

Pulling Down Strongholds

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

INTRODUCTION.

- A. When we look through the scriptures, we do not find anything that stops the Lord from accomplishing his will.
- B. There is no obstacle that is too tall, deep, or great for the Lord to overcome.
 - 1. There's nothing that is too great to stand before him.
 - 2. There is nothing too tall that he cannot overcome.
 - 3. There is nothing too deep that cannot be uncovered by the Lord.
- C. Since there is no obstacle too great for the Lord, then there should be no obstacle that is too great for His people, His children.
- D. Let's begin by looking at three Old Testament examples that display the power of God in pulling down strongholds.

I. THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD.

- A. Bringing down the walls of Jericho. (Joshua 6:1-19, 20-21, 22-27)
 - 1. The stronghold was a double-walled fortress designed to be impenetrable.
 - 2. The lesson is seen in the victory which came through the people obeying God's specific instructions, i.e. marching, trumpets, shouting.
 - 3. There is a contrast to consider.
 - a. When God's people did not obey Him, they were unable to overcome strongholds. Consider their first attempt to take the city of Ai without consulting God.
 - b. Sin was in the camp and they lost the battle.
 - 4. Victory requires walking with the Lord.
- B. Gideon and the altar of Baal. (Judges 6:25-27)

1. The stronghold to overcome was the communal idol on Gideon's father's land.
 2. Before Gideon could lead Israel against the external enemies (Midianites), he had to "clean up his own household."
 3. Gideon used a bull to physically pull down the altar—using the very things of his household to destroy the idols hindering their relationship with God.
- C. The fall of Dagon. (1 Samuel 5:1-5)
1. In the book of 1 Samuel, we see the power of the Lord causing an idol fall before the ark of the covenant. (1 Samuel 5:1-5)
 - a. The stronghold God overcame was the Philistine's false god, Dagon.
 - b. Without an Israelite present, God caused the idol to fall down, to bow down before the Ark of the Covenant.
 - c. God broke the idol which the Philistines worshipped.
 2. God's presence and power eventually forces every false thing to crumble.

II. PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS TODAY.

- A. The battle is not carnal. (2 Corinthians 10:3-4)
1. We walk in the flesh, but we do not war according to the flesh.
 2. Our "wrestle" is not against flesh and blood (people), but against spiritual hosts of wickedness and principalities. (Ephesians 6:10-12)
- B. What is a stronghold? (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)
1. A stronghold is a "fortress" in the mind: arguments, high things, and pretensions that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God.
 2. The ultimate outcome is to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.
- C. The weapon is use is the Word of God. (Hebrews 4:11-13)
1. The Word is living, powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword. It discerns the "thoughts and intents of the heart."

2. The "foolishness" of the cross destroys the wisdom of the wise. The world's "strongholds" of logic are dismantled by the message of Christ. (1 Corinthians 1:18-20)

D. Our armament. (Ephesians 6:13-18)

1. The Lord has given us what we need to pull down strongholds.
2. We must set our hearts and our minds on tearing down the strongholds of our lives.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Just as Israel wandered toward the Promised Land, we wander through a "wilderness of sin" (Zin). To reach our rest, we must use God's word to pull down the barriers that may be separating us from Him.
- B. If you are not a Christian, then seek to tear down the stronghold of sin by obeying the gospel's call to salvation. (Acts 2:38)
- C. For the erring Christian, repent and return to the Lord, just as Israel had to do when they fell into sin and idolatry.

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