DEVOTED HELP. The hands are for work, and the Almighty wishes us to infer that His people are not only remembered, but helped.

III. PERMANENT CONSIDERATION. "I have graven thee." Writing will wear off. That which is graven will and must remain.

IV. PAINFUL EFFORT. To engrave on the hands evidently refers to the process of engraving, which causes pain. Has God made no sacrifices for His people? Is not every redeemed soul written in crimson marks in the palm of the hands and the feet of the crucified Redeemer? (Homilist.)

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Pulpit Commentary - The idea of the passage is that the plan of Jerusalem remained in God's sight, though the Chaldeans had

devastated it, and even broken down its walls. It could all be built again, after the plan in the Divine mind. Thus impressively it is suggested that nothing, no sort of outward circumstance or calamity, can remove us from God's thought and care. His supreme care is for us, and that abides through all conceivable changes of condition and circumstance.

I. ALWAYS IN SIGHT, TO BE CARED FOR. This is true of friends who truly love one another—of husband and wife, of parent and children. They may not be always in bodily sight; they are always in thought, which is soul-sight. Of God it is said, "He careth for you." We are always in his thought. Round us, wherever we may be, are the "everlasting arms."

II. ALWAYS IN SIGHT, TO BE WORKED FOR. This is quite an additional idea. Others may care for us, who have nothing to do for us or can do nothing. God's care is an active care, finding due expression in tendings, watchings, providings, and arrangements. He keeps us before him, in order that he may do for us exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think.—R.T.

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Constable - Some servants inscribed the names of their masters on their hands in Isaiah's day, but masters did not write the names of their servants on their hands. Yet Yahweh had written (lit. engraved, cf. Ezekiel 4:1) the name of Zion on His palms so that He would not forget her, but be reminded of her frequently. The profile (skyline) of the city was constantly in His thoughts.

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Gill - Not upon his thick clouds, the clouds of heaven under him, always in view... much better the Targum, "lo, as upon the hands thou art engraven before me;" signifying that his people were always in his sight, his eyes were ever upon them, and never withdrawn from them; as anything held in the hand, or tied to or wore upon it, as a signet or ring that has the name of a person on it, to which the allusion may be; which shows how near and dear they are to him, what affection he has for them, and care of them; see Song of Solomon 8:6. Some think respect is had to the wounds in the hands of Christ, which, being on their account, are looked upon and remembered by him; or, however, to their being in his hands, out of which none can pluck them, John 10:28

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Trapp - So that as oft as I look upon mine own hands I cannot but think on thee. We read of one who had written the whole history of Christ's Passion upon the nails of his hands in small letters. The "signet on his finger" a man cannot lightly look beside.

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Poole - He alludes to the common practice of men, who use to put signs and memorials upon their hands or fingers of such things as they dearly affect, and would remember. See Exodus 13:9 Deuteronomy 6:8 Proverbs 6:21 Song of Solomon 8:6 Jeremiah 22:24.

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Hands, which were nailed to the cross.

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Song 8:6 "Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The [very] flame of the LORD.

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Spurgeon - Applies the truth of Isaiah 49:16 - A RETURN SUGGESTED.

1. Does Christ remember us as I have tried to prove that He dose? Then let us remember Him. "This do ye in remembrance of Me."
2. Let us not only remember Him at His table, but let us remember Him constantly. Let us, as it were, carry His name upon the palms of our hands.
3. Practically. We ought so to wear Christ on our hands that whatever we touch should be thereby Christianised.
4. Let the name of Christ, and your memory of it, become vital to you. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

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These words apply, first of all, to God's ancient people, the Jews, but they are equally true of all believers.

I. There are times when believers are apt to think themselves forsaken. - when you are experiencing waves of adversities and sore afflictions, when you have fallen into sin, when we are downcast "There is no time when the patient is an object of such tender interest to the surgeon, as when he is under his knife; so, you may be sure, if you are suffering from the hand of God, His eye is all

the more bent on you (Deut. 33:27)" (R M M'Cheyne)

The prophets were more than half poets. The language here is highly figurative. It is a bold anthropomorphism.

The being of the godly is bound up with the being of God; they are specially dear to God, shall never be lost sight of by Him, have their life hid with Christ in God, and go forward to the fulness of life, to the pleasures, which, according to another use of the same figure, are said to be at God's right hand for evermore.

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I. Consider our text verbally. Every single word deserves to be emphasised.

1. "Behold." It is a word of wonder; intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation. Here, indeed, we have a theme for marveling. "Behold" is intended to attract particular attention. There is something here worthy of being studied.

Heaven and earth may well be astonished that God should grave upon His hands the names of sinners. Speak of the seven wonders of the world, why this is a wonder in the seventh heavens! No doubt a part of the wonder which is concentrated in the word "Behold," is excited by the unbelieving lamentation of the preceding sentence. How the Divine mind seems to be amazed at this wicked unbelief of man! What can be more astounding than the unfounded doubts and fears of God's favoured people? He seems to say, "How can I have forgotten thee, when I have graven," &c. Here follows the great marvel, that God should be faithful to such a faithless people, and that when He is provoked with their doubting, He nevertheless abideth true. Behold! and be ashamed and confounded for all your cruel doubts of your indulgent Lord.

2. Behold, "I have," &c. The Divine Artist, who has been pleased to engrave His people for a memorial, is none other than God Himself. Here we learn the lesson which Christ afterwards taught His disciples—"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." No one can write upon the hand of God but God Himself. Neither our merits, prayers, repentance, nor faith, can write our names there, for these in their goodness extend not unto God so as to write upon His hands. Then, again, if the Lord hath done it, there is no mistake about it. If some human hand had cut the memorial, the hieroglyphs might be at fault; but since perfect wisdom has combined with perfect love to make a memorial of the saints, then no error by any possibility can have occurred; there can be no erasures, no crossing out of what God has written, no blotting out of what the Eternal hath decreed.

3. "Behold, I have graven thee." Not, "I will," nor yet, "I am doing it;" it is a thing of the past, and how far back in the past! Oh! the antiquity of this inscription! Do not these deep things comfort you? Does not eternal love delight you?

Oh, the antiquity of this inscription! "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God"; from everlasting to everlasting Thou art the same, and Thy people's names are written on Thy hands! Yet, methinks, there may be a prophetic reference here to a later writing of the names, when Jesus Christ submitted His outstretched palms to those cruel graving-tools, the nails. Then was it surely, when the executioner with the hammer smote the tender hands of the loving Jesus, that He engraved our names upon the palms of His hands.

Eph 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love

Morris - This remarkable revelation is incomprehensible to finite minds. We who are "in Christ Jesus" were saved and called (note the past tense), not only before we consciously accepted Christ, but even before we were born and before He created the world (Ephesians 1:4). While we cannot understand this with our minds, we can apprehend it with our hearts, and thank the Lord.

Mt 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Rev 13:8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

4. "Graven." I have not merely printed thee, stamped thee on the surface, but I have permanently cut thee into my hand with marks which never can be removed. That word "graven" sets forth the perpetuity of the inscription.

5. "I have graven thee," &c. "My Lord, dost thou mean me? Yes, even me, if I by faith cling to Thy cross." "I have graven thee."

It does not say, "Thy name." The name is there, but this is not all; "I have graven thee."

See the fulness of this! I have graven everything about thee, all that concerns thee; it is a full picture, as though the man himself were there.

See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy

weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. It is not an outline sketch, you see; it is a full picture, as though the man himself were there. Dare we dream that God forgets us?

6. We are engraven, where? Upon His hands, not upon the works of His hands. They shall perish; yea, they shall all wax old as doth a garment, but His hands shall endure for ever. Notice, it does not say, "I have graven thee upon the palm of one hand," but "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." There are two memorials. His saints shall never be forgotten, for the inscription is put there upon the palm of this hand, the right hand of blessing, and upon the palm of that hand, the left hand of justice.

We are engraven, where? Upon His "hands." We are not graven upon a seal, for a seal might be slipped from the finger and laid aside, but the hand itself can never be separated from the living God. It is not engraven on the huge rock, for a convulsion of nature might rend the rock with earthquake, or the fretting tooth of time might eat the inscription out; but our record is on His hand, where it must last, world without end. Not upon the back of His hands where it might be supposed that in days of strife and warfare the inscription might suffer damage, but there upon the palms of His hands where it shall be well protected. The tenderest part shall be made the place of the inscription; that to which He is most likely to look, that which His fingers of wisdom enclose, that by which He works His mighty wonders, shall be the unceasing remembrance, pledging Him never to forget His chosen. It does not say, "I have graven thee upon the palm of one hand," but "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." There are two memorials. His saints shall never be forgotten, for the inscription is put there upon the palm of this hand, the right hand of blessing, and upon the palm of that hand, the left hand of justice. I see Him with His right hand beckon me--"Come, ye blessed," and He sees me in His hand; and on that side He says, "Depart, ye cursed," but not to me, for He sees me in His hand, and cannot curse me. Oh, my soul, how charming this is, to know that His left hand is under Thy head, while His right hand doth embrace thee.

Now let us proceed to the second part of the subject—

II. Consider the text as a whole. God's remembrance of His people is—1. Constant. 2. Practical. He will work and show Himself strong for His people; He brings His omnipotent hands to effect our redemption. 3. Eternal. You cannot suppose it possible that any person can erase what is written on God's hand. 4. Tender. 5. Most surprising. Child of God, let your cheerful eyes and your joyful heart testify how great a wonder it is that you, once so far estranged from God, are this day written on the palms of His hands. 6. Most consolatory. There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote.

#### CONSIDER THE TEXT AS A WHOLE.

1. God's remembrance of His people is constant. The hands, of course, are constantly in union with the body. In Solomon's Song we read, "Set me as a seal upon thine arm." Now this is a very close form of remembrance, for the seal is very seldom laid aside by the Eastern, who not being possessed with skill in the art of writing his name, requires' his seal in order to affix his signature to a document; hence the seal is almost always worn, and in some cases is never laid aside. A seal, however, might be laid aside, but the hands never could be. It has been a custom, in the olden days especially, when men wished to remember a thing, to tie a cord about the hand, or a thread around the finger, by which memory would be assisted; but then the cord might be snapped or taken away, and so the matter forgotten, but the hand and that which is printed into it must be constant and perpetual. Oh, Christian, by night and by day God is always thinking of you.

2. This recollection on God's part is practical. We are engraven upon His heart--this is to show His love; we are put upon His shoulders--this is to show that His strength is engaged for us; and also upon His hands, to show that the activity of our Lord will not be spared from us; He will work and show Himself strong for His people; He brings His omnipotent hands to effect our redemption. What would be the use of having a friend who would think of us, and then let his love end in thought? The faithfulness we want is that of one who will act in our defence. Do you see the drift of it? If He moulds a world between His palms, and then sends it wheeling in its orbit, it is between those palms which are stamped with the likeness of His sons and daughters, and so that new work shall minister to their god. If He divides a nation, it is always with the hand that bears the remembrance of Zion. Scripture itself tells us, "When He divided the nations, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." The great wheel of providence, when God makes it revolve, works for the good of His people.

3. This is an eternal remembrance.

4. This memorial how tender! We have heard of one, an eastern queen, who so loved her husband that she thought even to build a mausoleum to his memory was not enough. She had a strange way of proving her affection, for when her husband's bones were burned she took the ashes and drank them day by day, that, as she said, her body might be her husband's living sepulchre. It was a strange way of showing love, and there was a marvellous degree of strange, fanatical fondness in it. But what shall I say of this Divine sympathetic mode of showing remembrance, by cutting it into the palms she It appeareth to me as though the King had said, "Shall I carve My people upon precious stones? Shall I choose the ruby, the emerald, the topaz? No; for these all must melt in the last general conflagration. What then? Shall I write on tablets of gold or silver? No, for all these may canker and corrupt, and thieves may break through and steal. Shall I cut the memorial deep on brass? No, for time would fret it, and the letters would not long be

legible. I will write on Myself, on My own hand, and then My people will know how tender I am, that I would sooner cut into My own flesh than forget them."

5. This memorial is most surprising. Scripture, which is full of wonders, yet allows a "Behold" to be put before this verse--"Behold!"

6. It is also most consolatory. When God would meet Zion's great doubt--"God hath forgotten me," He cheers her with this--"I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote.

III. And now we come to EXCITE YOU TO THE DUTY WHICH SUCH A TEXT SUGGESTS.

1. Is it not your duty to leave your cares behind you to-day?

2. If you must not have cares, you should not have those deep sorrows and despairs.

3. If this text is not yours, how your mouths ought to water after it. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

III. Be heedful of the duty which such a text suggests. 1. If you be partakers of this precious text, is it not your duty to leave your cares behind you to-day? Should not the fact that God always graciously and tenderly recollects you, compel you once for all to leave your burden with Him who careth for you? 2. If this text is not yours, how your mouths ought to water after it! Is there a soul here who says, "O that I had a part and lot in this matter!" Thou mayest have His pardoning love shed abroad in thy heart even now.

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Christ Pierced Zech 12:10 Zech 13:6 John 19:37 Rev 5:6

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After John was told that someone could open the book, he saw the scene Van Eyck later attempted to portray in his marvelous Adoration of the Lamb, one of the world's great paintings. Van Eyck, working with the limitations of his medium, pictures a lamb standing upon an altar with blood shooting forth from his wounded breast.

Martin of Tours -- During the Middle Ages there was a popular story which circulated about Martin of Tours, the saint for whom Martin Luther was named. It was said that Satan once appeared to St Martin in the guise of the Savior himself. St. Martin was ready to fall to his feet and worship this resplendent being of glory and light. Then, suddenly, he looked up into the palms of his hands and asked, "Where are the nail prints?" Whereupon the apparition vanished.

John 20:20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

21 Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

23 "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26 And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came<sup>^</sup>, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be with you."

27 Then He said<sup>^</sup> to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing."

28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

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Spurgeon - It is ill to wrench passages of the Bible out of their context, and treat them as infallible scripture when they are only sayings of men. By acting thus foolishly we could prove that there is no God (Psa 14:1), that God hath forgotten His people (Isa 49:14), that Christ was a winebibber (Mat 9:19), and that we ought to worship the devil Mat 4:19). This will never do. We must inquire who uttered the sentence before we venture to preach from it.

Isa 49:14 - When we are glad In the Lord, and are singing out our heart's joy, there is pretty sure to be someone or other who

sorrowfully sighs," The Lord hath forsaken me." — People say that there never was a feast so well furnished but that somebody went away unsatisfied; but God will not have it so at his festivals; and hence, the rest of the chapter shows how the Lord comforted this poor Zion, whose lamentation and mourning he had heard. Notice how he begins: —

Isa 49:15. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? "Can a woman" — the tenderer parent of the two, — "forget her child," —her own child, her feeble little child that still depends upon her for its nutriment and life, — "her sucking child," — .

Isa 49:15. Yea, they may forget, —It is just possible; there have been such monstrosities: "they may forget," —

Isa 49:15. Yet will I not forget thee. "Yet, saith the Lord, should nature change, And mothers monsters prove, Sion still dwells upon the heart Of everlasting love." How that gracious assurance should comfort the little handful, the "remnant weak and small" of God's people among the Jews! How it should also comfort any of God's servants who are under a cloud, and who have lost for a while the enjoyment of his presence!

Isa 49:16. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; —Where they must be seen, and where he can do nothing without touching his people while doing it. When a name is engraven on the hand with which a man works, that name goes into his work, and leaves its impress on the work.

Isa 49:16-17. Thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee. Jerusalem, the very Jerusalem that is in Palestine, shall be rebuilt. God will remember her walls, and the Church of God in Israel shall yet rise from that sad low estate in which it has been these many centuries; and all God's cast-down ones shall be comforted, and his churches, that seem to be left to die, shall be raised up again, for our God is no changeling. His heart does not come and go towards the sons of men.

"Whom once He loves, he never leaves, but loves them to the end."

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#### Rod Mattoon - THE MEMORY OF GOD-Ge 8:1-3

Noah has been in the ark many days, yet, God has not forgotten him. The waters assuaged as God made a wind to pass over the earth. He also closed up the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven. The rain was restrained too. The waters returned from the earth continually or rapidly. Lakes were formed; new rivers flow, and the oceans and seas cover more area of the planet. The Bible says the Lord remembered Noah. The word "remember" means to prick, pierce, or print upon the memory. God's people are engraven on the palms of His hands (Isaiah 49:16). We have four examples of God remembering something in the book of Genesis.

#### God's Memory in Genesis

- God remembers His Creation. He remembers Noah and the animals in the ark. 8:1
- God remembers His Covenant. This is His covenant with the earth. 9:15, 16
- God remembers His Champion. He remembers Abraham after the complete destruction of Sodom. 19:29
- God remembers a Crisis. He remembered Rachel and opened her empty womb. 30:22

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Over 200 instances of this verb REMEMBER can be found in the Hebrew Bible. In a majority of cases, the act denoted by this verb is more than recollection. In most instances, the act of "remembrance" is an act of covenantal or legal obligation, which leads to a present act. Remembrance is an act of recognition, not solely an act of reflection.

For ourselves, it is sufficient to know that, whether our names are blazoned abroad or unknown, easy or difficult to pronounce, short or long, full of meaning or unattractive, they are written upon God's palms and in heaven every child of His is to have a new name (Isa. 49:16; Rev. 2:17).

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D L MOODY

#### GOD'S LOVE IS UNFAILING

God's love is not only unchangeable, but unfailing. In Isaiah 49:15,16 we read:

"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. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me."

Now the strongest human love that we know of is a mother's love. Many things will separate a man from his wife. A father may turn his back on his child; brothers and sisters may become inveterate enemies; husbands may desert their wives; wives, their husbands. But a mother's love endures through all. In good repute, in bad repute, in the face of the world's condemnation, a mother loves on, and hopes that her child may turn from his evil ways and repent. She remembers the infant smiles, the merry laugh of childhood, the promise of youth. Death cannot quench a mother's love; it is stronger than death.

You have seen a mother watching over her sick child. How willingly she would take the disease into her own body if she could thus relieve her child! Week after week she will keep watch; she will let no one else take care of that sick child.

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Isa 49:16

God is Cheering for You

by Max Lucado

If your God is Mighty enough to ignite the sun, could it be that He is mighty enough to light your path?

God is for you. Not "may be," not "has been," not "was," not "would be," but "God is!" He is for you. Today. At this hour. At this minute. As you read this sentence. No need to wait in line or come back tomorrow. He is with you. He could not be closer than he is at this second. His loyalty won't increase if you are better nor lessen if you are worse. He is for you.

God is for you. Turn to the sidelines; that's God cheering your run. Look past the finish line; that's God applauding your steps. Listen for him in the bleachers, shouting your name. Too tired to continue? He'll carry you. Too discouraged to fight? He's picking you up. God is for you.

God is for you. Had he a calendar, your birthday would be circled. If he drove a car, your name would be on his bumper. If there's a tree in heaven, he's carved your name in the bark. We know he has a tattoo, and we know what it says. "I have written your name on my hand," he declares (Isa. 49:16).

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The Love That Will Not Let Us Go (Isaiah 49:16.)

Christ in Isaiah.

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MAX LUCADO - When you meet your Father in heaven, he'll call your name. After all, your name is written on God's hand (Isaiah 49:16). What a remarkable thought! The King of heaven calling your name!

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May 7

"He careth for you." (1 Pet. 5:7)

The Bible is fairly full of tokens of God's marvelous care for His people. During Israel's forty-year trek through the wilderness, they ate food from heaven (Ex. 16:4), had an unfailing supply of water (1 Cor. 10:4), and were equipped with shoes that never wore out (Deut. 29:5).

It is the same in our wilderness journey. To prove this, our Lord reminds us how His care for us is so much greater than His care for birds, flowers and animals. He speaks of sparrows, for instance. He provides their food (Mt. 6:26). Not one of them is forgotten before God (Lu. 12:6). Not one falls to the ground without Him (Mt. 10:29), or, as H. A. Ironside said, "God attends the funeral of every sparrow." The moral of the story, of course, is that we are of more value to Him than many sparrows (Mt. 10:31).

If He clothes the lilies of the field more beautifully than Solomon was ever attired, He will much more clothe us (Mt. 6:30). If He makes provision for the care of oxen, how much more will He care for our needs (1 Cor. 9:9).

As our High Priest, the Lord Jesus bears our names on His shoulders—the place of power (Ex. 28:9-12) and on His breast—the place of affection (Ex. 28:15-21). Also our names are engraved in the palms of His hands (Isa. 49:16), a fact that inevitably reminds

us of the nail wounds He sustained for us at Calvary.

He knows the exact number of the hairs of our head (Mt. 10:30). He numbers our tossings at night and keeps count of our tears in His book (Psa. 56:8 RSV).

Whoever touches us, touches the apple of His eye (Zech. 2:8). No weapon formed against us can prosper (Isa. 54:17).

Whereas the heathen carry their gods on their shoulders (Isa. 46:7), our God carries His people (Isa. 46:4).

When we go through the waters, the rivers or the fire, He is with us (Isa. 43:2). In all our afflictions, He is afflicted (Isa. 63:9).

The One who guards us neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psa. 121:3, 4). Someone has called this characteristic of God "the divine insomnia".

The Good Shepherd who gave His life for us will not withhold any good from us (John 10:11; Psa. 84:11; Rom. 8:32).

He cares for us from the beginning of the year to the end (Deut. 11:12). He bears us even to old age (Isa. 46:4). In fact He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). God really cares!

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## HERBERT LOCKYER -ALL THE PROMISES OF THE BIBLE

### The Shadow of the Hand

Among the almost 1,500 Bible references to hands, there are a few relating to God which carry with them promises of provision and protection. Throughout Scripture hands are represented in very many expressive actions and customs.

The right hand was the place

of honor and power.

"Upon thy right hand did sit the queen." Psalm 45:9; I Kings 2:19

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand." Psalm 110:1

"The right hand of power." Mark 14:62

"Thou that saveth by thy right hand." Psalm 17:1; Exodus 15:6

The right hand was illustrative of

protection and support.

"Thou hast holden me by thy right hand." Psalm 73:23; Isaiah 41:13

"He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Psalms 16:8; 109:31; 110:5

Men smote the Lord with the palms of their hands, but He in love and mercy assures us that He has graven our names upon the palms of His hands (Isaiah 49:16; Matthew 26:67). If we want to remember something, we tie a piece of string round a finger. Our names graven—never to be effaced—on His hands carries the promise of His everlasting remembrance of us.

Because in creation and redemption we are "The work of thy hand" (Isaiah 64:8), we are privileged to have the hiding shadow of that hand (Isaiah 49:2).

"My times are in thy hand." Psalm 31:15

What a rich promise this is the psalmist gives us! How blessed we are when we can sing—

All my times are in His hand:

I'll therefore trust, nor yield to fear,

But cast on Jesus all my care.

All events are under divine control. Nothing is left to chance. As Christians, we do not shape our lives by any star, as astrologists would have us do. The One who made the stars rules and overrules in the affairs of your life and mine. In infinite wisdom and love, He appoints all that should come our way. By His power, He causes all things to work together for our good—whether the "times" be



good or bad.

"My purpose shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

His purposes cannot be frustrated and His promises and purposes cannot fail.

"All his saints are in his hand." Deuteronomy 33:3

This further promise does not say that some of his saints—the most obedient and holiest—are in His hand, but all His saints. There is a sense, of course, in which every Christian is a saint—that is, separated and set apart by God for His service and sanctified by the operations of the Spirit. All believers, then, are saints, although some are more saintly than others. But all are in His hand of mercy, of power, and of providence. All in His hand are His property, to be protected and provided for by Him: and because His hand is large enough to hold all, it is strong enough to preserve all. His is the hand of a "living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

"Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand... No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John 10:28, 29

Do we not have here the promise of a double security? Truly, the Christian is safe because of the double grip Jesus spoke about. His statement is explicit—"no man"—and this is a generic term implying that even the believer himself cannot wriggle out of the mighty hands of the Father and the Son. With our hands in these wonderful hands of deity, we are forever safe and secure.

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J J Knap in "The Loins Girded" has this devotional...

The Palms of My Hands Isaiah 49:16

Among the sailors it is still the custom to imprint upon the lower arm or the back of the hand a small ship in such a manner that it is indelible, something that is easily done because of the art of tattooing. In the same manner people in the East in ancient times had the name of someone they loved imprinted not upon the back of the hand but, more intimately, in the palm of the hand,—people only had to open the hand to read it, and as hard as it was to forget one's own hand, so little could also that name depart only for moment from the heart.

The Lord applied this in the text of today to Himself in respect of the object of His eternal love, Jerusalem, which was an image of the congregation of the living God. The ancient Israel could complain when it was in exile: "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me"; but that complaint had to die on their lips now that they heard that the Lord had not only graven the holy city in one of His palms of the hand, but in both palms of the hand; and that He did not only occasionally think of her, but that the walls of Jerusalem, that would soon be restored, were continually before Him; yes, the Lord would have to shake off His own hands if He would want to shake Jerusalem from Him!

What a comfort is contained in this image for every one who believes, and by it proves to belong to the spiritual Zion of the redeemed congregation, even if he may not occupy as conspicuous a position as the walls of Jerusalem. Not only our name, but the whole building of our outward and inward life is engraved as a permanent plan in the Lord's palms of the hands, and also of this the comforting word is said: "Thy walls are continually before Me."

All events that must add to the elevation of the house of our life; all occurrences that affect our forming; all surprises and all disappointments that shall prove to work for our good; all our cares and our sorrows, that have their intended place in the plan of our life; our joys and sadness that cannot be missed in the plan of our life; there is nothing left to chance, it is all the realization of the Lord's wise and good counsel. Yes, even our spiritual needs and cares, our lightly straying heart, our so often evil inclinations, that need continuous sanctification, our whole soul with her confusing content,—He has it all continually before His eyes: we are graven in both His palms of the hands in indelible, yes, in eternal script!

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John MacDuff -. What he said concerning Zion is true of each of his people, "Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me!" Isaiah 49:16. Yes, upon his loving heart — are our worthless names imprinted for a perpetual memorial. And should not his remembrance of us, have the effect of stirring up our minds to a more frequent, devout, and adoring remembrance of Him? If we only felt the mighty obligations under which his boundless love has laid us — to forget him for a single hour would be impossible!

The high priest carried the names of the twelve tribes inscribed on his breastplate. But his church is engraved on the palms of the hands of her Redeemer. Isaiah 49:16.

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:28

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"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; Engraved!

(John MacDuff, "The Immutability of Christ" 1874)

"Behold! I have engraved you on the palms of My hands!" Isaiah 49:16

"Behold," says Immutable One, "I have engraved you on the palms of My hands." Not on the mountains, colossal as they are, for they shall depart; on no page of nature's vast volume, for the last fires shall scorch them; not on blazing sun, for he shall grow dim with age; not on glorious heavens, for they shall be folded together as a scroll. But on the hand which made the worlds, the hand which was transfixed on Calvary, the hand of might and love; I have engraved you there! No corroding power can efface the writing, or obliterate your name! You are Mine now, and Mine forever!

no one can snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:28

"Behold! I have engraved you on the palms of My hands!" Isaiah 49:16

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:28

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Dianne Neal Matthews (Drawing Closer to God)

"Can a woman forget her nursing child?"

Isaiah 49:14–18

Christina sat at her desk, wondering why she couldn't concentrate. She'd looked forward to coming back to work after her maternity leave; now it seemed that her heart had stayed at home. Moment by moment, her thoughts centered on her five-week-old son. Was he sleeping well today? Would the sitter remember to use that special cream on his rash? Hadn't his forehead felt a little warm this morning? And just when Christina finally got interested in her current project, the milk started flowing and she had to reach for the breast pump.

God compared a mother's love and attention to his care for Israel. During the Babylonian captivity, the people wondered if God had forgotten about them. He assured them that he had not. "Can a woman forget her nursing child?" God asked them. "Will she have no compassion on the child from her womb?" God said that although it is possible for mothers to forget their children, he could never forget his people. God had even engraved their names on his hands, so that his thoughts were continually focused on them.

What a comforting thought to know that God is thinking about us all through the day and night. How incredible to think that the Creator of the universe has us at the center of his thoughts. No matter what's happening in our life, God tenderly watches over us like a mother caring for her baby. And like a mother, he always wants what's best for us.

When we face troubles that seem to have no end, we can start to feel like God has forgotten all about us. During those times it helps to read Scriptures that remind us of his love and care. We may forget about God sometimes, but thankfully, we are never out of his thoughts.

Although mothers may forget, I will not forget you.

Isaiah 49:15

Ask yourself: What types of situations tempt me to feel like God has forgotten me?

## ----- SCAR & COVENANT

What did participants occasionally do when they made cuts in their flesh to help them remember their blood and lives were now "co-mingled"?

They would intentionally produce a scar? Scar = permanent reminder. These were "marks of covenant" (cp Paul Gal 6:17)

Let's see what Scripture says about "covenant cuts" and "covenant marks"

What was God's assurance to Zion (representative of the Israelite people) in Isaiah 49:15,16 when they complained that Jehovah had forsaken and forgotten them (Isaiah 49:14)?

1) Can a mother forget nursing child? Even if that occurred God would not forget Zion

2) God had inscribed (engraved) Zion on the palm of His hand (Click for more notes on scars)

Explanatory Note: The truth in Isa 49:14-16 is specifically spoken to literal Zion to assure her of God's faithfulness to preserve the city of God and the believing remnant of Israel, but these truths also clearly have application to NT believers and remind one of covenant marks in the hands of One Who would come over 500 years later.

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A Debtor to Mercy Alone

by Augustus Toplady

My name from the palms of His hands

Eternity will not erase;

Impressed on His heart it remains,

In marks of indelible grace.

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3 sermons by Spurgeon on Isaiah 49:16

1) Neither Forsaken Nor Forgotten

2) A Precious Drop of Honey

3) God's Memorial of His People

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Who does the picture of "inscribed on His palm" remind you of when compared with Ps 22:16? They pierced my hands and my feet

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What (Whom) does Ps 22:16 refer to? Messiah's Crucifixion

Piercing of hands and feet is an accurate description of crucifixion (see Acts 2:23)

Explanatory Note: "Pierced" is actually the Hebrew word 'ariy which is more accurately translated "like a lion" (see the marginal note in the NAS). On the other hand the Septuagint (LXX) translates it with the Greek verb orusso which means to dig or to dig a hole. Brenton's English of the LXX renders it "pierced my hands and my feet". Ps 22:16 is not specifically quoted in the NT, although Jesus does quote Ps 22:1 which lends support to verse 16 being a reference to Messiah's crucifixion. The most popular modern translations render this verse "pierced" but the careful student will at least be aware of the background that has led to their translation.

The incision was scarified into a permanent scar which would serve as a constant reminder of the covenant promise between the partners

Trumbull brings out this practice of scarification in his book, The Blood Covenant writing that

Commander Cameron, who, while in charge of the Livingstone Search Expedition ... gives several illustrations of the observance of this rite... "The first operation consisted of making an incision on each of their right wrists, just sufficient to draw blood; a little of which was scraped off and smeared on the other's cut; after which gunpowder was rubbed in [thereby securing a permanent token on the arm]." (The Blood Covenant - Online)

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Isaiah 49:16 Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.

The word "inscribed" means to cut into signifying permanence). Yes, the immediate context is the City of Zion, but the application to those in covenant with Him should not be lost. Indeed, Spurgeon felt fully justified to apply the metaphor to believers, not just in one sermon, but 3 sermons!

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Spurgeon comments on Isaiah 49:16 writing that...

"Behold is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." (Neither Forsaken nor Forgotten)

Spurgeon comments

"I have graven thee"... does not say, "Thy name. " The name is there, but that is not all: "I have graven thee. " See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee upon his own palms?...

A dear friend told me that, when traveling in the East, he frequently saw persons who had the portraits of their friends printed on the palms of their hands. I said to him, "But did not they wear out?" Yes, sometimes," he said, "but very frequently they were tattooed, marked right into the hand, and then, as long as the hand was there, there was the image of the friend, roughly drawn, of course.?" Oriental art is not very perfect, but there it was, drawn on the palms of the hands, so that it could be always seen. A person had never to say, "Run and fetch the portrait; run and bring me down the memorial?"; he always had it present with him. So the Lord Jesus always has his people present with him at all times. He is the head: they are the members. (Ed: Speaks of oneness) The members are never far off from the head. He is the Shepherd: they are the sheep; and the careful shepherd, in time of danger, is never far from, his sheep. Christ is not far from any of his people, and, therefore, his recollections of them are not difficult to be maintained. He keeps the memorial of them in his hands present with him. There is no fear, therefore, that he will forget them. (Neither Forsaken nor Forgotten)

Comment: In Spurgeon's sermon he alliteratively expounds on the significance of the Inscription on God's palm as that which is Present, Permanent (perpetual), Personal, Painful.

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F B Meyer - Yes, child of God, thou art photographed where God must ever behold thee, on his hands, on his heart. Thou art never for a moment out of his thought, nor hidden from his eye. Not on one hand only, but on both. It is the plural in each case, "On the palms of my hands."... What a contrast between Zion's wail about being forsaken and forgotten, and God's tender regard! So the believer, considering the desolations of his soul and the ruins of past joys, is apt to think himself a castaway. But it is not so. At the time of his deepest despair, God is thinking of him, as a mother of her first-born babe; and his need is ever before Him.

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Charles Roll referred to Jesus as "The Engraver of the Name (Isaiah 49:16): Reliable in fixity and faithfulness. --

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Vine comments on Isaiah 49:16... = Jews had a custom of marking on their hands, or elsewhere, a delineation of the city and the temple, as a sign of their devotion to, and perpetual remembrance of, them. The Lord graciously adopts the figure to confirm His assurance. However great the devastation wrought by Gentile powers might be, the walls are ever before Him in their restored and perfected condition in the future. To be graven on the palms of His hands is suggestive of the closest identification with Himself (Ed: Reminds us of the oneness of the New Covenant), of His unchanging love (cp God's hesed), and of His constant mindfulness of us in all His emotions and activities. Often, in our unbelief, remissness and forgetfulness, we lose sight of our preciousness in His sight in Christ. What is here conveyed in figure finds its fullness of expression in the outflowing of the Lord's heart to the disciples in the upper room, "Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you: abide ye in My love" (Jn 15:9).

Ray Ortlund comments that = The imagery of Isa 49:16 suggests a vision of God spreading out his hands before us, so that we can see our very names engraved there. Have we thought through how profoundly we're loved by God? If his assurances do not move us, what more are we holding out for? Isn't the love of God enough? (Isaiah: God saves sinners. Preaching the Word)

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J Vernon McGee comments = What beautiful assurance God gives them that they are not forsaken of Him! Israel may forsake Him—as they are doing yet today—but God will never forsake them. My friend, if you still have doubts that God will restore Israel, I submit this section to you for your careful study.

We might not want to admit it, but there are times when we feel abandoned and forgotten by the Lord too (like Zion). We wonder why the circumstances in our lives are like they are. We wonder why it seems like life is one trial after another. We wonder where God is in the world and why things appear to be out of control. Sometimes we feel like we have been forgotten! These verses are designed to teach you that you are “unforgettable”. God cannot and will not forget about you, God cannot and will not forsake you. I want to show you how these verses present our God. We are given four proofs of God's devotion to us. Let me share those proofs with you today as I preach on the subject: Unforgettable.

The Sermon Notebook - The Sermon Notebook – Isaiah.

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Jer 17:1 sins written down with an iron stylus! Sins covered by the blood of the wounds in His hands wrought by an iron nail? Wounds which leave a scar forever!

The palm is toward the face. In all the work that He does, His own people are constantly in His mind, and the objects of His care. The graving on the hands was done by the nails of Calvary. A Dictionary of Bible Types.

“The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me” (Isa 49:14).

Isaiah 6:12; 17:9; 27:10; 32:14, and 49:14; 54:6, 7; 62:4, 12.

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- When you feel alone

'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God' Isaiah 41:10.

See also Psalms 23; 73:23-24; Isaiah 49:14-16; John 14:15-21.

The New Unger's Bible Handbook.

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God cannot forget us.

Isa. 49:14-16.

Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling.

In the verse, “Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands” (Isaiah 49:16), there is an allusion to the ancient custom of puncturing ornamental figures and mementoes upon the hand, arm, and forehead, and coloring the punctures with indigo, cypress, etc. This gives us the figure of Zion being as close to God as He is to Himself, and facing Him amid all the emotions of His divine life. The New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

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Hand of God

A figure of speech which points to God's sovereign power in creation and in his actions on his people's behalf, especially in redemption. Also used as a symbol of authority and in taking oaths.

God Creates by His Hand

Ac 7:50 See also Isa 66:2; Job 10:3, 8; Ps 8:3; 19:1; 95:5; 138:8; Isa 48:13; 64:8

God Holds the World in His Hand

Ps 95:4 See also Job 12:10; 26:13; 36:32; Ps 31:15; Isa 40:12; 41:19-20; Da 5:23

God's Creatures Are Fed From His Hand

Ps 145:16 See also Ps 104:28; Isa 34:17

God's Hand Symbolises His Power

God's hand is mighty Hab 3:4 See also 1Ch 29:12; Ps 118:15-16; Jer 18:6; Da 4:35; Am 9:2

God executes judgment by the power of his hand Am 1:6-8 Judgment on the Philistine cities. See also Dt 32:41; 1Sa 5:6-9; Isa 40:2; Jer 15:6; La 2:3; Eze 6:14; Zep 1:4; Ac 13:11

God's hand holds a cup of judgment Jer 25:15-17 See also Ps 75:8; Isa 51:17; Hab 2:16

God's hand brings trouble Job 19:21 See also Ru 1:13; 1Sa 6:3; Job 1:11; Ps 38:2; 39:10

God's hand causes fear Isa 19:16 See also Isa 23:11

Pleas for God to Use His Powerful Hand

Ps 74:11 See also Ps 10:12; 60:5 pp Ps 108:6; Ps 77:10; 144:7-8

God's Powerful Hand Used On His People's Behalf

God redeems by his powerful hand Ps 138:7 See also 1Ki 8:41-42 pp 2Ch 6:32; Ps 98:1; Isa 11:11; Eze 20:21-22, 33-34; Mic 4:10

God redeemed Israel from Egypt by his powerful hand Ex 13:3 See also Ex 3:19-20; 13:9, 14; Dt 5:15; 7:8; Ne 1:10; Jer 32:21; Pa 9:15

God's hand ensures success for his people Isa 41:10 "righteous" has the sense of "victorious". See also Ps 16:8; 18:35; 89:21; Isa 42:6; 49:4

God's powerful hand is invincible Jn 10:29 See also Ps 139:10; Isa 43:13

God's hand protects his people Ezr 8:31 See also Ex 33:22-23; 1Ch 4:10; Ps 121:5; Isa 41:13; 49:2, 16; 62:3

God's hand inspires the prophets Jer 1:9 See also Isa 8:11; Jer 15:17; Eze 1:3; 3:14, 22; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1

God's hand fulfils his purposes Ezr 7:6 See also 2Ch 30:12; Ezr 7:9, 28; 8:18; Ne 2:8, 18; Pr 21:1; Ecc 2:24; Isa 45:1; Lk 1:66; Ac 11:21

God's Uplifted Hand

Signifies his taking an oath Ne 9:15 See also Ex 6:8; Nu 14:30; Dt 32:40; Eze 47:14

Signifies his power Isa 9:12, 17, 21; 26:11

God's Right Hand Symbolises His Authority

Ac 7:55-56 See also Ps 110:1; Ac 5:31; Ro 8:34; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 1Pe 3:22

God's Hand Must Be Recognised

God requires submission under his hand 1Pe 5:6 See also Ro 10:21; Isa 65:2

The works of God's hand must be acknowledged Ps 28:5; 92:4; 143:5

Dictionary of Bible Themes: An Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies.

Matthew Poole - I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; mine eye and heart is constantly upon thee. He alludes to the common practice of men, who use to put signs and memorials upon their hands or fingers of such things as they dearly affect, and would remember. See Exo 13:9 Deu 6:8 Pro 6:21 Son 8:6 Jer 22:24.

John Gill - Not upon his thick clouds, the clouds of heaven under him, always in view, as R. Saadiah Gaon, mentioned by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi: much better the Targum, "lo, as upon the hands thou art engraven before me;" signifying that his people were always in his sight, his eyes were ever upon them, and never withdrawn from them; as anything held in the hand, or tied to or wore upon it, as a signet or ring that has the name of a person on it, to which the allusion may be; which shows how near and dear they are to him, what affection he has for them, and care of them; see Song 8:6. ("Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The [ very] flame of the LORD) Some think respect is had to the wounds in the hands of Christ, which, being on their account, are looked upon and remembered by him; or, however, to their being in his hands, out of which none can pluck them, Joh 10:28: and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

John Trapp - Behold, I have graven thee. ] {a} So that as oft as I look upon mine own hands I cannot but think on thee. We read of one who had written the whole history of Christ's Passion upon the nails of his hands in small letters. The "signet on his finger" a

man cannot lightly look beside. See Song 8:6 Jer 22:24. "As I live," declares the LORD, "even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet [ ring] on My right hand, yet I would pull you off;

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1. Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come,

Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heav'n and home,

When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He:

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

\* Refrain:

I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,

For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

2. "Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear,

And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;

Though by the path He leadeth, but one step I may see;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

3. Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise,

When songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies,

I draw the closer to Him, from care He sets me free;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

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## CHARLES ROLL - NAMES AND TITLES OF JESUS

### The Engraver of the Name

Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. 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. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands (Isaiah 49:15-16).

When the Lord uses "behold," it is sufficient to indicate that something startling is to follow. In this instance we stand astonished at the declaration that is made. Listen to the music of the words, "Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of My hands." I, the Architect and Artist of the ages, the Designer of the everlasting habitations, "I have graven thee." A ring of reality sounds forth from this statement, reminding us of other utterances equally exciting: "I have chosen," "I have called," "I have made," "I have given" and such like, all of which we cherish dearly. No indefiniteness marks the words such as marks "I may," "I might," or "I must." Whatever else may happen to other engravings on stone or steel, in this case no erasure is feasible because He is immortal, and no error is possible because He is immutable. None can efface the engraving because He dwelleth in light which no man can approach. What antiquity is attached to the engraving of the Ancient of Days, as compared with the deep-cut hieroglyphics of the basalt rocks of Egypt. Even before the days of earth's earliest infancy, or ever she had burst her swaddling bands of cloudy mist; prior to the shooting forth of effulgent sun rays across the bosom of the sky; preceding the peeping of stars with twinkling eyes athwart the cerulean arch; the Eternal had focused His heart's love on His ransomed society and fastened the remembrance of His loved object on the palms of His hands. Not written, stamped or printed on pages of parchment is this name, but graven forevermore.

The suggestiveness of the figure expresses eternal election; it indicates inseverable identity; it intimates an ineffable immortality; yea, the very fashion of its design foretells an unending union with an incomparable Lover. No human merit can induce Christ to

engrave the name and no human monarch can insist on its being done. Philanthropists, potentates, principalities, and philosophers have no influence here, not even enough to have one single name inscribed in such a place. The sole prerogative is according to the riches of His grace, and according to the good pleasure of His will. The endorsement of His everlasting love is the only recommendation needed; the endearment of His affectionate heart of infinite mercy is the sole commendation to assure the engraving of the name on the palms of His hands.

The lines that are imprinted on our hands at birth remain unchanged until our burial at death. But God has no birth or burial, so the engraving on His hands remains forever. These are the hands wherewith He wrought the mighty wonders of creation, all the features of which creation were designed by the wealth of His wisdom. These are the same hands which have been guiding, guarding and governing through the centuries, but never before was it known that both palms were memorial tablets.

To be engraven on His hands is expressive of the favor of a faithful Guardian and likewise it exhibits a distinctive honor bestowed by a powerful Governor. We learn from these things how precious the Church is to Christ, how desirous He is to honor her, how generous He is in her favor and how vigorous His ministry in intercession whereby He assures to His Bride ineffable splendor. No fondness has ever been expressed to any loved favorite in this world that is comparable to the favor Christ has shown to His people (Psalm 106:4-5). We may esteem this act as one of the marvels of His ministry, we may count it among the miracles of His mercy and we may accept it as one of the great mysteries of His monarchy.

Our name is engraven upon His own hands,

Our witness in heaven eternally stands;

The nearest and dearest and choicest to Him,

Without spot or wrinkle without or within.

The tables and tablets of brass and of stone

With their deeply cut letters are soon overthrown;

But none can erase the indelible names

Of those He redeems and eternally claims.

Names and Titles of Jesus Christ - Names and Titles of Jesus Christ – The Indescribable Christ: A–G.

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KAY ARTHUR -

BECAUSE I'M IN COVENANT WITH GOD ... I HAVE A FAITHFUL FRIEND

Have there been times-or are there times-when you wonder if God has forgotten or abandoned you? ((remember His delays are not denials))

Does this experience come from times of difficulty, stress, loneliness, or testing?

Perhaps you've cried and cried in the depths of your need, aching, hurting, grieving, begging for relief and had that gnawing sense that rescue won't come.

Is it because the arm of flesh upon which you leaned has walked away or been taken from you in death, and you are feeling desperately alone, confused, helpless, fragmented unable to get it together?

The loving arms of protection are gone, the counsel of another has been silenced, and you feel abandoned... frighteningly on your own... forsaken!

Hush, precious one. Catch that still small voice, and listen carefully, quietly. God is speaking:

"Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb?" (Isaiah 49:15-16)

"Not usually," you answer, "though some have... "

And God says,

"Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands." (Isaiah 49:15-16)



You are not abandoned, forgotten, for you are inscribed on the palms of God's hands! It's the mark of covenant, beloved.

## "SEE MY HANDS"

If you are God's child by covenant, a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, this is the truth you must cling to when you feel abandoned: You are inscribed on the palms of His hands! For the feelings are just that- feelings.

Feelings that are very real, feelings that you must deal with. But remember reality. Reality is the fact that a covenant has been cut on your behalf. Your feelings will betray you-overwhelm you cripple you-if you do not decide, by the gut-level determination of faith, that "feel it or not" you will trust your Covenant God. Put on the music ... the hymns of the faith ... the choruses of trust. Sing whether you feel like it or not. Sing whether you can sing or not. Sing until your feelings conform to reality.

For Jesus bears on His body the brand-marks of covenant. For all eternity our Lord Christ-in His resurrected body-will carry the scars of eternal love, scars made on the day they pierced His hands and His feet and thrust a spear into His side. (Revelation 5:6)

As the Guardian of your life lifts His holy hands in intercession on your behalf, the covenant marks of His love for you are ever before Him. He cannot, will not forget you or forsake you.

He is there. He cares. And He is the Son of God the God of Covenant!

He is speaking to you who doubt:

"Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." (John 20:27)

For He Himself has said, I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say,"The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6)

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Spurgeon - THE bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant." Oh, it is not my remembering God, it is God's remembering me, which is the ground of my safety; it is not my laying hold of his covenant, but his covenant's laying hold on me. Glory be to God! the whole of the bulwarks of salvation are secured by divine power, and even the minor towers, which we may imagine might have been left to man, are guarded by almighty strength. Even the remembrance of the covenant is not left to our memories, for we might forget; but our Lord cannot forget the saints whom he has graven on the palms of his hands.

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And just as he prized those people and desired to work through them, so he prizes the church today. He has purchased her at a very dear price, the blood of his Son, Jesus Christ. He tenderly regards her as a father does his children. She is the apple of his eye and her name is inscribed on the palms of his hands.

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Inscribed on the Palms of God's Hands ... God is cosmic, yet deeply personal. God's relationship to us is described in the most intimate, basic terms ... a mother breast-feeding her infant. As intensely as Israel feels forgotten, God feels intensely connected. Women who have breast-fed know the ache of this life-giving nourishment; how milk spills at the softest cry. God's intensity more than matches Israel's, as their word "forgotten" (v. 14) is overturned not once, but three times (v. 15).

We are not forgotten. We are inscribed on the palms of God's hands. Every day in Washington, D.C., people visit the Vietnam Memorial, searching for a name etched into the wall bearing so many names. They trace their fingers over the letters, touching something deeper than name alone. Not forgotten. Remembered. Inscribed. Still, not all names are there, for even our best memorials are limited. Not so the palms of God: every name is written, everyone is included. What joy to find your own name and names of those you love on God's outstretched palm!

Might tattoos be an apt metaphor for God's inscribed hands? Indeed, people who get tattoos often want to indicate membership in a group, a way of life; or to make permanent note of an event or a person. However, an ink is being developed today that makes tattoo removal easier and less painful. Our loyalties, our loves change. Not so with God. The covenant holds. We are inscribed on the palms of God's outstretched hands, hands that guide us toward freedom and welcome us home.

kimberly l. clayton

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Isaiah 49:14–16 In the meantime, the city of Zion is portrayed as feeling that her Lord has forgotten her. Jehovah's answer is that a mother may forget her nursing baby, but He will never forget His city. Zion is inscribed on the palms of His hands, and her walls are never out of His mind. We instinctively compare the reference to the palms of Jehovah's hands with the lovewounds borne by Christ for us. A great English Christian poet expressed it beautifully:

My name from the palms of His hands

Eternity will not erase;

Imprest on His heart it remains

In marks of indelible grace.

—Augustus Toplady

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Spurgeon - When I read my name inscribed on the palms of Jesus' hands, when I understood that I was united to him by a union that never could be broken, I said to myself, "What a thousand fools I have been to have lived forgetful of my highest glory, unmindful of my dearest friend!" To have lived year after year in open enmity against my Lord seemed like a grim and ghastly dream, almost too horrible to be true. Have you not felt the same? Have you not felt ashamed and confounded at the memory of your former life? Have you not felt as if you could never open your mouth any more because of all your unkindness to your heavenly friend? Such penitent reflections keep the Lord's people right, by creating a fear and trembling in the presence of his overflowing goodness.

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INDELIBLE - [Middle English indelyble, from Medieval Latin indelebilis, alteration of Latin indelebilis, from in- + delēre to delete]

(15th century)

1 a : that cannot be removed, washed away, or erased

b : making marks that cannot easily be removed an indelible pencil

2 a : lasting indelible memories

b : unforgettable , memorable an indelible performance

indelible ink - ink that cannot be erased or washed away

Indelible ink - Indelible means "un-removable". Some types of indelible ink have a very short shelf life because of the quickly evaporating solvents used. India, Mexico, Indonesia, Malaysia and other developing countries have used indelible ink in the form of electoral stain to prevent electoral fraud. The Election Commission in India has used indelible ink for many elections. Indonesia used it in their last election in Aceh. In Mali, the ink is applied to the fingernail. Indelible ink itself is not infallible as it can be used to commit electoral fraud by marking opponent party members before they have chances to cast their votes. There are also reports of 'indelible' ink washing off voters' fingers.

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INDEL'IBLE, a. [Fr. indelebile; L. indelebilis; in and delebilis, from deleo, to blot out.]

1. Not to be blotted out; that cannot be effaced or canceled; as indelible letters or characters. Indelible ink is such as cannot be taken out of paper or cloth, or not by ordinary means.

2. Not to be annulled.

They are endued with indelible power from above, to feed and govern this household. [Unusual.] Sprat.

3. That cannot be effaced or lost; as, impressions on the mind may be indelible; reproach or stain on reputation may be indelible.

INDEL'IBLY, adv. In a manner not to be blotted out or effaced; too deeply imprinted to be effaced, or to vanish.

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The Lord Carries His People

ON HIS SHOULDERS Ex. 28:12

IN HIS BOSOM Isa. 40:11

ON HIS HEART Ex. 28:29

ON HIS HAND Isa. 49:16

ON HIS FOREHEAD Ex. 28:38

ON HIS WINGS Ex. 19:4

IN HIS ARMS Deut. 33:27

Golden Nuggets - Golden Nuggets – Volume 18.

The Lord's Hands

PIERCED FOR OUR SINS Psalm 22:16

GRAVEN WITH OUR NAMES Isaiah 49:16

FILLED FOR OUR NEEDS Exodus 28:14

UPLIFTED FOR OUR BLESSING Luke 24:50

STRONG FOR OUR DEFENSE Psalm 138:7

RE-ASSURING FOR OUR FEARS Revelation 1:17

POWER-GIVING FOR SERVICE 1 Kings 18:15

Golden Nuggets - Golden Nuggets – Volume 24.

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Graven upon His Hands

By: A. B. Simpson

Isaiah 49:16

THIS BEAUTIFUL FIGURE EXPRESSES GOD'S PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF EACH ONE OF US

He addresses us in the second person, "thee," and this implies that He knows and records our individual names. God knows each of us personally. He tells us the very hairs of our head are all numbered, and we are of more value than many sparrows. "The shepherd knoweth his sheep, and calleth them by name." "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

IT SPEAKS OF HIS PERSONAL LOVE

Christ so loves us that He carries our names in His constant remembrance. He contrasts His love with the tenderest material affection; we may take the highest types of human love, and then know that He loves us yet more and better.

THE FIGURE IMPLIES CONTINUAL REMEMBRANCE

The object of engraving us upon the palms of His hand is to keep us ever in His thoughts. How wonderful is God's remembrance of us! Our circumstances may seem to deny that God has any thought about us; but He has not forgotten us; His eye is still upon us; His heart is tenderly cherishing us; His hand is working for our highest blessing.

THE FIGURE IMPLIES GOD'S PURPOSES FOR US

He has drawn the plan of our life, not on parchment, but on His own hands; and He is working it out in completeness of detail.

THE FIGURE ALSO SUGGESTS THE THOUGHT OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION FOR US

Those hands where our names are written are the hands He ever holds up in prayer for us to His Father. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost... seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

## THE FIGURE SPEAKS OF ATONEMENT

Because the palms where our names are written are pierced palms, and our names are written in the blood that flowed from the prints of the nails. At least, every time the Father looks at these names, He beholds the marks of Calvary and remembers the price that was paid for our redemption.

## ETERNAL AND UNCHANGEABLE SECURITY IS ALSO SUGGESTED BY THE FIGURE

He has not written our names, nor sketched our names, nor printed our names, but He has graven them. They are cut deep into His very flesh, or into the precious jewels which are always upon His fingers, where He says He has set us as a signet upon His hands.

Golden Nuggets - Golden Nuggets – Volume 8.

## INDELIBLY INSCRIBED BY INDELIBLE GRACE! THE PALMS OF HIS HANDS!

A TATTOO! Isa 49:14-16 (Isa 49:14) Ever feel the Lord has forsaken or forgotten you! Does God really care about His me? Promise: The Lord cannot forget His own! This assurance was given to the chosen race on the eve of their return from Babylon. Listen to the Lord's voice take on tones of unusual persuasiveness. Ponder His assurances & compassion & comfort! (Isa 49:15) I will not forget! – a Mothers love is "tops"... but not thee top! A mothers love is awesome! Someone once asked Susanna Wesley which one of her 11 children she loved the most. She wisely replied, "I love the one who's sick until he's well, and the one who's away until he comes home." Mothers struggle w/being a buffer between their kids & the sidewalk? Them and disappointment? Them and failure? How close they are supposed to get? How far to dare fall behind? In Catholicism, going to Mary for prayer, or things, is promoted because a mother is known for being more "tender, caring, gentle, and patient, forgiving, & understanding." But God's love for us supersedes a mother's love... "They may forget, Yet I will not forget!" The difference could be likened unto the difference of the ray of the sun, verses the sun! (Isa 49:16) On which hand? – Oh, both Hands! (Pulpit) Drawn from the ancient practice of burning or puncturing figures & other mementoes upon the hand, arm etc., then often rubbing henna, indigo, gun powder, or some other color substance. Inscribed – speaks of not forgetting, permanent, indelibly marked, i.e. constantly present w/Him. Not like man w/tattoo at beach(blacked out). Inscribed you – not just your name... but you! Your person, your image, your case, your circumstances, your sins, your temptations, your weaknesses, your wants, your works, all your concerns. I have them engraved there! Whichever hand He lifts He sees His people! He treasures the remembrance of you! Now – He keeps His promise a 1000 times, & yet the next trial we doubt him again!. He never fails; He is never a dry well; He is never as a setting sun; He is never as a passing meteor; or a melting vapor;& yet we are vexed with anxieties, overwhelmed with suspicions, & disturbed with fears, as if God were a mirage of a desert. Q: Will you ever say again that God has forsaken you, when He has engraved you on his hands? Walls – of Jerusalem. Even her broken walls are before his eyes, w/a view of their rebuilding What's he eyeing in your life, w/a view rebuilding?

Faith is the Grace - . Faith is the grace that is most struck at in our tribulations (Jam 1:3); therefore if a man know the strength of it in time of tribulation, then ordinarily he has a clearer proof of the truth and strength of that grace than at other times. It is the grace that is of most use to us at such times (1Pe 5:9; Eph 6:16). Three benefits we have by it-- It keeps us so that we do not for these things question the love of God (Isa 49:14; Psa 77:9; Heb 12:5).

ISA 49:16

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands

The writing on God's hands

These words are a singularly bold metaphor, drawn from the strange and half-savage custom, which lingers still among sailors and others, of having beloved names or other tokens of affection and remembrance indelibly inscribed on parts of the body. Sometimes worshippers had the marks of the god thus set on their flesh; here God writes on His hands the name of the city of His worshippers.

I. Here we have set forth for our strength and peace A DIVINE REMEMBRANCE, MORE TENDER THAN A MOTHER'S (Isa 49:15). When Israel came out of Egypt, the Passover was instituted as a memorial unto all generations, or as the same idea is otherwise expressed, "it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand." Here God represents Himself as doing for Israel- what He had bid Israel do for Him. They were, as it were, to write the supreme act of deliverance in the Exodus upon their hands, that it might never be forgotten. He writes Zion on His hands for the same purpose. The text does not primarily refer to individuals, but to the community. But the recognition of that fact is not to be allowed to rob us of the preciousness of this text in its bearing on the

individual. For God remembers the community, not as an abstraction or a generalised expression, but as the aggregate of all the individuals composing it. We think of “the Church,” and do not think of the thousands of men and women who make it up. We cannot discern the separate stars in the galaxy. But God’s eye resolves what to us is a nebula, and every single glittering point of light hangs rounded and separate in the heaven. There is no jostling nor confusion in the wide space of the heart of God. They that go before shall not hinder them that come after. That remembrance which each man may take for himself is infinitely tender, The echo of the music of the previous words still haunts the verse, and the remembrance promised in it is touched with more than a mother’s love. “I am poor and needy,” says the Psalmist, “yet the Lord thinketh upon me.” But do not let us forget that it was a very sinful Zion that God thus remembered.

II. THE DIVINE REMEMBRANCE GUIDES THE DIVINE ACTION. The palm of the hand is the seat of strength, of work; and so, if Zion’s name is written there, that means not only remembrance, but remembrance which is at the helm, as it were, which is moulding and directing all the work that is done by the hand that bears the name inscribed upon it. For His Church, as a whole, He does more amidst the affairs of nations. You remember the grand words of one of the psalms. “He reproveth kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm.” It is no fanatical reading of the history of earthly politics and kingdoms, if we recognise that one of the most prominent reasons for the Divine activities in moulding the kingdoms, setting up and casting down, is the advancement of the Kingdom of heaven and the building of the City of God. “I have graven thee on the palms of My hands,” and when the hands go to work, it is for the Zion whose likeness they bear. But the same thing applies to us individually. “All things work together”; they would not do so, unless there was one dominant will which turned the chaos into a cosmos. “All things work together for my good.”

III. THE DIVINE REMEMBRANCE WORKS ALL THINGS, TO REALISE A GREAT IDEAL END, AS YET UNREACHED. “Thy walls are continually before Me.” When this prophecy was uttered, the Israelites were in captivity, and the city was a wilderness; “the holy and beautiful house where the fathers praised Thee was burned with fire,” the walls were broken down; rubbish and solitude were there. Yet on the palms of God’s hands were inscribed the walls which were nowhere else! They were “before Him,” though Jerusalem was a ruin. It means that Divine remembrance sees “things that are not, as though they were.” In the midst of the imperfect reality of the present condition of the Church as a whole, and of us, its actual components, it sees the ideal, the perfect vision of the perfect future. So, the most radiant optimism is the only fitting attitude for Christian people in looking into the future, either of the Church as a whole, or of themselves as individual members of it. (A. Maclaren, D. D.)

God remembering His people

This figure suggests--

I. CONSTANT REMEMBRANCE. It is impossible not to observe that which is written on the hands. If writing were on the face, it would not be seen, on the breast it would not be observed. But the hands are always before us.

II. DEVOTED HELP. The hands are for work, and the Almighty wishes us to infer that His people are not only remembered, but helped.

III. PERMANENT CONSIDERATION. “I have graven thee.” Writing will wear off. That which is graven will and must remain.

IV. PAINFUL EFFORT. To engrave on the hands evidently refers to the process of engraving, which causes pain. Has God made no sacrifices for His people? Is not every redeemed soul written in crimson marks in the palm of the hands and the feet of the crucified Redeemer? (Homlist.)

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Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!

O what a foretaste of glory divine!

Heir of salvation, purchase of God,

Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

[Refrain:]

This is my story, this is my song,

Praising my Savior all the day long;

This is my story, this is my song,

Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,

Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;

Angels descending bring from above

Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

[Refrain]

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I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Joshua 1:5

There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. — God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

The Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him. — He will ever be mindful of his covenant.

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. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Joshua 21:45. Numbers 23:19. Deuteronomy 7:9. Psalm 111:5. Isaiah 49:15,16. Zephaniah 3:17.

Daily Light on the Daily Path.

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Jesus saith unto her, Mary. John 20:16

Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name: Thou art mine. — The sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name. And the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

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

The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. — We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.

Thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial. And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment. And thou shalt set in it four rows of stones. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, ... and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord.

Isaiah 43:1. John 10:3,4. Isaiah 49:16. 2 Timothy 2:19. Hebrews 4:14. Exodus 28:9,12,15,17,21,30.

Daily Light on the Daily Path.

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He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. John 10:3

The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. — Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you ... depart from me, ye that work iniquity. — The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. — Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm. — The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

2 Timothy 2:19. Matthew 7:22,23. Psalm 1:6. Isaiah 49:16. Song of Songs 8:6. Nahum 1:7. John 14:2,3.

Daily Light on the Daily Path.

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VANCE HAVNER - "WELL IN HAND!" - (cf Jn 10:28-29, our times are in His hand - Ps 31:15) - I call this "having the situation well in hand." Here is security for time and eternity. The palm of the hand is a well-protected place and that hand can fold into a fist if threatened! Not only ourselves but our times, all our circumstances, the day in which we live, the happenings of our lives—all these are under His control. Sometimes they are beyond our control, but "He's got the whole world in His hands." He not only leads us by His hand, He keeps us in His hand.

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There are times when it feels as if God has forgotten us. When life beats us down and gets the best of us, it's easy to think we've been deserted. Maybe he's busy putting out fires elsewhere, we think to ourselves. And our prayers begin to feel empty and distant. That's why it's so important to stay in God's Word, because it reminds us that God is always near. Especially when we feel the most neglected. When you feel forgotten by God, just close your eyes and envision the hands of the Almighty. And remember his words: "I could never forget you."

Embracing Eternity: Living Each Day with a Heart Toward Heaven.

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SPURGEON - Morning and Evening

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

No doubt a part of the wonder which is concentrated in the word "Behold," is excited by the unbelieving lamentation of the preceding sentence. Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." How amazed the divine mind seems to be at this wicked unbelief! What can be more astounding than the unfounded doubts and fears of God's favoured people? The Lord's loving word of rebuke should make us blush; He cries, "How can I have forgotten thee, when I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands? How dardest thou doubt my constant remembrance, when the memorial is set upon my very flesh?" O unbelief, how strange a marvel thou art! We know not which most to wonder at, the faithfulness of God or the unbelief of His people. He keeps His promise a thousand times, and yet the next trial makes us doubt Him. He never faileth; He is never a dry well; He is never as a setting sun, a passing meteor, or a melting vapour; and yet we are as continually vexed with anxieties, molested with suspicions, and disturbed with fears, as if our God were the mirage of the desert. "Behold," is a word intended to excite admiration. Here, indeed, we have a theme for marvelling. Heaven and earth may well be astonished that rebels should obtain so great a nearness to the heart of infinite love as to be written upon the palms of His hands. "I have graven thee." It does not say, "Thy name." The name is there, but that is not all: "I have graven thee." See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when He has graven thee upon His own palms?

Morning and Evening.

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There are many persons to be found who are bowed down with despondency of spirit, and cannot lift up themselves to enjoy a comfortable hope. Let such take heart from the case before us; and let them also remember that the Lord does not now forget the sorrowful and broken-hearted. We see this expressly stated in—Isaiah 49:13-16.

The Interpreter: Or, Scripture for Family Worship.

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Our Lord Jesus has his own memorials of us, even as he has given us a memorial of himself. The prints of the nails constitute forget-me-nots of a peculiarly personal and abiding kind: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands": Isaiah 49:16. By these marks he sees what he has already suffered, and he pledges himself to do nothing apart from those sufferings, for his hands, with which he works, are pierced. Since he thus bears in his hands the marks of his passion, let us bear them on our hearts.

My Sermon Notes: A Selection From Outlines of Discourses Delivered at The Metropolitan Tabernacle.

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We come, therefore, brethren, by the help of God's Spirit, to consider this divine memorial: "I have graven thee on the palms of my hands"; then very briefly let us trace out the result of this memorial of God, and let us close with a personal reflection upon the object of this divine remembrance: "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hand."

We have here a metaphorical speech to set forth the impossibility of God's forgetting us. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." I will give a catchword to each particular explanation of this metaphor. The first word is present... He keeps the memorial of them in his hands—present with him. There is no fear, therefore, that he will forget them.

The next thought that arises from the metaphor may be remembered by the catchword of permanent. As I have already said, the impression made upon the hands, as intended in this figure, was permanent—so long as the person lived, there it was. You grave your friend's name upon a sapphire, and you may lose it; you may write it upon a rock, and the rock may crumble; you may get to yourself the most precious and lasting form of matter, and stamp the impress of your friend upon it, and by-and-by it may moulder away; but when Christ says that he writes his people's names upon his hands, unless he himself can perish, their memorial must abide. As long as Jesus lives, he must bear with him the memories of his people. It is inconceivable that Christ should be without a hand, and what is graven deep on those palms, never to be erased, must abide near to him for ever and for ever. Oh! think, Christian, you are never forgotten of God! Never in your darkest night of sorrow, never in your most wayward moment of personal doubt and wandering, never forgotten, and you never shall be. If you live to the decrepitude of old age, he will bear and carry you. If you lie long upon a lonely pallet, where few shall observe your suffering, he will not forget you. If you are drifted to some remote part of the world, far from all you love, he will be just as near. Time shall roll on and come to its close, but Christ will not forget you then, and in the eternity that cometh amidst the burning of the world and the judging of mankind, the graving on his hand shall be as permanent as ever, and you shall still be remembered of the Lord who loved you or ever the earth was. Present and permanent, then, is the memorial which Christ cherishes of his people. We have lately seen an unusual number of rainbows, and I must confess that nothing gives me greater joy than to see the rainbow. It is the memorial of the covenant. I like to look upon it. But there is something more cherishing to me than looking on it myself: it is the thought of that text where God "saith the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant." It comforts me that I can look on the sign of God's faithfulness, but it comforts me much more that God looks at it—that his eye is on it. Had I been an Israelite, I think it would have given me much pleasure to see the blood sprinkled on the lintel and the two sideposts of my house. I should have known I was secure. But there is something better than that. You remember the text, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." It is God's sight of the blood that saved you. So here it is Christ that looks at the palms of his own hands; that sees the memorial; looks there always, and has not to look far, for his hands are not far removed from himself—they are part of himself. It is on himself he bears the memory—the permanent memory of all whom he has bought with blood; therefore, be ye comforted, and think not that ye are overlooked.

The third word shall be personal—present, perpetual, and personal. "I have graven thee not in the book of record, but I have graven thee upon myself, upon the palms of my hands." It means this—I will put it in one short, compact sentence—that Christ could as soon forget himself as he could forget his people. He has stamped them into himself; yea, more, he has taken them into such vital, indelible union with his own person, that to forget one soul that he has bought with blood would be to forget himself. The mother does not forget her child because there is an intimate connection between them. The head cannot forget the members because there is a still more intimate connection there. My finger does not need to tell my head that it suffers; and when a limb is full of pain and agony, it does not need to send express messengers up to the brain to say to the head, "Think of me, for I am full of grief." No; the head feels that the limb is a part of itself, knit to itself; and Christ has a personal interest and a personal union with all his people. Oh! precious thought! Ye are dearer to Christ than any treasure could be to him, because you are of his flesh and of his bones. This is the reason—this is one reason that is given in Scripture—for conjugal love, because the woman was taken out of the man, and she is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh; and when our blessed Second Adam fell asleep in death, God took his Church out of his side, and the Church is bone of Christ's bone and flesh of his flesh. He cannot forget her; he looks upon her with a love that never can change, and never can be indifferent.

The next word I shall give you after this one of personal is painful. "I have graven thee on the palms of my hands." I may be permitted to illustrate this by our Saviour's hands. What are these wounds in thy hands, these sacred stigmata, these ensigns of suffering? 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. Old Jacob valued much that portion which he took out of the hand of the Amorite with the sword and with the bow, and so truly does Christ value that which he has conquered at great expense Child of God, you cost Christ too much for him to forget you. He recollects every pang he suffered in Gethsemane, and every groan that he uttered for you upon the cross. The graving upon his hands brings to his recollection the redemption price which he paid down that you might be set free. Oh! what better ground can you have for believing that Christ remembers you than this, that he loved you and gave himself for you? Treasure up that thought.



The other word is practical. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands"; as much as if God would say, "I can do nothing without remembering my people." If he creates the world, it is with the hand that has his people graven on it. If he puts forth his hand to uphold all things, that upholding hand upholds his saints. With his left hand he smites the wicked; but he cannot smite his people, for he sees them in the palm of that very hand. All that God does has an eye to his people. Note before I leave this, that it does not say, "I have graven thee on the palm of my hand," but "on the palms of my hands," as if there was a double memorial before the Lord for ever. With his right hand he blesses, and his people have a share in that; with his left hand he deals out vengeance, but he sees his people there, and gives no vengeance to them.

Oh! this is a rich text! and we trust we shall so handle it as to bring out the juice from the luscious sentences, throw it in the wine-press, and tread it again and again with active feet, and it shall always yield fresh sweetness, and give forth yet more and more luscious draughts to slake your thirst, if you know but how to use it. Dear, abiding, precious memorial of our crucified Lord, thou dost charm away our fears. He never can forget us.

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Engraved! The following is from Spurgeon's sermon, A PRECIOUS DROP OF HONEY. No. 512

God's promises are not exhausted by one fulfilment. They are manifold mercies, so that after you have opened one fold, and found out one signification, you may unfurl them still more, and find another which shall be equally true, and then another, and another, and another, almost without end... I believe, I say, that the text before us belongs primarily to the seed of Israel; next, to the whole Church as a body; and then to every individual member.

We will begin with the first word, "Behold." "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." "Behold," is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation. Here, indeed, we have a theme for marvelling.

Heaven and earth may well be astonished that God should ever grave upon his hands the names of sinners; that rebels should attain so great a nearness to his heart as to be written upon the palms of his hands. Well might the angels wonder, and those bright spirits be lost in amazement, for unto which of the angels said he at any time, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands?"

What cherub ever attained this dignity, or to what seraph was this honour awarded? But to man, who is but a worm; to the son of man who is but dust and ashes; to man who has rebelled, who has lost all claim upon God's favour and deserves his hottest wrath—to man is this consolation given, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

Speak of the seven wonders of the world, why this is a wonder in the seventh heavens! No doubt a part of the wonder which is concentrated in the word "Behold," is excited by the unbelieving lamentation of the preceding sentence. Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." How amazed the divine mind seems to be at this wicked unbelief of man! What can be more astounding than the unfounded doubts and fears of God's favoured people. He seems to say, "How can I have forgotten thee, when I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands? How can it be? How darest thou doubt my constant remembrance, when the memorial is set upon my very flesh?" O unbelief, how strange a marvel thou art! I know not which most to wonder at, the faithfulness of God or the unbelief of his people. He keeps his promise a thousand times, and yet the next trial makes us doubt him. He never faileth; he is never a dry well; he is never as a setting sun, a passing meteor, or a melting vapour; and yet we are as continually vexed with anxieties, molested with suspicions, and disturbed with fears, as if our God were fickle and untrue. Here follows the great marvel, that God should be faithful to such a faithless people, and that when he is provoked with their doubting, he nevertheless abideth true. Behold! Behold! I say, and be ashamed and confounded for all your cruel doubts of your indulgent Lord. I remarked that the "Behold" in our text is intended to attract particular attention. There is something here worthy of being studied. If you should spend a month over such a text as this, you should only begin to understand it. It is a gold mine; there are nuggets upon the surface, but there is richer gold for the man who can dig deep. I can only indicate the veins of gold, it is for you afterwards in your meditations to follow them out. I pray you, be very careful with the text; lose not a drop of the wine of consolation contained in its precious crystal; be prayerful and anxious to grind forth from this wheat every atom of its fine flour; leave no meal to grow stale in this barrel; drain all the oil from this cruse, for where God sets a "Behold," depend upon it, there is a something that is not to be trifled with, nor to be passed over in indifference.

The Divine Artist, who has been pleased to engrave his people for a memorial, is none other than God himself.

If the Lord hath done it, there is no mistake about it. If some human hand had cut the memorial, the hieroglyphs might be at fault; but since perfect wisdom has combined with perfect love to make a memorial of the saints, then no error by any possibility can have occurred; there can be no erasures, no crossing out of what God has written, no blotting out of what the Eternal hath decreed. Fixed, and fixed for ever must be the inscription which is of divine authorship; the powers of darkness cannot rase those everlasting

lines.

Take the next word. We have many wells here out of which we may draw water.

Yet, methinks, there may be a prophetic reference here to a later writing of the names, when Jesus Christ submitted his outstretched palms to those cruel graving-tools, the nails. Then was it surely, when the executioner with the hammer smote the tender hands of the loving Jesus, that he engraved our names upon the palms of his hands, and to-day when he points to those wounds, when by faith he permits us to put our fingers into the prints of the nails, he may still say to us—"Deep on the palms of both my hands I have engraved thy name."

Well, Christian, do not these deep things comfort you? Have you no consolation in the ancient things of the everlasting mountains? Does not eternal love delight you? God is no stranger to you; he has known you long before you knew yourself; ay, long ere you were curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, in his book all your members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them. Known unto God from the foundation of the earth were you; he was always thinking of you; there was never a period when you were not in his mind and on his heart. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

I have graven thee in; I have not merely printed thee, stamped thee on the surface, but I have permanently cut thee into my hand with marks which never can be removed. That word "graven" sets forth the perpetuity of the inscription. Not on the hand of man but on the hand of God is it graven. Oh! mysterious thought! On that hand immortal and eternal is it digged, graven in. Our gravers press upon their tools; they tell us how stern the labour when they cut the hard metal to mark each line, and God has thus graven; with the whole strength of Omnipotence he has leaned upon the tool to cut our names into his flesh. Was there not such a graving at Calvary? Is it not written, "It pleased the Father to bruise him; he hath put him to grief?" It is as if eternal strength, I say, leaned upon that graving-tool to write the memorial of his chosen people in the hands of Jesus. "

"If Jesus is ours we have a true friend,

Whose goodness endures the same to the end;

Our comforts may vary, our frames may decline;

We cannot miscarry; our aid is divine.

The hills may depart and mountains remove,

But faithful thou art O fountain of love!

The Father has graven our names on thy hands;

Our record, in Heaven eternally stands."

But I want you, my beloved brethren, to notice that the word runs, "I have graven thee." It does not say, "Thy name." The name is there, but that is not all; "I have graven thee." See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. It is not an outline sketch, you see; it is a full picture, as though the man himself were there. What, darrest thou dream that God forgets thee? Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee, not thy name, I say, but everything that concerns thee upon his own palms? "Oh!" saith one, "but I am in such a plight this morning." Well, he has graven that there? "Ah!" saith another, "I am so weak and so feeble!" That, too, is engraven there. "I have graven thee." The Omniscient God knows you better than you know yourself, and whereas you are conscious of some sin and some imperfection, he knows that you have an infinitude of sin and a vastness of infirmity, he has put it all there—"I have graven thee." I say, again, this is a thing too great to be talked of, but more fit to be read, marked, learned, and digested in the silence of your closet. You have never graven yourselves so well upon the tablets of your own knowledge as God has engraven you upon those blessed tablets—the palms of his hands. Yes, I dare to say it, our indulgent God as much thinks of one saint as if there were no other saint and no other created thing in all the world. Our covenant God so recollects and cares for his child, that if the whole universe were dissolved and had departed like a shadow, and our Lord had but one man to fix all his grace upon, he would not watch him more, nor more carefully and lovingly see after his best interests, than he now cares for each one of his people. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

Remember we are engraven, where? Upon his hands, not upon the works of his hands. They shall perish; yea they shall all wax old as doth a garment, but his hands shall endure for ever and ever. We are not graven upon a seal, for a seal might be slipped from the finger and laid aside, but the hand itself can never be separated from the living God. It is not engraven on the huge rock, for a convulsion of nature might rend the rock with earthquake, or the fretting tooth of time might eat the inscription out; but our record is on his hand, where it must last, world without end. Not upon the back of his hands where it might be supposed that in days of strife

and warfare the inscription might suffer damage, but there upon the palms of his hands where it shall be well protected, so that even

“When God’s right arm is bared for war,

And thunder clouds his stormy car,”

even then, when he smites with his fist, his people shall be well protected within the palms of his hands. The tenderest part shall be made the place of the inscription, that to which he is most likely to look, that which his fingers of wisdom enclose, that by which he works his mighty wonders, shall be the unceasing remembrance, pledging him never to forget his chosen. Do notice, it does not say, “I have graven thee upon the palm of one hand,” but “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” There are two memorials. His saints shall never be forgotten, for the inscription is put there upon the palm of this hand, the right-hand of blessing, and upon the palm of that hand, the left-hand of justice. I see him with his right hand beckon me—“Come ye blessed,” and he sees me in his hand; and on that side he says, “Depart ye cursed,” but not to me, for he sees me in his hand, and cannot curse me. Oh! my soul, how charming this is, to know that his left hand is under thy head, while his right hand doth embrace thee. Both hands are marked with the memorial; this left hand, which is the hand of cursing, cannot curse me, for it is under my head; it cannot smite, for it has become my strength and my stay, my pillow and my rest, while his right hand doth embrace me, to keep me safe from death and hell, and to preserve me, and bring me to his eternal kingdom in glory.

Now I am conscious, that I cannot work out the beauty of this passage. I am equally conscious that you cannot either, unless you have much longer time for meditation than such a short service as this can afford you. Take it home and look at it again and again, especially laying an emphasis on the word “thee,” and oh! if you can render it—“He hath graven me, me, me upon the palms of his hands,” if your soul can know that God hath you daily in remembrance, and neither can, nor will forget you, then you will dance before the ark of the Lord, and if Michal mocks, you may answer her as David did—“The God that chose me, made me to dance.” Eternal Election and Indissoluble Union, are truths which make believers rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. “Be glad in the Lord and rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart.”

God’s remembrance of his people is constant . The hands, of course, are constantly in union with the body. In Solomon’s Song we read, “Set me as a seal upon thy hand.” Now this is a very close form of remembrance, for the seal is very seldom laid aside by the Eastern, who not being possessed with skill in the art of writing his name, requires his seal in order to affix his signature to a document; hence the seal is almost always worn, and in some cases is never laid aside. A seal, however, might be laid aside, but the hands never could be. It has been a custom, in the olden days especially, when men wished to remember a thing to tie a cord about the hand, or a thread around the finger by which memory would be assisted; but then the cord might be snapped or taken away, and so the matter forgotten, but the hand and that which is printed into it must be constant and perpetual. O Christian, remember that by night and by day God is always thinking of you. From the beginning of the year even to the end of the year, the Lord’s eye is upon you, according to his precious word—“I, the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it I will keep it night and day.” Your remembrance of God is intermittent; you thought of him this morning when you rose from your beds; you are trying to think of him now, and this evening again your thoughts will go up to him; these are only times and seasons of remembrance, but God never ceases to recollect you. The finite mind of man cannot constantly be occupied, if it is to engage in other pursuits, with any one thought; but the gigantic mind of God can allow of a million trains of thought at once. He is not confined to thinking of one thing, or working out one problem at a time. He is the great many-handed, many-eyed God; he doeth all things, and meditateth upon all things, and worketh all things at the same time; therefore he never is called away by any urgent business so that he can forget you. No second person ever comes in to become a rival in his affection towards you. You are fast united to your great Husband, Christ, and no other lover can steal his heart; but Jesus, having chosen you, doth never suffer a rival to come. You are his beloved, his spouse, the darling of his heart, and he has himself said, “Mine eye and my heart are toward thee continually.” Every moment of every day, every day of every month, and every month of every year, is the Lord continually thinking upon you, if you be one of his.

Next, dear friends, and to the children of God this will be a delightful thought, this is an eternal remembrance. You cannot suppose it possible that any person can erase what is written on God’s hand. The Scriptures tell us that we are in the hand of Christ, and that none shall pluck us out.

“Once in Christ, in Christ for ever,

Nothing from his love can sever.”

Toplady made no mistake when he said—

“My name from the palms of his hands

Eternity will not erase;

Impress'd on his heart it remains

In marks of indelible grace;

Yes, I to the end shall endure,

As sure as the earnest is given;

More happy, but not more secure,

The glorified spirits in heaven."

It appeareth to me as though the King had said, "Shall I carve my people upon precious stones? Shall I choose the ruby, the emerald, the topaz? No; for these all must melt in the last general conflagration. What then? Shall I write on tablets of gold or silver? No, for all these may canker and corrupt, and thieves may break through and steal. Shall I cut the memorial deep on brass? No, for time would fret it, and the letters would not long be legible. I will write on myself, on my own hand, and then my people will know how tender I am, that I would sooner cut into my own flesh than forget them; I will have my Son branded in the hand with the names of his people, that they may be sure he cannot forsake them; hard by the memorial of his wounds shall be the memorial of his love to them, for indeed his wounds are an everlasting remembrance." How loving, then, how full of superlative, super-excellent affection is God toward you and toward me in so recording our names.

Weary not when I yet further remark, that this memorial is most surprising. Scripture, which is full of wonders, yet allows a "Behold" to be put before this verse—"Behold!" If the things I have been saying are enough to make you wonder, the deep sea of the text, without bottom and without shore, would much more cause you to hold up your hands in astonishment. Child of God, let your cheerful eyes and your joyful heart testify how great a wonder it is that you, once so vile, so hard of heart, so far estranged from God, are this day written on the palms of his hands.

And then I close this point by saying it is also most consolatory. When God would meet Zion's great doubt—"God hath forgotten me," he cheers her with this—"I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." Where are you this morning, mourner—where are you? Ah, you may well hide your head for shame. You said yesterday, when trial came after trial—

"My God hath forgotten me quite;

My Lord will be gracious no more."

Here is God's answer to you this morning—"It cannot be; I cannot forget you, for I have graven you upon the palms of my hands."

"Forget thee, I will not, I cannot, thy name

Engraved on my heart doth for ever remain;

The palms of my hands whilst I look on, I see

The wounds I received when suffering for thee."

There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote. If thou be a child of God, though thy troubles have been as innumerable as the waves of the sea, this text, like the channels of the ocean, can contain them all. I care not this morning though thou hast lost everything, though thou camest here a penniless bankrupt beggar; so long as thou hast this text thou art rich beyond a miser's dream. You may have forgotten your own mercy; your own experience may seem a dream to you; the devil may tell you that you never knew the Lord; your own sins may bear evidence in the same way; but if you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the covenant made with David's Lord must not and cannot be broken. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." Come, drooping saint, lift up thy head! Thou dreary, downcast brother, be thou of good cheer! If Christ remembers thee, what more canst thou want? The dying thief's extremity could not suggest a prayer larger than "Lord, remember me!" and thy greatest sorrow cannot ask for a more complete assuagement than this—"Lord, show me that thou hast graven me upon the palms of thy hands."

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SPURGEON - I may illustrate this by our Savior's hands. What are these wounds in thy hands, these sacred stigmata, these ensigns of suffering? 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.  
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Indeed, the nail that pierced my Savior's palms had my name on it, for it should have been mine. Our names are on the Lord's heart. They're not penciled in—they're indelibly, unalterably, permanently engraved. "Do you think I've forgotten you?" the Lord asks His people. "Look at My hands. You are engraved upon them. "Whenever I am tempted to think God has forgotten me, I need only to go to the Cross of Calvary, for there I'm reminded that He engraved me on the palm of His hands when in them He absorbed nails and paid the price for my sin.

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Fly back as far as you will, until this present world and all the worlds within the universe slept in the mind of God, like unborn forests in an acorn-cup, and even then you have not reached the time, before all

time when it was first said—"I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands." Isaiah 49:16

Before the young earth had burst her swaddling bands of mist, yes, before the globe had been begotten, or yonder sun had darted his infant arrows, or yon stars had opened their eyes, the Eternal had fixed his eye of love upon his favorites!

God was always thinking of you; there was never a period when you were not in his mind and on his heart! "I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands."

Child of God, let your cheerful eyes and your joyful heart testify how great a wonder it is that you, once so vile, so hard of heart, so far estranged from God, are this day written on the palms of his hands!

There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote! If you are a child of God, though your troubles have been as innumerable as the waves of the sea, this text, like the depths of the ocean, can contain them all.

I care not this morning though you have lost everything, though you came here a penniless bankrupt beggar; so long as you have this text you are rich beyond a miser's dream!

"I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands."

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A precious assurance

God's promises are not exhausted by one fulfilment. They are manifold mercies, so that after you have opened one fold, and found out one signification, you may unfurl them still more and find another which shall be equally true, and then another, and another, and another, almost without end. I believe that the text belongs primarily to the seed of Israel; next, to the whole Church as a body; and then to every individual member.

I. I intend to CONSIDER OUR TEXT VERBALLY, pulling it to pieces word by word. Every single word deserves to be emphasised.

1. We will begin with the word, "Behold." "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." "Behold" is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation. Here, indeed, we have a theme for marvelling. "Behold" in our text is intended to attract particular attention. There is something here worthy of being studied.

2. We pass on now to the next word, "I." The Divine Artist is none other than God Himself. Here we learn the lesson which Christ afterwards taught His disciples--"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." No one can write upon the hand of God but God Himself. Neither our merits, prayers, repentance, nor faith, can write our names there. Nor did blind chance or mere necessity of fate inscribe our names; but the living hand of a living Father, unprompted by anything except the spontaneous love of His own heart. Then, again, if the Lord hath done it, there is no mistake about it. If some human hand had cut the memorial, the hieroglyphics might be at fault; but since perfect wisdom has combined with perfect love to make a memorial of the saints, then no error by any possibility can have occurred.

3. Take the next word, "have." Not "I will," nor yet "I am doing it"; it is a thing of the past, and how far back in the past! Oh, the antiquity of this inscription! "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God"; from everlasting to everlasting Thou art the same, and Thy people's names are written on Thy hands! Yet, methinks, there may be a prophetic reference here to a later writing of the names, when Jesus Christ submitted His outstretched palms to those cruel graving-tools, the nails. Then was it surely, when the executioner with the hammer smote the tender hands of the loving Jesus, that He engraved our names upon the palms of His hands.

4. But the next word is "graven." The Rev. John Anderson, of Helensburgh, told me that while travelling in the East he has frequently

seen persons with the portraits of their friends upon their hands, so that wherever they went, as one in this country would carry the portrait of a friend in a brooch or a watch, they carry these likenesses printed on their palms. I said to him, "Surely they would wash out." They might by degrees, he said, but they frequently had them pricked in with strong indelible ink, so that there, whilst the palm lasts, there lasts the memorial of the friend. Surely this is what the text refers to. I have graven thee in; I have not merely printed thee, stamped thee on the surface, but I have permanently cut thee into My hand with marks which never can be removed. That word "graven" sets forth the perpetuity of the inscription.

5. Shall we take that next word? "Thee." It does not say, "thy name." "Thee." See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. It is not an outline sketch, you see; it is a full picture, as though the man himself were there. Darest thou dream that God forgets thee?

6. We have hitherto taken every word, but we must now take the next two or three. We are engraven, where? Upon His "hands." We are not graven upon a seal, for a seal might be slipped from the finger and laid aside, but the hand itself can never be separated from the living God. It is not engraven on the huge rock, for a convulsion of nature might rend the rock with earthquake, or the fretting tooth of time might eat the inscription out; but our record is on His hand, where it must last, world without end. Not upon the back of His hands where it might be supposed that in days of strife and warfare the inscription might suffer damage, but there upon the palms of His hands where it shall be well protected. The tenderest part shall be made the place of the inscription; that to which He is most likely to look, that which His fingers of wisdom enclose, that by which He works His mighty wonders, shall be the unceasing remembrance, pledging Him never to forget His chosen. It does not say, "I have graven thee upon the palm of one hand," but "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." There are two memorials. His saints shall never be forgotten, for the inscription is put there upon the palm of this hand, the right hand of blessing, and upon the palm of that hand, the left hand of justice. I see Him with His right hand beckon me--"Come, ye blessed," and He sees me in His hand; and on that side He says, "Depart, ye cursed," but not to me, for He sees me in His hand, and cannot curse me. Oh, my soul, how charming this is, to know that His left hand is under Thy head, while His right hand doth embrace thee.

## II. CONSIDER THE TEXT AS A WHOLE.

1. God's remembrance of His people is constant. The hands, of course, are constantly in union with the body. In Solomon's Song we read, "Set me as a seal upon thine arm." Now this is a very close form of remembrance, for the seal is very seldom laid aside by the Eastern, who not being possessed with skill in the art of writing his name, requires' his seal in order to affix his signature to a document; hence the seal is almost always worn, and in some cases is never laid aside. A seal, however, might be laid aside, but the hands never could be. It has been a custom, in the olden days especially, when men wished to remember a thing, to tie a cord about the hand, or a thread around the finger, by which memory would be assisted; but then the cord might be snapped or taken away, and so the matter forgotten, but the hand and that which is printed into it must be constant and perpetual. Oh, Christian, by night and by day God is always thinking of you.

2. This recollection on God's part is practical. We are engraven upon His heart--this is to show His love; we are put upon His shoulders--this is to show that His strength is engaged for us; and also upon His hands, to show that the activity of our Lord will not be spared from us; He will work and show Himself strong for His people; He brings His omnipotent hands to effect our redemption. What would be the use of having a friend who would think of us, and then let his love end in thought? The faithfulness we want is that of one who will act in our defence. Do you see the drift of it? If He moulds a world between His palms, and then sends it wheeling in its orbit, it is between those palms which are stamped with the likeness of His sons and daughters, and so that new work shall minister to their god. If He divides a nation, it is always with the hand that bears the remembrance of Zion. Scripture itself tells us, "When He divided the nations, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." The great wheel of providence, when God makes it revolve, works for the good of His people.

3. This is an eternal remembrance.

4. This memorial how tender! We have heard of one, an eastern queen, who so loved her husband that she thought even to build a mausoleum to his memory was not enough. She had a strange way of proving her affection, for when her husband's bones were burned she took the ashes and drank them day by day, that, as she said, her body might be her husband's living sepulchre. It was a strange way of showing love, and there was a marvellous degree of strange, fanatical fondness in it. But what shall I say of this Divine sympathetic mode of showing remembrance, by cutting it into the palms she It appeareth to me as though the King had said, "Shall I carve My people upon precious stones? Shall I choose the ruby, the emerald, the topaz? No; for these all must melt in the last general conflagration. What then? Shall I write on tablets of gold or silver? No, for all these may canker and corrupt, and thieves may break through and steal. Shall I cut the memorial deep on brass? No, for time would fret it, and the letters would not long be legible. I will write on Myself, on My own hand, and then My people will know how tender I am, that I would sooner cut into My own flesh than forget them."

5. This memorial is most surprising. Scripture, which is full of wonders, yet allows a "Behold" to be put before this verse--"Behold!"
6. It is also most consolatory. When God would meet Zion's great doubt--"God hath forgotten me," He cheers her with this--"I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote.

### III. And now we come to EXCITE YOU TO THE DUTY WHICH SUCH A TEXT SUGGESTS.

1. Is it not your duty to leave your cares behind you to-day?
2. If you must not have cares, you should not have those deep sorrows and despairs.
3. If this text is not yours, how your mouths ought to water after it . ( C. H. Spurgeon.)

Neither forsaken nor forgotten

#### I. THE FEAR EXPRESSED, which led to the utterance of our text (Isa 49:14).

1. This fear has been felt by very many.
2. It has some times been very plaintively expressed.
3. And some, too, are very obstinate while they are in that condition, for the passage contains a very unreasonable complaint. Read Isa 49:13, "Jehovah hath comforted His people," &c. Yet, in the teeth of that double declaration Zion said, "Jehovah hath forsaken me," &c.
4. I suppose Zion came to this conclusion because she was in banishment.
5. Yet I think that there is some measure of grace mingled with this fear. Let me read you this passage straight on: "Jehovah hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted. But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." She did not say that till God had visited her. There is in your soul a longing after God. This is the work of His Holy Spirit! Besides, although the text is a word of complaint, it has also in it a word of faith: "my Lord." Did you notice that? Zion calls Jehovah hers though she dreams that He has forsaken her. I do love to see you keep the grip of your faith even when it seems to be illogical. Hold on this assurance with a death-grip. If you cannot hold on with both hands, hold on with one; and if sometimes you can hold with neither hand, hold on with your teeth.

#### II. THE COMFORT BESTOWED. "I have graven thee," &c. What is it that makes it so certain that God cannot forget His people?

1. God remembers His eternal love to His people, and His remembrance of them is constant because of that love. God's suffering love secures His memory of us.
2. By the expression, "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands," God seems to say, "I have done so much for you that I can never forget you."
3. When a memorial is engraven on a man's hand, then it is connected with the man's life.

### III. AN INSPECTION INVITED. "Behold."

#### IV. A RETURN SUGGESTED.

1. Does Christ remember us as I have tried to prove that He does? Then let us remember Him. "This do ye in remembrance of Me."
2. Let us not only remember Him at His table, but let us remember Him constantly. Let us, as it were, carry His name upon the palms of our hands.
3. Practically. We ought so to wear Christ on our hands that whatever we touch should be thereby Christianised.
4. Let the name of Christ, and your memory of it, become vital to you . ( C. H. Spurgeon.)