

The Weapons and the Battleground



Spiritual Warfare (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we follow through our theme this week, the theme of "Spiritual Warfare."

I'll begin by reviewing briefly the material that we have covered in my two previous talks. First of all, as representatives of God's kingdom here on earth, we are committed to an all-out spiritual war with an opposing kingdom, the kingdom of Satan. Secondly, Satan's kingdom is highly organized. Its highest level is made up of evil spirit beings, persons without bodies; and its headquarters are located in the heavenly realms.

Yesterday we looked at an historical example of how all this works in practice in Daniel 10. When Daniel set out to pray concerning the future of God's people, Israel, his prayers set all heaven in motion. God dispatched an angel to bring Daniel the answer to his prayer but in his passage from God's presence to Daniel on earth, this angel was opposed by satanic angels somewhere in the heavenly realm. Only after 21 days of this spiritual conflict did this angel eventually break through to Daniel with his message. The main satanic angel that opposed God's angel was called "the prince of the kingdom of Persia." Without going into all the details that this passage reveals, we can say briefly that there is a highly organized kingdom of evil spirit beings in the heavenly realm that systematically opposes God's purposes and God's people on earth. Viewed in this light, prayer is much more than presenting a list of petitions to God. It is becoming involved in a tremendous spiritual conflict that spans earth and heaven and embroils both men and angels.

Today we are going to look at two related aspects of this spiritual warfare: the weapons which we must use and the battleground on which the war is fought. Both are revealed in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. I will read the New American Standard Version first.

> "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh…"

Notice, Paul says we are living in the flesh and we are engaged in a war but our war is not in the fleshly realm. In other words, the weapons that we use must correspond to

the nature of the war. If the nature of the war were fleshly or physical, then we could use fleshly or physical weapons: tanks, bombs, bullets, whatever. But because the war is spiritual and in a spiritual realm, therefore the weapons also must be spiritual. So the version goes on to say:

> "...for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ..." (NAS)

Notice, our weapons are appropriate to the war and we are dealing with fortresses.

The King James version reads like this:

> "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [fleshly or physical], but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) [Where the New American Standard says 'fortresses,' the King James says 'strongholds.'] casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ..." (KJV)

First, let me sum up about the weapons. The weapons are suited to the area of warfare. The warfare is in the spiritual realm; therefore, the weapons are spiritual. Now, I'm not going to go into further detail about the weapons now because that will be my main theme in the two following weeks that I'll be talking to you on this theme of spiritual warfare. So just note that the weapons are spiritual and appropriate to the realm of the warfare and we'll put that in our pending file until we can deal with it in greater detail in the following two weeks.

Now let's look at the battleground. And this is tremendously important that we understand where the battle is taking place. Speaking of the battleground and our objectives, Paul uses various words and I am choosing from various different translations now, but these are the words: imaginations, reasonings, speculations, arguments, knowledge and thought. One thing is obvious: every one of those words refers to the same particular realm, the realm of the mind. This is something we absolutely have to understand. The battleground is in the realm of the mind. Satan is waging an all-out war to captivate the minds of the human race. He is building strongholds and fortresses in their minds and it is our responsibility as God's representatives to use our spiritual weapons to break down these strongholds and fortresses, to liberate the minds of men and women and then to bring them, in turn, into captivity to the obedience of Christ. What a staggering assignment that is!

I have said that our warfare is in the realm of the mind and that in this realm Satan deliberately and systematically builds strongholds or fortresses in people's minds, strongholds and fortresses that resist the truth of the gospel and the Word of God and prevent people from being able to receive the message of the gospel.

Let us ask ourselves briefly, what kind of strongholds does the Bible indicate? I would suggest to you two fairly common English words that pretty well describe the type of strongholds in people's minds. The words are prejudices and preconceptions.

I believe that's exactly what Satan builds in people's minds. You have heard perhaps, the definition of prejudice. It is being down on what you are not up on. In other words, if you don't know anything about it, it is sure to be wrong. If you were not the first to think of it, then it is dangerous. If ever that was true of any group of people, it is true of religious people. Almost anything that religious people have not heard about before, they view with intense fear and suspicion.

There is another example of prejudice which is contained in the famous statement, "Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up!" That's prejudice, you see. When a person's mind is already made up in advance, no amount of facts or truth or evidence or reason can change them. Only spiritual weapons can break down those strongholds. You see, people are driven and dominated by prejudices and preconceptions, often to their own destruction.

I think of an example that really impressed me, maybe because I am English by background. But in the American Revolutionary War, when the English soldiers were fighting the American rebels, their idea of war, the English idea of war, was to put on full uniform and march in rank, in very highly-colored uniforms with the drums rolling, into battle. And the American sharpshooters just hid in the trees and in the swamps and simply shot these people down without ever being seen. By our standards today, that would be considered military suicide but in that time, people couldn't conceive of fighting in any other way. What was that? It was a stronghold of prejudice and preconception that caused the unnecessary death of thousands of English soldiers. That's just an example of how a mental prejudice can drive people

to their own destruction.

Let's think of some examples of prejudices that grip people's minds. I would say religious cults, political ideologies and racial prejudices. And they are found frequently amongst professing Christians.

Some little while back I was in South Africa preaching. I was asked to preach on this theme of principalities and wars, spiritual warfare. And as I was meditating on it, it seemed that the Lord gave me the identity of the strongman over South Africa. A rather unusual word: bigotry. I looked up the word bigot in the dictionary and this was the definition: "One who holds, irrespective of reason, and attaches disproportionate weight to some creed or view." That's a bigot. That's a stronghold. That's what Satan builds in people's minds.

After I had given this talk, a minister who was born in South Africa and knew the country well, said to me, "You couldn't have described the problems of South Africa any better. South Africa is riddled with bigotry: religious, racial, denominational. The root problem of that nation is bigotry." And yet, individually they are a most delightful group of people, but their minds have been captivated and held by this stronghold of bigotry. Now, I'm not suggesting that the South Africans are different from other people, they just have their own particular kind of stronghold.

Listen to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:4, as we close this message:

> "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (NIV)

That is a stronghold, something that blinds men's minds so that the light of the gospel cannot shine in. Do you know that usually when a person is in that condition, it is worse than useless to argue with them. The more you argue, the more they restate their error and the more firmly they are stuck in that error. The only way to deliver such people is to use our spiritual weapons and break down the strongholds in their minds.

Well, our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll explain the most important single fact that we need to know in order to be assured of victory in our spiritual warfare.

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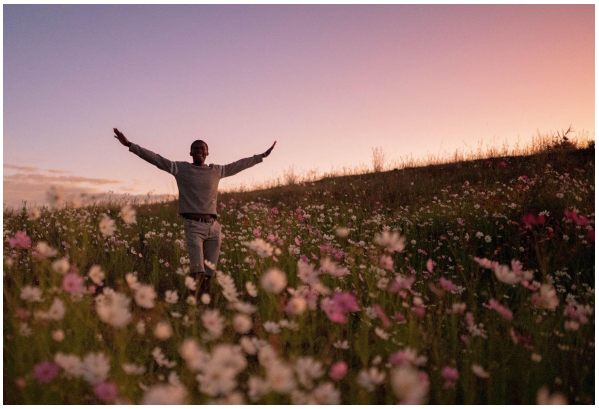

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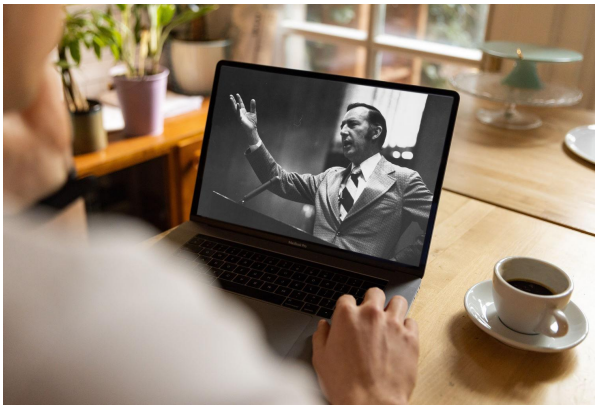

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