

### Ear, Hand and Foot Leviticus 8:22-23

Read Leviticus 8:22-23 (In Leviticus 14:15-18 we are told that virtually the same ritual, only with oil and not blood, was used to indicate the cleanliness of one who was cured of a skin disease.)

Leviticus 8:22-23 relates to the commissioning of Levitical priests which had special meaning only to priests in the Old Testament. In Jesus we are all priests. Read I Peter 2:9.

A Jewish study of this passage by Rabbi Artson noted that, while Leviticus was directed to those serving in the Temple in Jerusalem, *“Our tradition also holds that the eternal task of the Jewish People is to mold ourselves into a nation of priests, a holy people. In doing so, the standards that apply to a ‘kohen’ (priest) in the Temple are essential tools for elevating our own spiritual and ritual status as well.”* The New Testament says that is true for Christians.

Artson went on to describe what he called an *“elaborate ceremony”* during which candidates washed themselves to become ritually pure and then donned special clothing to *“demarcate themselves for their activity in the Temple.”*

A Christian becomes a priest under Jesus, first by having his sins washed away not with the water of purification used by Levitical priests but because of the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. The moment a person commits himself to Jesus he is clothed in Jesus’ righteousness, which sets a Christian apart from those who have never trusted in Jesus and enables each Christian to be a priest of Jesus.

Following the cleansing and being properly robed, priests underwent the ritual of having the blood applied appropriately. In a nutshell, Jewish commentators, along with Christian writers, agree that the **ear** represents what one hears and by extension what one says. **hands** represent what one does and **feet** where one goes.

Note that it was the right ear, thumb and toe, not the left. Does that mean that God ignores or is against those who are left-handed? Of course not. But because between 80 and 90% of the people are right-handed, and for them that is the dominant hand, the right has become the symbol that represents both the right and left. Most often we are told to raise our right hand or place our right hand on the Bible. We refer to a special friend or worker as our “right hand” person.

Back to the imagery of right versus left. Scripture follows that metaphorical pattern in describing the strength and activity of God. Read Psalm 18:35 as an example of this. Scripture also uses the right hand as a way of describing the care of God. Read Isaiah 41:13.

We know that God does not have hands but attributing such to Him enables us to better understand Him. If God had hands, He could more than adequately care for us with the pinky finger on His left hand. Right hand is used to describe acts of God performed on our behalf, and

in ancient times it was used to describe the place of honor. Jesus is described as being seated on the right side of God.

A couple of other notes on right-handedness. In ancient Israel the right hand was used to bless someone as in Genesis 48:17-19. Read Ecclesiastes 10:2 for another interesting use of right and left.

Returning to the ritual of commissioning priests. A consecrated **ear** was essential if the priests were going to rightly hear, understand and apply God's Word. In the Old Testament we have a reference to the importance of a consecrated ear while today that needs to be expanded to include consecrated eyes. In the days of Moses few could read so learning came via hearing. The ears were the instrument through which one received the Word of God. Today we use our eyes to study the Bible and through Scripture we hear God speak to us.

Expanding the concept of ears to include our eyes as the sources of information, the question this presents to us is, *"What are my ears and eyes hearing, seeing and what of that message am I applying to my life and sharing with others?"* Related to that question is *"What are my ears hearing and eyes seeing that have no place in the mind of a priest in the Jesus' kingdom?"*

The anointing one's **hand** was a symbol of anointing one for work. Today we are the hands of Jesus commissioned to do His work. Think about the hands of Jesus and then contemplate how we should be using our hands for Him. The Gospels record that Jesus reached out to people and touched them with His love and compassion. His hands touched the sick, even the lepers that no one else would touch. He loved to bless little children by touching them.

One of the exciting challenges when we think of our hands is to recall the use God has for them. An example is recorded in Exodus 4. God was with Moses and had chosen him to return to Egypt and lead the Israelites out of captivity. Moses was afraid to do that, so God asked him a simple question according to verse 2. God asked, **"What is that in your hand?"** Moses replied **"a staff."** God responded, *"That's what it is to you but when you use what I have put in your hands for me, well, you will be amazed at what I can do with it. Let me show you."* And it became a serpent.

In the New Testament John recorded a similar lesson. Jesus had been teaching all day and when it was time to wrap it up the disciples suggested they send the crowd away. Jesus said, *"Let's feed them instead."* The disciples said, *"No way can we do that."* Jesus said, *"Let's see about that. What's available?"* The disciples said, *"No much. One small boy has 5 small loaves of bread and 2 small fish in his hand but that's all."* Jesus said, *"That's all in his hands but put them in mine."* And with that Jesus fed 5000.

Are our hands and the things we have in them dedicated to God? If we belong to Jesus, we are His royal priesthood and our hands should be His. We are God's hands through which He touches the hurting, supplies for the needy, loves the lonely, and lifts up the fallen.

Then the big toe, representing the feet of the priests feet that were to be consecrated to God's service. In a broad sense that includes all of the places our feet take us as priests in Jesus' kingdom. A current craze is the *Fitbit* that measures how far one walks each day. I have some friends who have paid over \$100 for an instrument that tells them they are not walking enough. I seriously wonder what a spiritual Fitbit would look like if it kept a total of how many steps our feet take for God. What if we had a spiritual Fitbit that recorded when we walked to worship, not just church but to time spent with God in prayer and study of His Word? What if we had a spiritual Fitbit that recorded when our feet took us, as priests in Jesus' kingdom, to minister to others in Jesus' name? What reading would our spiritual Fitbit give if it was recording the steps we take to share Jesus with those who do not know Him?

In Romans 10:15 the Apostle Paul referred to Isaiah 52:7 and applied it to the priests in Jesus' kingdom. Read Isaiah 52:7. How we use our feet is important.

We can also use our feet to take us to places of enjoyment. God has included those places in how we are to use our consecrated feet. There are, however, places that Christians should never use their feet to take them. We need to also learn when our feet should take us to fun places and when they should take us to worship or service.

In studying the consecration of Levitical priests, especially their thumbs and feet, note an incident recorded in Judges where those two parts of the body were incapacitated so as to make it impossible to function effectively. Read Judges 1:4-7.

As priests in Jesus' kingdom we have been given ears to hear what God says and instructed to share those words with others. We have been given hands to do God's work and feet to take us where He would have us go. But Satan is not happy when we use our bodies, or our lives, for the glory of God. He, therefore, seeks to take us captive to himself and cut off our thumbs and toes so we cannot live as God would have us live or serve as He would have us serve. We must be careful to stay close to God who, by the power of His right hand, can and will prevent that from happening. When we are committed to God, He will give to us, as He did to Judah, victory over the enemy. God will render Satan as helpless as a person without thumbs or toes.