

Spiritual Warfare.03. A Stronghold in An Individual

Rev. Bill Hyer

“Spiritual warfare” is the conflict against fallen, unholy, evil spirits or angelic beings taking place in the universe or cosmos

→ The purpose of spiritual warfare is to advance the kingdom rule of the Lord Jesus Christ by overcoming, defeating, tearing down, and destroying the spiritual rule, power, and strongholds of the kingdom of Satan through the exercise and establishment of the authority, power and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ so that His kingdom rule is manifested and His will is being done in the hearts, minds and lives of people on earth

The kingdom of Satan corresponds to the kingdom of God and counterfeits the ways and means God has created and ordained to manifest, establish and spread His kingdom rule

- The ways and actual time-space locations in the invisible, spiritual realms and the visible, earthly realm where God’s will is being done are the ways and time-space locations where and the kingdom of God is being manifested in the universe (Matt. 6:10)
- The ways and actual time-space locations in the invisible, spiritual realm and the visible, earthly realm where Satan’s will is being done is where Satan’s kingdom is being manifested
- Just as God created human beings in His image and likeness as individuals and corporately as “*man*”/mankind/humanity (Gen. 1:26), so also Satan is “*working in*” humans (Eph. 2:2) to “*make*” individuals and corporate “*man*”/mankind/humanity in his image and likeness
- Just as it is God’s will that through humans conformed to His image and empowered by the Holy Spirit He will accomplish his will on earth that the glory of Who He is, His kingdom rule, and His holy, manifest presence will spread to “*the ends of the earth*” so that the “*knowledge of the glory of God will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea*” (Ps. 2:8; Num. 14:21; Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14), so it is Satan’s will that through humans conformed to his image that the glory of who he is and his kingdom rule will spread and “*fill*” the whole earth (Matt. 4:8-9; Rev. 13:2, 8)
- And just as God’s purpose is to accomplish His will through humans who think and act like Him, so it is Satan’s purpose to accomplish his will through humans who think and act like him

One of, if not the primary way this is done by Satan is to create what is called a “stronghold” in an individual person and corporately in a human organizational structure of some kind

- 2 Corinthians 10:4 explicitly identifies this particular work of Satan establishing a “*stronghold*” in fallen individuals
- **2 Corinthians 10:4** = *For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.*

The Greek word translated “strongholds” is “*ochuroma*” (ὀχύρωμα)

- “*ochuroma*” is derived from the Greek word “*echo*” (ἔχω) which means “to hold, to hold in one’s hand, to possess”
- Because a particular place, space, and location can be held, occupied, and fortified for the purposes of defending it from attack and from which to offensively wage war, this word can also mean “a fortress, castle, citadel, or stronghold”
- In English, it is literally a “hold” that is strengthened and fortified, and, thus, a “*stronghold*”
- Satan’s “*kingdom*” works, operates, and manifests in and through “*strongholds*” in both individuals and corporate human organizational structures

Jesus spoke of the reality of an evil spirit having a “stronghold” in an individual

- After driving out a demon from a person, the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of “*Beelzebub, the ruler of demons,*” who is Satan (Matt. 12:24-27)
- In a reasoned rebuttal to this accusation, Jesus said, “*How can someone enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house*” (Matthew 12:29)

In this statement, Jesus speaks of an individual being a “house”

- A “house” is a specific structure that is the dwelling place a person occupies and lives in
- Because the temple built by Solomon became the dwelling place of God’s holy, manifest presence, it was called “*the house of God*” (2 Chron. 5:14)
- In a similar yet greater way to how God dwelt in the physical structure of the temple that was His “house,” He now lives in persons who are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ because the Holy Spirit of God lives and dwells in them (Romans 8:9, 11)
- They are both individually and corporately together called “*the temple*” and the “house” of God
- **1 Corinthians 3:16** = *Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?*
- **1 Corinthians 6:19** = *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?*
- **Ephesians 2:19,21, 22** = *You are ...the household of God...²¹a holy temple in the Lord...²² a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

The kingdom of Satan corresponds to the kingdom of God and counterfeits the ways and means God has created and ordained to establish and manifest His kingdom rule

- Just as the Spirit of God can both influence from the “outside” of and dwell “in” a person to become God’s “house,” so Jesus said Satan’s kingdom works, operates, and manifests in person by an evil spirit or “*demon*” that can influence a person, from one degree to another, and enter into that person so that he or she becomes the “house” of that evil spirit (Matt. 12:29)
- When an evil spirit occupies a “house,” that spirit is likened to a “*strong man*” because the evil spirit has power to influence that person’s body, mind/soul, heart/spirit in regard to their thinking and actions from one degree to another of control
- When there is more than one demon in a person, the highest-ranking demon is called the “*strong man*”

➔ Thus, the place or places (Eph. 4:27) in an individual that the “*strongman*” and other spirits occupy can be called a “*stronghold*”

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 gives details about a “stronghold” and how it is built in a person

- **2 Corinthians 10:3-6** = *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶ being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.*
- These words reveal at least 12 specific things about a Satanic “*stronghold*” in a person and how it is built

(1) A primary strategy and means of spiritual warfare Satan and the evil spirits of his kingdom work to advance his kingdom rule is by building of Satanic “strongholds”

- Just as in physical warfare, a critical element of warfare is a strategic location that an army seeks to “win” and on which to “build a stronghold” to “take the land” and control it, so it is in spiritual warfare that Satan’s strategy and purpose is to build a “stronghold” in an individual
- That this is a work of Satan is explicitly stated further in the letter of 2 Corinthians
- **2 Corinthians 11:3** = *But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*
- **2 Corinthians 11:14** = *And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.*

(2) A “stronghold” is primarily located in, literally, “the inner man,” or the “inner being” or “inner self” of a person

- “Inner man,” “inner being,” “inner self” are translations of the Greek words “eso anthropos”
- The Greek word “anthropos,” literally means “man” and is used in the Scriptures to speak of both an individual human (Rom. 5:12) and of corporate mankind/humanity (Matt. 4:4)
- This Biblical concept of “man” is based on the translation of the Hebrew “Adam” in **Genesis 1:26**, “*Then God said, “Let us make man (“Adam”) in our image, after our likeness”*
- The Greek word “eso” means “inner”
- The words “eso anthropos” are literally “inner man,” however, for certain contemporary cultural reasons, and depending on the verse and the version of the English translation, the Greek words “eso anthropos” are translated variously as “inner being,” “inner self,” or “inner man”
- **Romans 7:22** = *For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being” (ESV) // “inner man” (NASB)*
- **2 Corinthians 4:16** = *Though our outer self” (ESV) // “man” (NASB) is wasting away, our inner self (ESV) // “inner man” (NASB) is being renewed day by day”*
- **Ephesians 3:16** = *that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being (ESV) // “inner man” (NASB)*

The “inner man/being/self” is composed of the soul/mind and spirit/heart

- These two aspects of the “inner man” are referred to in various ways throughout Scripture as the “soul,” “mind,” “spirit,” and “heart,” whether as one unified whole or distinguished from each other
- **Matthew 22:37** = *And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*
- **1 Corinthians 14:14-15** = *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.¹⁵ What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.*
- **This distinction is commonly stated as the difference between “head” and “heart”**

While in the Western culture the word “mind” is primarily used for the “organ” of thinking, the Bible speaks of the “heart/spirit” as having “thought”

- **Genesis 6:5** = *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*
- **1 Corinthians 2:11** = *For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.*

- **Hebrews 4:12** = *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

The primary location of a “stronghold” is in the “inner man”

- This is evident in 2 Corinthians 10:5 from the words “arguments,” “opinion,” “knowledge,” and “thought” which are all activities and processes of the “mind” and “heart”
- **2 Corinthians 10:5** = *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*
- This is also stated in 2 Corinthians 11:3 in the word “thoughts”
- **2 Corinthians 11:3** = *But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*

The Greek word translated “thought”/“thoughts” is “noema” (νόημα) and in some verses it is translated as “mind”

- **2 Corinthians 3:14** = *But their minds (νόημα) were hardened*
- Notice the combination of “mind” and the “heart” which is most often said to be “hardened”
- **2 Corinthians 4:4** = *In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds (νόημα) of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

➔ **A “stronghold” is in the “inner man” of the “soul/spirt”/“mind/heart”/“head/heart,” which is the “organ” and location of mental perception, thinking, and making choices**

(3) The essential nature of a Satanic “stronghold” is that it is a hostile spiritual “power” that is opposed to, actively resists and wages war against God, His truth and will

- It is a place and means of “waging war” against “God” and the kingdom rule of “Christ” with the purpose and objective that a person will not be “obedient to Christ” and God’s kingdom rule
- Being a location that is under the kingdom rule of Satan, it’s nature and characteristic is that it is built and conformed to the thinking and actions of Satan, the adversary of God

A stronghold is not passive or inert but a positive “power” that repels, resists and actively opposes the truth and will of God being done

- This is implicitly stated in the words the “*the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power*” (2 Cor. 10:4)
- “Power” is the strength, energy and force by which something is influenced, moved in a particular direction, and by which something is done and accomplished
- The reason the various “weapons” believers use for spiritual “warfare” must have “divine power,” literally “the power of God,” is because they are waging war against the strength, might, and “power” of Satan and his kingdom that is located in and waging war from a “stronghold”

Like two magnets whose powers oppose and repel each other, a Satanic “stronghold” is a power in an individual that opposes the truth and will of God

- As when two magnets are not in the “field” of each other’s power there is not a manifestation of resistance, so a Satanic stronghold is not evident when the truth and will of God are “distant”
- But when they are brought near they repel, and the closer they are brought near, the resistance increases with greater intensity and power to completely oppose, resist and reject each another

(4) The building of a Satanic “stronghold” begins, originates and is initiated from the spiritual realm “outside” a person through some form of means or media

- This is stated in the negation of this kind of warfare as not being a “*according to the flesh*” and that “*the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh*” (2 Cor. 10:3-4)
- The “*flesh*” in this context means “earthly, human nature,” which is not merely composed of the physical body but also the “psychology” of a person, their “soul/spirit”/“mind/heart”

In the beginning of human history, Satan began his attack against Adam by initiating and engaging in conversation with Eve while Adam was standing next to her listening

- **Genesis 3:1, 6** = *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”...⁶ So she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*
- Centuries later with the Lord Jesus Christ, Satan used the same strategy of attack by initiating and engaging Jesus in a “conversation”
- **Matthew 4:3** = *And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God...”*

In the same way, Satan initiates spiritual warfare from the “outside” of individuals either personally or through spirits under his kingdom rule working through their “weapons of warfare” in one way or another, and through various means and forms of media

- This spiritual warfare by Satanic spirits is explicitly stated in Ephesians 6:11-12
- **Ephesians 6:11-12** = *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

(5) A Satanic “stronghold” is initially created by a “thought” that enters the mind/heart

- This is evident in 2 Corinthians 10:5, “*take every thought captive to obey Christ,*” which means there are thoughts that enter the soul/spirit // mind/heart that are disobedient to Christ

A “thought” is an idea, feeling, sense, notion or concept that enters the mind/heart where it is “either “approved” and received or “rejected”

- When a “thought” enters the “mind,” it is then processed, whether “consciously” or “unconsciously,” whether “instantaneously” or by consideration and contemplation
- This process is an evaluation and judgment to either “accept” or “reject” the thought
- The way the thought is “accepted” is to believe that it is “good” and “desirable” with the mind/soul/heart being “inclined” toward it to “desire,” “receive” and act according to it
- The way the thought is “rejected” is to believe that it is “evil” and “undesirable” with the mind/soul/heart being “disinclined” to “receive” it and, thus, not act according to it

In the very first and initial act of spiritual warfare in human beings in the Garden, the “serpent,” who was Satan, presented a thought that entered the minds of Eve and Adam

- Satan subtly initiated this process with Eve by directly speaking to her and asking, “*Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’*” (Gen. 3:1)
- Because of this thought, the process of her thinking is engaged with her mind focused on eating from the trees in the garden

- She then responds to and contradict Satan's thought saying, "*We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,* ³ *but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'*" (Gen. 3:2-3)
- Through her process of thinking, she is now specifically focused on eating of "*the tree*" of which she knows she "*shall not eat*" because "*God said*" she would "*die*"
- Satan then speaks a contradictory thought to her, "*You will not surely die*" (Gen. 3:4)
- This, then, initiates the process of evaluation and judgment in her mind/heart
- In order to support this thought, Satan presents to her mind thoughts and ideas that form a reasoned "argument" to persuade her that his contradictory thought of what "*God said*" is "good" and "desirable," saying, "*For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*" (Gen. 3:5)
- Rather than believing God's word, she then makes the judgment that the thoughts/ideas of Satan are to be believed because they are "good" and more "desirable" than what "*God said*"
- She then acts according to those thoughts, that desire, and that judgment
- **Genesis 3:6** = She "*saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*"

What is clear in the last statement is that Adam, "her husband" was "with her"

- While these thoughts were being spoken directly to and entered the mind of Eve, they also were being heard, perceived, and entering the mind/heart of Adam
- He also processed the thought and "argument" of Satan, chose to believe it and act accordingly
- The Scripture states that whereas Eve was deceived by the thoughts and reasoned "argument" of Satan, Adam was not - he knew what he was doing!
- **1 Timothy 2:14** = *Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived*

(6) The essential nature of the Satanic thought is that it is a lie

- A lie is the primary means and weapon Satan uses to wage spiritual war against God and people
- It is "*against the knowledge of God*" (2 Cor. 10:5)
- In one way or another, the thought is a deception, distortion, misrepresentation, misapplication, perversion, corruption, contradiction, or outright denial of the truth of the word of God
- This is obvious in Satan's contradiction of God's word that "*the day you eat of it you shall surely die*" (Gen. 2:17) with his outright denial of it, saying, "*You will not surely die*" (Gen. 3:4)

Jesus said the origin of all lies is Satan

- **John 8:44** = "*the devil ...does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*"
- Coming from the "*mind*" of Satan, it is intended to conform a person's mind to Satan's mind

(7) When the lie is believed, it is received in the heart/mind and becomes a "foothold" (Eph. 4:27) and "foundation" for the building of a "stronghold"

- The structure of a "*stronghold*" begins to be built in a person's mind when the lie is "received"
- On the basis of the lie, the "foundation" of that "*stronghold*" can be built
- Using a different analogy from Scripture that the word of God is like a "*seed*" that enters the heart, germinates, takes root, grows, and bears fruit, (Matt. 13:3-8, 19-23), a lie is the "seed" of Satan planted in the mind/heart that is believed and received, takes root and bears evil fruit

(8) A Satanic “stronghold” is then built by an “argument” that is like a “wall” “raised up” to support, sustain, and protect the “stronghold” “against” the truth of God as well as being the place/location from which to wage spiritual war by means of the “argument”

- 2 Corinthians 10:5 = *arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God*

The Greek word translated “arguments” is λογισμός (logismos) and means “reasoning, reckoning, computation, judgment, decision, a reasonable argument”

- The root of “logismos” is “logos,” which means “word,” and is the word from which is derived the English word “logic”

- A “logismos” is a thought that is judged to be “logical” and “reasonable”

- This is demonstrated by Satan’s reasoned argument, “*For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*” (Gen. 3:5)

A Satanic “argument” is employed to support, verify, and prove the lie

- This “argument” is specifically “*raised up high against*” the truth of God

- The Greek word translated “*lofty opinion*” (ESV) is ὑψωμα (hupsoma) and literally means “a lofty thing, high thing, something that is elevated”

- It is the “logical reasoning” of the “argument” supporting and sustaining the lie which is “*raised*” and built up to become a “wall” of “the structure” of the stronghold

- The “argument” is raised and built up to defend and protect the “stronghold” from attack, as well as a location from which to wage offensive war by argumentation

Believing the lie and the “argument” is the “mortar” which holds the “stronghold” together

- The stronger the faith is in the lie and the “argument,” the stronger is the “stronghold”

(9) Because it is “high” and “lofty,” it is highly esteemed and honored by the sinful mind

- 2 Corinthians 10:5 = *lofty opinion*

- Because the lie and argument are “*raised up*” to be a “high and elevated thing,” they are regarded as highly esteemed, honored, and valued by the sinful, fallen “*mind*”

- The argument is most often “high” and “lofty” in terms of intellectual reasoning, scholarship, philosophy, academic “excellence” and “tradition,” as well as being regarded as the most up-to-date and “modern” “science” by “the world”

- This esteem and worldly value also strengthens and supports the structure of the “stronghold”

- Because of this, there will always be a worldly peer pressure in the community to both believe, maintain and uphold lie of the argument as well as to reject, persecute, excommunicate, “cancel,” and destroy those who don’t “hold to the party line” of that group or community

(10) A Satanic “stronghold” takes a person “captive” to the lie, and, thus, to Satan

- Corresponding to and counterfeiting the kingdom of God in which “*every thought*” is to be “*taken captive to Christ*” (2 Cor. 10:5), the lie and arguments of Satan “*take captive*” the mind/heart of a person when they believe and receive it

- The Greek word translated “*take captive*,” αἰχμαλωτίζω (aichmalotizo), means to “lead away as a prisoner,” the result of being captured by an enemy in a war and taken away under his rule

- Far from leading to “freedom,” the building of a Satanic “stronghold” makes a person a “captive” and prisoner to the lie and the kingdom rule of Satan

- This reality is stated in Colossians with a different but synonymous Greek word
Colossians 2:8 = *See to it that no one takes you captive (συλαγωγέω - sulagogeō) by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world*

Not believing the truth of God and believing the lie is the “legal ground” (Eph. 4:27) for Satan to have access to a person in order to “take them captive”

- **Romans 1:18** = *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

The legal ground makes it possible for an evil spirit or spirits to oppress the person from “outside” and enter “into” the person so that they become “the house” of that spirit or spirits (Matt. 12:29)

- When the evil spirit or spirits enter a person, the Scripture speaks of the person as being “demonized” (Matt. 12:22) or “having a demon” (Luke 8:26) (“possessed” is inaccurate)

(11) The strength and power of a “stronghold” can increase in influence and control

- **2 Corinthians 10:6** says we are “to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete”

- The Greek word translated “complete” is πληρώω (plaroo) and literally means “to fill”

- Corresponding to and counterfeiting the kingdom of God in which we are to be “filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit” to be transformed to be like and obey the Lord Jesus, the strength of influence and control of the stronghold and evil spirit or spirits either working “on,” “in” and “through” a person can increase to “fill” the person to live in disobedience to the Lord

- **Luke 8:30** = *Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him.*

- **Acts 5:3** = *Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?”*

- **Acts 13:10** = *Paul said, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?”*

The power of a stronghold over, in, and through a person will not only be the “rational” content of the lie and argument(s) but the emotional strength of their meaning and attachment to the person and amplified by the demons holding them captive

- This is depicted in **Ephesians 6:16** as “the flaming darts of the evil one”

- While the “dart” or “arrow” is the rational content of the lie, the “flames” are the emotions connected and attached to the “dart” that ignite the “fire” of emotions in the person

- The greater the power of the emotions and the strength of the demon(s) in the person, the greater will be the power of their influence and control in and through the person

(12) The reality of a Satanic “stronghold” is manifested in persistent disobedience to God

- **2 Corinthians 10:6** = *every disobedience*

- Being led away and held “captive” in the prison of the “stronghold,” the person continuously chooses to act and live in rebellion against and disobedience to God, thereby advancing the kingdom rule of Satan on the earth in and through the person

➔ **The basic principle is: Where there is fruit, there is a root - evil fruit is produced from an evil root and good fruit is produced from a good root**