

# The Arm of the Lord - Part 1

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon emphasizes the need for the revealing of the arm of the Lord in response to the current spiritual state of the world and the church.*

**Duration:** 42:54

**Scripture:** Matthew 24:29, Acts 2:19

**Topics:** "God's Work"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for a cry to God in the face of the evils and challenges present in the world. He refers to the prophet Isaiah's cry for God to come down and intervene in the midst of the people's troubles. The speaker highlights the importance of justice and the revealing of God's power in our time. He emphasizes that the arm of the Lord is the only thing that can save and deliver the people of God. The speaker urges the listeners to take the current situation seriously and to cry out to God for His intervention.

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## Transcript

The phrase which is to be the key to our present consideration is in that chapter which was read to us, Isaiah chapter 53 and in verse 1. Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed, phrases, the arm of the Lord. You know that the word arm is a symbolic word in the scriptures, used very many times, signifying that upon which man relies for strength and support. The larger phrase, the arm of the Lord, just means the strength and support of the Lord himself.

The arm represents the person. Sometimes the person is in weakness, and his arm is described as being weak, sometimes in strength. The arm is the symbol of the person, sometimes of the people, the nation, but always indicating the state of strength or weakness.

So this phrase, the arm of the Lord, implies the showing of himself in power on behalf of that which is according to his might. To whom will the Lord show himself in power? To whom will the Lord make bare his arm? To whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Now while in the Bible there are very many incidents in which the arm of the Lord is shown, there are particular occasions characterized by this phrase. For instance, we have repeated reference to the bearing of his arm, the stretching forth of his arm in the bringing of Israel out of Egypt.

It is referred to so often as an outstanding occasion of the Lord showing his arm, stretching forth his arm, bearing his arm, the lighting down of his arm to bring them out. The arm of the Lord was revealed. You read, consider that whole story of God's dealing with Pharaoh and Egypt on behalf of his people.

It's all gathered up in this. That was the revealing of the arm of the Lord. Of course, it is but an illustration, the emancipation of an elect people from the kingdom of this world and of darkness.

For that, the arm of the Lord is revealed. Or again, Israel's deliverance from Babylon. It was another occasion when the arm of the Lord was revealed.

How often that is the way in which it was regarded. The arm of the Lord stretched out over Babylon, brought down her rulers, overthrew her forces in order to bring the people back from captivity. And again, that was symbolic, the recovery of a pure testimony amongst the Lord's people, which testimony had been lost.

And when the question is asked, to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Or in another tense, to whom will the arm of the Lord be revealed? The answer is there. But for that purpose, in relation to that, again, in the raising and the exalting of Jesus, to the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, it was indeed a revealing of the arm of the Lord. And still further, in those early days of the church, how wonderful was this revealing of the arm of the Lord.

In those first chapters of the book of Acts, again and again, his arm was stretched out. When they were suffering persecution and martyrdom, few met together for prayer, and they prayed, Grant to thy servants boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy hand. And mighty signs and wonders are done.

And Herod came under the impact of that arm. Saul of Tarsus came under that same impact. Many, many things happened because the Lord was revealing his arm.

Before we are at the end of the New Testament, the whole of that nation of Israel has met the arm of the Lord. The arm of the Lord is revealed in the complete overthrow and scattering of Israel as a nation, so thoroughly that she has never recovered that original integration. More still, Rome unleashed all her forces against the Lord and against his anointing, but met the arm of the Lord and was completely destroyed, ceased to be an empire and a nation.

Just a few examples in history of the revealing of the arm of the Lord. In answer to this question, to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Now, as you will probably have noticed, there are several features common to every one of these instances. One, the exalting of world powers against God, a common feature in every case.

The lifting up of the head on the part of the powers of this world against the Lord and against his anointing. Through the emboldenment of the Lord's glory and the Lord's purpose in a bad condition amongst his own people was common to many of these occasions. It was not to the Lord's glory to have Israel in Egypt.

It was very much to the contrary after the covenant that the Lord had made, the revealed purpose of his heart that he should have the sons of Israel in bondage in Egypt, giving their strength to the powers of evil. It was very much contrary to the glory of God to have Israel in Babylon. It was dishonoring to the Lord and contrary to his revealed intention.

So often it was like that. The Lord revealed his arm because of a condition amongst his own people. And then again, there was a cry from within.

A cry from within on the part of an instrument of intercession. There was Moses in touch with God right from the inside in relation to this situation. There was Daniel and a few others with him right on the inside of the situation crying to God.

There were those prayer meetings in the book of the Acts. The cry of the elect to be avenged. This was a feature common to the intervention of God again and again.

A cry from the inside. Now you see, in relation to all this, some questions arise in our presence and our day. Is there a situation in our time which corresponds to these situations? In that three-fold condition, is there a condition like that today? Well, I think the answer is obvious.

Are world powers lifting up their heads against the Lord? Was there ever a time when the very throne of God was more challenged by world powers than today? Is there a condition in Christianity which brings much dishonor to the Lord? Is the Lord's true testimony today involved in a spiritual state which is contrary to his mind as revealed? The answer again is self-evident. Dear friends, it is impossible in these days to move about this world without meeting these two things and being almost overwhelmed by them. There is a tremendous force set against God.

You feel it. You meet it. It comes out at you everywhere.

Something evil set against God. And if that is distressing, one does not exaggerate at all when one says, but even more distressing is this state amongst Christians speaking generally, shall I say in Christianity, which is such a contradiction to what God has revealed as his purpose. Oh, what a state! We would not dwell upon it, speak about it, but there it is.

Sometimes you are almost compelled to say that the greatest enemy of Christianity is Christianity. I speak, of course, very generally. But it is like that.

The honor and glory of God is deeply involved in a spiritual condition today amongst the people of God which is very, very dishonoring to him. These two conditions undoubtedly obtain today. What about the third? Is there a cry from the inside? It is difficult to say very much about that.

Yes and no. There is a growing sense within the heart of many children of God that things are not right. There is, I think, a cry deep down in many hearts for some changing of the spiritual condition of the Lord's people.

A real sense that this is not what the Lord meant. There is that. With all the very general satisfaction with so little, there is within a cry, a discerning and understanding cry, born are they knowledge that the Lord meant something other for his church than this.

This could never answer to God's standard. This is a growing consciousness right at the heart of things and perhaps it is stronger and its expression is greater than we are able to assess. But it is there and even if it was Daniel and perhaps three or four or half a dozen in Babylon, that was enough for the Lord.

That was enough. It was there. The Lord must have it.

It was there. It was enough. These three things surely do obtain today the fault.

The fault. Is it not time that the arm of the Lord should be revealed again? I would put a lot of emphasis upon that last point. Great need, the great need of a deepened and strengthened cry to God.

I'll come back to that again presently. To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Have we in the scriptures anything that would justify an expectation that at the end the arm of the Lord will again be revealed as on these former occasions? Is there something that would support our prayer and our expectation? I think there is quite a lot, don't you? You know on the day of Pentecost Peter broke off a prophecy before he finished it. He said this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

And what happened on that day for that to which he referred stopped at a certain point. It stopped at the outpouring of the Spirit. But Joel's prophecy which Peter quoted to the end did not have its fulfillment on that day.

Almighty things were included in that same prophecy which was suspended from the day of Pentecost for a later day. You look at it again in Acts 2.19 and see those things are held in reserve for another time. Again you remember when the Lord Jesus returning from the wilderness in the power of the Spirit went to Nazareth and the role was given to him to read.

He opened it at Isaiah 61. He began to read and he stopped before he finished the prophecy. He stopped at a point and left a part of that prophecy unread.

The acceptable year of the Lord and he sat down. He did not finish with the day of vengeance of our God. That's suspended.

That has yet to be. Then we have a chapter like Matthew 24. That section from verse 29 all pointing to what will happen at the end.

The day of the coming of the Lord. It's full of the marks of the bearing of the arm of the Lord. The intervention of God at the end time.

Those things have not all been fulfilled yet. And it's impressive, is it not, that some of the things there in that very section are identical in language with the remainder of Joel's prophecy. Things suspended for a later day.

And then what about the book of the Revelation? Whatever interpretation we accept of that book. Historicist, Futurist or whatever it might be. You cannot get away from the fact that it all focuses upon the day of the coming of the Lord.

And it is full of interventions of God. In the life of the church. In the life of the nation.

And finally in the kingdom of darkness. The bearing of the arm of the Lord. I think, dear friends, the answer to the question is yes.

There's quite a lot in the Word that would justify an expectation that there is going to be at the end a repetition of this. Revealing of the arm of the Lord. Now we're going to reserve for later the answer to our third question.

Which would be, will be, what will be the principles upon which the arm of the Lord will be revealed at any time. For any people. Or against any situation.

My point at the moment is just this. There is a great need for the revealing of the arm of the Lord in our time. That need exists very strongly and very greatly amongst the Lord's own people.

Indeed it becomes a personal matter. It is a matter of very great consequence. To whether the Lord can stand with us.

With his power. Stand alongside of us. With his might.

Show his arm for us. Individually. You can leave the metaphor and forms of speech if you like.

And just simplify it in this way. It is of tremendous importance whether the Lord can commit himself to you and to me. And say I can be with that man.

I can be with that woman. With my strength. I can put my power alongside of them.

That's a very important matter. How far the Lord can show his arm for us. Or as companies of the Lord's people.

It is a very important thing as to whether the Lord can put his power behind us. In our local companies. The Lord can just stand with us.

In strength and say this is something I am going to look after. This is something that I am going to defend. This is something of which I am going to exercise my power.

I am with this. I am in this. I say that's an ultimate question.

What's the good of anything at all? Anything at all. All our striving and all our teaching and everything else. All our expenditure.

What's the good of it if the Lord is not with us? And not free to exercise his power and show himself mighty on our behalf. What's the good of it? I say it's an ultimate question. What is true in the individual and in the local and the companies.

Is true for the people of God in this world. See the people of God are involved, involved in this world situation. And nothing but the arm of the Lord can save them.

There is nothing that can save them but the arm of the Lord. There is only one thing that is going to meet this present need and situation amongst the Lord's people. And that is that he should make bare his mighty arm.

There should be the lighting down of his arm. And if that is true in these three senses amongst his own people. What about this world? This iniquitous world.

This evil, evil world. You know it's just there that sometimes we get nearest to having our greatest controversy with the Lord. I confess to you that as I have moved again over wide ranges of this world and seen things.

Sometimes the question has arisen in my own heart. Oh Lord, how can you bear to allow this to go on? How can you being in the position that you occupy tolerate this? You don't think that I'm exaggerating. Well, I could take you in a very few hours and show you something that would horrify you.

And make you say, oh God bring this creation to an end soon. Evil, yes it's there. And nothing, nothing but the arm of the Lord can meet it.

It's like that. This is a word for the hour. And we are going to ask this question and seek to answer it as far as possible as the Lord enables later.

What are the principles upon which the arm of the Lord will be revealed? Because that arm is governed you know. There are times when the arm of the Lord is as it were paralyzed. It's bound.

It cannot move. It is not free. Yes, the arm of the Lord.

The cry of prophets wasn't it? That he was like a bound man in the midst of his people. Unable to move. There are principles, spiritual laws which govern the arm of the Lord.

And whether it be our own personal need of that arm. Or the need in local companies or in the church or in the world. We must understand on what ground the Lord will exercise the might of his arm.

Will lift it and stretch it out and do his mighty thing. I say I'm not answering that question this morning. What are those principles? That will come later.

But for the present I want to just bring into view this whole matter. The need for the arm of the Lord to be revealed. I want you to be afresh, gripped by that need.

This word has been with me for weeks. I have moved about, especially in the far east. Arm of the Lord.

Awake. Arm of the Lord. The need for the arm of the Lord in this many sided world situation.

Could be put in other ways. Oh that the Lord would do something. Would really do something.

And if the Lord would bring this upon us at this time, as a company gathered together in these days. A new sense of this need for the arm of the Lord to be revealed. And move us in relation thereto.

Firstly as to the cry. And then to get into line with those laws which govern the arm of the Lord. These gatherings will be well worthwhile.

They will have been, I believe, epoch making. A very real consequence. Oh that I had the strength and ability to impress this upon you.

You notice, of course, that I'm laboring at the moment under an unusual handicap. I like to speak with a strong voice in matters like this. I'm having just for the moment to be very restrained, you understand that.

It may improve as we go on. But it isn't the strength of voice. It's the matter of spiritual perception.

You're really coming into a spiritual sensing of the need of the arm. Which could all be expressed in this one phrase, arm of the Lord. So this morning I speak of it in this general way.

And stress the great need for this cry. This cry. First of all the cry against spiritual iniquity on this earth.

Dear friends, if we could tell you just a little of what we have seen and heard as the result of the spiritual iniquity that is at work in this world. The lies stripped and wrecked and harassed, families broken up. Oh it's a terrible story.

First of all the cry against spiritual iniquity on this earth. Dear friends, if we could tell you just a little of what we have seen and heard as the result of the spiritual iniquity that is at work in this world. The lies stripped and wrecked and harassed, families broken up.

Oh it's a terrible story. And it's all the work of spiritual iniquity. Evil, real diabolical evil.

Nothing but satanic ingenuity. It's the most clever, cunning thing. All concentrated upon ridding this world of God and what is of God.

As represented in men and women. It's evil. The sorrow and the suffering that we have met and touched day after day because of this spiritual evil and that we know is going on today in parts of this world indescribable things.

Utterly inhuman language cannot express this diabolical thing that is at work on the earth today. Oh for a cry to heaven that will bring the arm of the Lord against this thing. Cry against spiritual iniquity because it's spiritual iniquity.

I don't think man at his worst left to himself to conceive these things. A cry against the dishonor of the Lord in the spiritual state of those who bear his name generally. There again is a terrible story.

Terrible story. Oh yes, the difficulty, the real difficulty for the Lord is amongst those who have on them that name Christian. There needs to be a cry raised to heaven against this dishonor to the Lord that is in what is called the Christian church.

Of course it is not that, but it's called that. And a cry against a too easy satisfaction and superficial apprehension of the great purpose of God. I tell you dear friends again and again, my soul has been stirred with anger.

With anger at the superficial and easy going attitude towards the great purpose of God. Here is revealed this immense purpose of God from eternity to eternity. And the attitude towards spiritual things is well, a mere modicum satisfied.

A little, little is all that seems to be required to bring a great deal of gratification. Oh, it is heart-wending. If you have any idea at all of the greatness of God's purpose, how it's all just carried right away with the most superficial, glamorous kind of Christianity.

As though just this noisy, jazzy thing corresponded in any way to that vast purpose of God concerning his son. It makes you angry. It stirs you to the depths.

There needs to be a cry against that which is a substitute for the great purpose of God. Now when Isaiah, this prophet, became oppressed with the evils within the compass of the people of God, Israel, and with the evils in the nations outside, he cried with a great cry. You have it in chapter 64 of his prophecies.

Oh, that thou wouldst render heaven, and come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence. As when thou didst terrible things to earth, thou camest down. Cry, there you are, so late in the prophecies, chapter 64.

Oh, that thou wouldst render. You've only to move about in this world, and really size things up and sense things, for that cry to be born in you. But my point is, I bring this preliminary word to an end.

Ask the Lord to put within you such a cry, to make you a part of this inside cry for the glory of God in a day like this. Make you part of that essential instrument and vessel, like the Daniel company, or Esther, or Moses, or the prayer meeting in Jerusalem, or many such at other times before and since, to make you a part of a vessel that will reach heaven with a cry, and bring that arm forth, because that is a vital principle. I will be inquired of for this thing by the house of Israel.

The arm of the Lord will not just happen. The arm of the Lord is after all in response to something that is crying to the Lord. Shall not God avenge his elect which cry unto him day and night? I say he will, he will, but he must have a crying elect.

The Lord makes it like that. This is, I know, a solemn beginning. It may seem a bit of a heavy beginning, but really dear friends, this is a day for being serious, a time for facing the real situation, not just going on as though all were well in a fool's paradise.

God must be reached with a cry in these days. And I can only say this to you out of very close touch with this great need. I'm sure if you had been with us in these past months, you would have been stirred in this way, and you would have come back as we have with this in your heart, oh, that the people of God would get to crying to God about this situation.

So I lay it before you right at the outset, and if the Lord enables, I hope to take you further in this whole matter of the ground on which the Lord will move.

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