

27-Dec-10

Testimonial Eclipse

Dear E _____,

You wrote an E-mail recently and it is only now that I can respond. Unfortunately, perhaps due to the upheaval of my E-mail system in the past week, I cannot locate your communication. I will reply to it by memory. You cited the following Text,

“While he yet talked to the people, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my Mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” —Matt 12: 46-50.

As you studied this Text, you perceived some connection between it and Hebrews 6: 2. Therein Paul gives to us a list of other strong-strong meat doctrines in addition to the doctrine of Christ which the church, by Paul’s promise, is to finally grow into so as to teach. Taking Paul’s list, you sought to make an application to the Lord’s above-described actions. He lists the doctrines of *baptisms, resurrection, eternal judgment, and laying on of hands*. The *laying on of hands* was your point of interest. Since we know that the last-day disciples and their ordination insinuates them to be teachers of strong meat, then could the Lord’s honor of His disciples described in *Matt 12*, the stretching forth of His hand toward them, be representative of the *laying on of hands* described by Paul in *Hebrews six*, you pondered? Such seems to be a safe conclusion since we know —not by Paul alone, but— foremost by the *Testimony of Jesus* that a core of disciples will be elected to finish the Gospel work. This gathering of them and their inauguration could very well be described as the *laying on of hands*. I see no objection in such an analysis so long as we are willing to grow it beyond that understanding in the time when the Lord opens up to us even a greater application. As it stands now, you employ Paul’s promise to explain Christ’s reaction to His family. Hopefully, you do so ever cognizant that my work is not to fully explain and make plain or crystal clear the teachings of Paul but the teachings of Jesus.

In my work, I do not believe that I have ever made such a link before, and I salute you for your thoughtfulness. Although I must confess that, as Vinnette read to me your question and as she centered upon your focus of the stretched forth hand of Jesus, my mind immediately made a different connection, one between *Matt 12* and *Isa 51*. Therein the Lord describes the reinstatement of His power on earth by virtue of the symbolism, His arm. It was described in *Isa 51* to be the power that delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery. It is true that *Matt 12* points to our day and the inauguration of the eternal *disciples indeed*. His reaction shows that they will be included in the “family of heaven” by their faithful work of ‘doing the will of the Father which is in heaven’. But Isaiah’s prophecy, rather than Paul’s, shows this work by the Lord actually being done as described above in *Matt 12*: by stretching forth His hand (singular) to ordain a group of faithful and righteous saints. This He does, obviously, because they have heeded His counsel and done the will of the Father; He would honor no man who does otherwise. But careful attention to every word may, to some close reasoners, manifest that, in *Isa 51*, it does not describe Christ as ‘stretching forth His hand’ as does *Matt 12*; instead, it uses a different metaphor; that is the awakening of His arm. I believe that, even though the arm is different than the hand, the two actions are one and the same. The hand cannot be stretched forth as described in *Matt 12* unless the arm is employed since it sits at the end of the arm. To awaken the arm, as described in *Isa 51*, is to take it from its resting position at the side to a position of full deployment. After all, it is impossible to stretch forth your

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hand so as to wave it toward a small group of people without extending the arm from a resting position to a reaching position. For a man who is standing and stretching forth only the hand—not the arm—while the arm remains at rest most probably would extend his hand only in a downward position. The results of such a stretch would resultantly not identify the uplifted target which requires identification. Isaiah’s prophecy can now be cited. He says, “*Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law...Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days...Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep: that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?*” —Isa 51: 7, 9, 10.

As always the case, the greater lesson comes from the *Testimony of Jesus*. Therein, regarding this subject, *Matt 12* shows to us the vital lesson of our exaltation. He shows to us that we must esteem the disciples and our ministry to them above the needs of our genetic family members. This will be done by the Lord’s arm, the *mustard seed*, as he directs his ministry to the disciples and encourages them to elevate disciple status above all other earthly connections. This is indeed strong meat which comes from Jesus’ testimony. My purpose has always been to teach the Bible-new-Testament (Paul’s) prophecies, in the light of Christ’s words (Jesus’ testimony), and not the opposite. The former tactic likewise neatly expresses the very theme of your study, the stretching forth of the Lord’s hand. The later brings Jesus into compliance with Paul or, to put it another way, it expresses the stretching forth of Paul’s hand. My purpose of emphasizing the *Testimony of Jesus* is so done because Father’s will and testament eclipses the work of Paul and all gospel writers.

Thus, my recommendation is that when we read the writings of Paul and the other NT authors, that we seek to understand their work by the light given to us by Father through Jesus. In other words, we should take care to not let the proverbial tail wag the dog by teaching that Jesus fulfills Paul’s work. I hope that you can appreciate the subtlety of the distinction: It is that the *mustard seed* will illuminate the entire Bible by virtue of the *Testimony of Jesus*. It may not conform with Paul’s writings; it in fact may define other strong-meat doctrines which Paul did not describe; yet, it eclipses his work with a life saving brilliance to the Gospel. True indeed were his words, “...*when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known*” —1Cor 13: 11, 12.

I hope that this answers your question.

Sincerely,

Derek,