

# Does Greek *dexian* Mean Right [Side] or Right [Hand]?

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The Greek word *dexian* is of interest because it occurs in Rev 5:1, where its meaning is disputed. There is a question whether *epi tēn dexian tou kathēmenou epi tou thronou* means "at the right [side] of the One sitting on the throne," or "in the right [hand] of the One sitting on the throne."

Different forms of the word occur some 232 times in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, but as an accusative singular with article (as in Rev 5:1) only thirteen times. I bring these thirteen examples together in a separate listing for the reader's convenience (<http://www.historicism.org/Documents/GreekDexian.pdf>).

In two cases *tēn dexian* clearly does not refer to "the right [hand]." These are 1 Kgs 6:8 and Matt 5:39. In 1 Kgs 6:8 the expression is τὴν ὠμίαν τοῦ οἴκου τὴν δεξιάν means "the right side of the house," but it does not have this meaning because of *dexian* "right." It has this meaning because of *ōmian*, which in context means "side," but is literally "shoulder." The right "shoulder" of the house is the right "side" of the house.

In Matt 5:39 Jesus is talking about a person being struck on the right cheek and then turning the other. The expression is τὴν δεξιὰν σιαγόνα. We know this is a reference to the "cheek" instead of the hand because of context, but also because of the word *siagona* which accompanies *dexian* and explicitly says "cheek."

In each of the remaining ten examples, apart from Rev 5:1 and the two passages already mentioned, *tēn dexian* occurs without an accompanying noun and the meaning is consistently given in translations as "the right [hand]." I submit that this is also the appropriate sense in Rev 5:1.