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When You Give Place To The Devil...

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You Strengthen the

Hands of the Wicked

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Ezekiel 13:22

"Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life."

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Jeremiah 23:14

"Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery & walk in lies; They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me & her inhabitants like Gomorrah."

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How Did they Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked?

The false prophets were leading God's people astray prophesying by Baal and practicing sin so that they did not see their need to repent and save their life. (Ezek. 13:22; Jer. 23:13-14)

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How Did they Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked?

In this lesson, we will contrast what the true prophets preached from God's word with the false prophets.

Then we'll make application on how men strengthen the hands of the wicked with their lies, errors, and deceptions so that people don't repent of their sins today.

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How Did the False Prophets Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked?

- By Teaching Error

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Inherited Depravity vs. God's Word

They said, "Why should not the son bear the guilt for the father's iniquity?"… but God said, "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, & the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself" (Ezekiel 18:19a, 20).

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Once Saved Always Saved vs. God's Word

When a wicked man turns from sin and practices righteousness, will he live (Ezekiel 18:21-22)?

God says YES, but man says NO

If a righteous man turns away from righteousness and commits sin will he live (v. 23-24)?

God says NO, but man says YES

Man says, "The way of the Lord is not right" (v. 25).

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No Future Punishment vs. God's Word

The Lord said, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets…they are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord. *"They keep saying to those who despise Me, the Lord has said, you will have peace; and as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, they say, calamity will not come upon you"* (Jer. 23:17)

Will they suffer future punishment?

God says YES, but man says NO

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Error was Refuted by God's Word

While the false prophets preached peace, Jeremiah and Ezekiel declared God's wrath on the wicked which refuted the error they taught. (Jer. 23:16-17; Ezek. 13:13-16)

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Error Emboldens Sinners so that that they won't Repent

While God doesn't take any pleasure in the death of the wicked and wants him to repent so that he will live, the false prophets were telling lies about God's word which emboldened His people to continue in their sins. (Ezek. 18:23; 13:19, 22)

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Men Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked by Teaching the Same Error Now

"Inherited depravity"

"Once saved, always saved"

"No future punishment"

What do people believe as a result of these errors that are taught?

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Since Many Believe the Error of False Teachers, they will likely make Excuses

"God made me the way I am- a sinner. Therefore I can't help it."

"I am already saved, so I don't need to ever repent or confess my sins to be right with God and go to heaven."

"Since there is no future punishment – I can live however I want."

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When Men Believe Error Today, they don't Want to Repent

Therefore many do not think they will be held accountable for their own actions which contradicts the word of God.

The same message that Israel believed from the false prophets is strengthening the hands of the wicked so that people don't repent of their sins today.

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When Error is Taught, the Wicked Rejoice while the Righteous Grieve

These doctrines strengthen the hands of the wicked to continue in sin while it makes the heart of the righteous grieve (Ezek. 13:22).

Does it hurt you to hear that someone has been murdered?

How much more should it hurt when false teachers are leading souls to hell with their smooth & flattering speech (Rom. 16:17-18)?

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How Do Men Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked Today?

- By Teaching Error
- By Sinning With Them

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We Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked When We Sin with Them

The false prophets of that time were guilty of committing adultery (Jeremiah 23:14) and so are many today.

Others lust, drink, dance, gamble, lie, curse, do drugs, party or commit other sins with them (1 Peter 4:1ff).

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We Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked When We Sin with Them

But how will others see their need to repent if we sin with them?

We have given false comfort that their souls are in no danger.

What should you do when your friends, family, or brethren try to get you to sin with them?

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When You are Enticed to Sin with Others, SAY NO

'When sinners entice you do not consent" (Proverbs 1:10ff).

Either Ananias or Sapphira could have saved their lives if one or the other would have had the conviction to say no to the sin of deception (Acts 5:1f).

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When You are Enticed to Sin with Others, SAY NO

"How blessed is the man who does not walk *in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!* But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night" (Psalms 1:1-2).

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How Do Men Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked Today?

- By Teaching Error
- By Sinning With Them
- By Failing to Warn Them

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We Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked When We Fail to Warn the Sinner

Ezekiel was appointed as God's watchman to warn the people.

"Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me" (Ez. 3:17).

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We Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked When We Fail to Warn the Sinner

"When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and *you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way*, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but *his blood I will require at your hand*. "Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul" (Ezekiel 3:18-19).

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When We Fail to Warn the Righteous and they Sin, their Blood is on our Hands

"Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because *you did not give him warning*, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but *his blood I will require at your hand*. "Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul" (Ez. 3:20-21)

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We Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked When We Fail to Warn the Sinner

If the watchman failed to warn them, he would die along with the rest of the people because of his negligence.

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We Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked When We Fail to Warn the Sinner

If the apostle Paul was silent about the sins of the brethren, they would not have seen their need to repent of their sins (2 Cor. 7:8-10; Gal. 1:6ff; 2:11ff; Acts 20:26-27, 31-32).

The Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians & even the apostle Peter needed to be warned so they wouldn't lose their souls.

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We Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked When We Fail to Warn the Sinner

This is why we must warn others about the consequences of sin, following the traditions of men, divorce and remarriage, and other errors. (Gal. 5:19-21; Matt. 15:1ff; 19:9)

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We Strengthen the Hands of the Wicked When We Fail to Warn the Sinner

When we sin with, encourage, or say nothing to others who believe in these or other errors and they live by them, we are giving them false comfort and they don't see any need to repent of their sins.

"Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but rather expose them". (Ephesians 5:11)

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If God's Word was Preached, the People Would Repent of their Evil Deeds

"But if they had stood in My council,
Then they would have announced My words to My people, And would have turned them back from their *evil way*
And from the evil of their deeds"
(Jeremiah 23:22).

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If God's Word was Preached the People Would Repent of their Evil Deeds

This demonstrates the power of influence for many will follow the religious leaders they trust in.

If we stand up for the truth, others will more likely repent of their sins, but if we don't, why would they ever consider being converted to Christ?

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Conclusion

Don't strengthen the hands of the wicked by teaching or believing error, sinning with others, or by failing to warn the sinner.

Don't strengthen the hands of the wicked by being silent when error is taught or when sin is covered up.

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Conclusion

If we would stand up for His word, people would turn back from their wickedness!

The Israelites in captivity were saying "Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off" (Ezekiel 37:11).

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Conclusion

But God was going to bring people to life in a new covenant (Ezekiel 37:4-6; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13).

Why die in your sins when you can be saved from the wrath to come through Christ. (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Rom. 5:6-9).

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Conclusion

Be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Christ by being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (John 3:5; 1 Peter 1:22; Rom. 6:3-4)

Or you can be restored back into the Lord's fold again (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

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