

## The “Mighty” Hand of God

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by Wayne Goff

As a lifetime Bible student, I am amazed when certain words **JUMP OFF** the page at me. You would think after studying the Bible for so many years that nothing would surprise you. But every good Bible student knows that is far from the truth. In fact, the exact opposite is true — the more you study, the more you learn, and the more you learn, the more you realize there is so much you don’t know.

I am reminded of a college student who was preparing for life as a gospel preacher. He commented to someone in the library that he had studied the entire Bible and all of its questions, had prepared a year’s worth of lessons (104) on the Bible, and was now finished. He wondered aloud what he would do now! When I heard the story, I laughed and remembered how little I knew when I was a college student. So my reply was simple: “Wait till he learns what the questions are!” And there is plenty yet to be learned from God’s Word.

The phrase “*mighty hand of God*” jumped off the page at me as I read 1 Peter 5:6 this past week. I have **emphasized** repeatedly that verse and its teaching to *humble yourself before God* so that He might lift you up. And I’ve **emphasized** in my preaching that we should all cast “*all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*” Perhaps that is why my mind might have skipped over the word “*mighty.*” Peter doesn’t say that we should humble ourselves under the hand of God! He says that we should humble ourselves under the **mighty** hand of God! It is so much easier to submit to one who is greater and more powerful than we. God’s knowledge, wisdom and superiority are **so much greater than ours** that it defies description and comprehension! If you doubt that, then read again Job 38! In that chapter, God asked Job, “*Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?*” I’m sure Job’s mind immediately thought something like “Oops! I messed up!” I can’t even answer the questions on the **Jeopardy** television show. I certainly don’t want to match wits with God!!!

Now the Greek word translated here “*mighty*” appears only here in the New Testament. But in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, it is used at least twenty times. “The word can be used of human strength (Deut. 8:17), or the strength of the bow (Ps. 76:3), or even the sea (Ps. 89:9), but mostly it is to God’s strength (Ps. 62:11)” [*Theological Dictionary of the NT, abridged*]. So when Peter says “*humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,*” you should read this as “**MIGHTY** *hand of God.*” Or as President Trump might say, “**HUGE!**” After all, can one overemphasize the power of God?

The lesson should not be lost on us. God’s power is so vast, mighty and overwhelming that we, His children, should confidently rest ourselves under His wing and let His will be done, and not ours. How often are we all worked up about things that matter so little? How often do we think things are up to us to fix, when God is there to take care of them with little effort or thought?

Yes, we are admonished to “*be sober, be vigilant*” (v. 8) against the devil. We have been given the power to “*resist him, (be) steadfast in the faith*” (v. 9). But do not forget what Peter has said already: “*Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*” In the **context** of our lives, please remember that God is an ever-present help in times of trouble. That should relieve some of your anxiety. The apostle Paul reminded the Philippians that “*The Lord is at hand*” (4:5). He is near. He is here. And to the idolatrous Athenians Paul said, “*for in Him we live and move and have our being,...*” (Acts 17:28). After all, while man is supposed to “*seek the Lord, in the hope that he might grope for Him and find Him, ... He is not far from each one of us*” (v. 27). Whew! And I thought it was all up to me.....

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