

Rom. 14:19  
So then let  
us follow  
after things  
which make  
for peace,  
and things  
whereby we  
may edify  
one another.



John 8:32  
And ye shall  
know the  
truth and the  
truth shall  
make you  
free.

October  
21  
2018

## “THE HAND OF THE LORD”

by Jim Stauffer

In **Isa. 59:1,2**, the prophet speaks of the hand of the Lord. *“Behold, the LORD’S hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.”*

In Scripture the hand of the Lord or the arm of the Lord is viewed as the representation of the power of God to take action either for His people or against His enemies. In this text, Isaiah tells us His hand is actually capable of reaching out to save, but there is a reason He does not do so. The reason is our sins have separated us from Him.

Now, we understand that Christ is the personification of the grace of God (**Rom. 5:1,2,8,9**), therefore, even to the sinful, God has reached out. What the passage indicates is until we accept the terms of His redemption (**Heb. 5:8,9**), the sin that separates us from Him cannot be receive atonement (**2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 2:1,2**).

While these Scriptures teach us Jesus is the cleansing sacrifice (**1 Pet. 1:18,19**) for the sins of man, that cleansing cannot take place until man has called out to God by his actions and obeyed what God has commanded for the remission of sin.

Being separated from God is described as a spiritual death by the apostle Paul, *“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”* (**Eph. 2:1,2**) In connection with this principle Jesus has promised to be both the bread and water of life (**John 6:35**). It becomes very clear we must comply with the revelation of Jesus Christ (**John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:10-13**), in order to receive this very benefit He has promised. He says if we will follow His word He will restore to us the life we have lost by our sin. Life lost due to the separation from

God’s powerful and blessing hand, the source of life.

Now it is imperative we give heed to His teaching and the revealed word from His designated servants in order to be restored to a living relationship in the spirit with God and Christ. *He who has ears, let him hear.*

(**Mat. 13:9**) As we noted last week, *Hear ye Him* (**Mat. 17:5**).

Christ has done the heavy lifting in this redemption process by giving Himself on the cross for our sins. We then must, as those who hear Him, simply listen and obey what He has said.

He told His apostles and all those who follow in His footsteps to proclaim the message of salvation to all.

*And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.* (**Mark 16:15,16**) Now what is so difficult to understand in this passage? Shortly following this communication from the Lord, we see how they carried it out in **Acts 2**. They told a group of people who had been complicit in the crucifixion of Christ, to, *...repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

(**Acts 2:38**) We are further taught to confess Jesus as Lord and to believe He has been raised from the dead by God in heaven in order to become His disciples.

The question before every man who wishes to have life restored to his spirit, by way of remission of his sins, is do you desire the hand of the Lord to stretch out to you? The powerful hand of the Lord who in the Old Testament defeated the enemies of Israel and in the New Testament will defeat the enemies of spiritual Israel by way of redemption from sin.

Friends, we cannot claim innocence when we stand before Him in judgment. He has revealed the details of the process to us. If we fail to respond, we will give an account of all we have done in our bodies in our earthly life, whether it be good or bad (**2 Cor. 5:10**). Think seriously, for this is a matter with eternal implications.

## Rightly Dividing The Word Of God (3)

**Tommy J. Thornhill | Etna, Arkansas, USA**

We continue our study of *"rightly dividing the word of truth"* (God's revealed word) (**2 Timothy 2:15**). As was pointed out in the first article of this series, many false scriptural conclusions are drawn, then taught and practiced simply because people do not *"rightly divide"* (handle properly) *the word of truth.*"

The first article pointed out that using human opinions ("what I think") instead of a *"thus says the Lord,"* is not rightly dividing the word of God. We are to walk by faith (God's revealed word **Romans 10:17**), not by sight (what men think or want it to say) (**2 Corinthians 5:7**). Man's opinion is not God's revelation.

My last article began a discussion of a second area where people fail to *"rightly divide the truth"* (God's word). They fail to recognize the difference between the Old and New Testaments. This failure to understand the differences has led people to introduce into the Lord's church several false doctrines, beliefs and practices. The rest of the issue was devoted to showing that the Old Testament as law was not intended to be permanent, but to be replaced by the New Testament (**Hebrews 10:9-10**) after Jesus fulfilled its requirements (**Matthew 5:17-18; Romans 10:4**). It was removed, nailed to the cross (**Colossians 1:14-17; Ephesians 2:14-17**).

When this is pointed out, people then ask, if we are not under Old Testament law, then what purpose does the Law (Old Testament) serve (**Galatians 3:19**)? Note **Romans 15:4**. Let me give some reasons why we have the Old Testament in our Bibles today.

While we do not go to the Old Testament for doctrine, there are several things that make it valuable to us today. The inclusion of the Old Testament into the Bible affirms the trustworthiness of the word of God, as inspired of God. Referring to the Old Testament, Paul in **2 Timothy 3:16** declares that *"all scripture is given by inspiration of God."* And that would also include what he and the other New Testament writers would write. Peter affirms the same in **2 Peter 1:21**, *"holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."* God protected His word and made sure it was preserved and accurately transmitted to man. After Jesus came and fulfilled His mission He promised His disciples they would be given the Holy Spirit to guide them into *"all truth"* (**John 16:7-13; 14:26**). After He returned to heaven, His disciples went throughout the world preaching the gospel, and the words they spoke were the *"word of God"* (**1 Thessalonians 2:13**). They not only preached the word, they wrote it. They wrote four accounts of the gospel, and 23 epistles in which they quoted 100s of Old Testament scriptures, showing how they were fulfilled in the time of Christ. How could we have confidence in the New Testament writings, if the

Old Testament was unreliable and corrupted through the years? The New Testament writers freely quoted the Old Testament, confidently expecting us to pay attention to them as inspired writings. They wrote, without any hint of doubting the truthfulness of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is also important in helping us to learn of God's omnipotence and omniscience. With His infinite foreknowledge and power, He enabled men to foretell future events with precise accuracy. In the Old Testament we can read many of these prophecies and see them fulfilled years, sometimes centuries, later. In preparing the world for the coming Messiah, Christ Jesus, God gave over 300 prophecies concerning the advent of His Son and His purpose for coming into the world. Everyone of them was fulfilled (**Luke 24:44-45**).

But we also learn that prophecy was sometimes more than mere predictions of future events. Yes, there was a predictive element to them, but it would be hard for us to obey a prophecy. But the prophets also spoke many moral and spiritual truths that are just as true today as when they were first spoken. As I have shown, it is true that the Law of Moses and the ten commandments are no longer binding on us, but the principles of truth embedded in them are still binding today. In fact, the moral laws existed even before the Jews received the ten commandments. All mankind were sinners, even before God gave the written law on Mt. Sinai to the Jews. His moral laws were binding even on the Gentiles (**Romans 2:12-15**). Therefore, the moral and spiritual truths taught in the Old Testament are still binding today. The truths were more than man's opinions, they are the authoritative word of God.

We learn from the Old Testament that the written record was no accident. The things were written on purpose by inspiration. They were written as a record to be read by future generations (**2 Peter 1:12-15**). Peter tells his readers his writings are not just for them. He then points that the Old Testament writers wrote the word of God that was inspired.

It is from the Old Testament we learn the origin of the universe and why it functions with such order and precision. We also learn of the origin and nature of man (**Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7-8, 21-25**) and how sin came into the world. We then learn how God dealt with sinful man in the past. We see what He did when men did what they were told to do, and what He did to those who refused to listen to Him. Moses, king Saul, and the young prophet of **1 Kings 13** are just a few examples of how He reacted when men failed to respect and honor His commands. They are examples for us today. His demands on mankind are no different today. He still expects reverence and obedience, just as He did then (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**).

So, you see, that while we no longer go to the Old Testament for law, since it was taken out of the way by

the cross of Christ, there are certainly a lot of things we can learn and benefit from in a study of the Old Testament. It was written for our learning, not law (**Romans 15:4**). Let's make sure we *"rightly divide the word of truth."*

## THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

The church was built by Christ and is in harmony with God's purposes and plans (**Matt. 16:18**). The church is ruled by divine authority (**Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:18-23**). Whatever the church is and does, Christ must have willed it. The only sure foundation is Jesus Christ (**Eph. 2:20**).

God has given a divine plan for accomplishing His purposes. In **Ephesians 4: 11** Paul said, *"And he gave some (to be) apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."* The work of revelation was accomplished by the apostles and prophets (**Acts 1:15-22; 2 Cor. 5:20; Acts 11:27-30; Eph. 2:20**); their influence continues, in that we have the result of their completed work today as a perfect and complete guide. **Jude 3** tells us: *"Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you for our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto-the saints"* (cf. **2 Pet. 1:3**). Evangelists in the New Testament traveled about preaching the word but sometimes they stayed in one area for a period of time (**1 Tim.1:3; 2 Tim.4:2-5**). Pastors were those mature godly men, who after meeting the qualifications of God (**1 Tim.3**), took the oversight of local congregations watching after the sheep (hence, shepherds but also known as elders and overseers). As *"all truth"* was being revealed teachers were needed; some teachers obviously had miraculous knowledge (**Jn. 16:13; 1 Cor. 12:28-29**). Why did Christ give these gifts unto men? **Ephesians 4:12** says *"For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering unto the building up of the body of Christ."* Men need to be equipped spiritually to serve and minister; every Christian must be involved as the body is strengthened and increases, both spiritually and numerically. We are striving for a mature faith in Christ. *"Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"* (**Eph.4:13**).

Institutionalism perverts and thwarts the very purpose and plan God reveals in His word for the church. Christianity seeks the reformation of man from within, not from without (**1 Cor. 7:20- 22**). The Lord never intended a social gospel or a social religion. While many New Testament Christians fail in respect to hospitality and providing wholesome entertainment for their children, it still remains the fact that the home *not* the church is to be the center of social activity (**1 Cor. 11:20- 22**).

Fellowship halls, fellowship banquets, etc., are simply diversions away from the true intent and nature of the Lord's church. Likewise, regardless of the good accomplished, carnal appeals are merely symptoms of a much deeper problem, namely, a failure to understand and properly appreciate the true mission of the church of Christ.

The church is not a business in business to make money. It is not a courtroom nor is its function domestic relationships. Certainly the gospel answers the needs of man but many a church (and preacher) has gotten sidetracked by attempting to be a professional counseling center for divided homes and the people in them. Secular business is not the business of the church. While civil government is ordained by the Lord (**Rom. 13: 1-7**), political issues do not belong in the church.

No one has the right to prostitute the energy, strength, zeal, or resources of the church. Let the church be faithful to the divine mission as purposed by God from all eternity. Let the church be the church and let God have all the glory.

**Randy Harshbarger**

## THE CHURCH MUST TAKE A STAND, 2

Before I go any further I need to explain something. In last week's article in the second to last sentence I quoted the last verse of **1 Corinthians 5** and the last bit of the sentence is all caps. It looked for all the world like I was being a mean hearted ogre. Such is not the case since all I did was copy and paste that entire verse from the New American Standard Bible of 1995 and it is all caps there. It is not all caps in all versions but it is in many. There is no room in the faithful Christian heart for hatred or hardheartedness. There are however, things which need to be done which require a great deal of intestinal fortitude and this is one of them.

This brings in naturally the purpose of the actions which Paul described in the scripture just here. If one only looks at the last verse of the chapter one would think that Paul is advocating getting rid of people and that's not Paul's purpose at all! In verse five of this chapter he says, *"I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."* (NAS95) The goal was the saving of the man's soul, to get him to repent, if he would. Secondarily it was to protect the rest of the church from his evil influence if he would not repent. Apparently this man DID REPENT for in **2 Corinthians 2** he wrote, *"Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority.... forgive and comfort him.... Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him."*

**Cleveland Reddinger**

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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IDOLATRY EXPOSED



## What Must I Do To Be Saved?

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10