

Spiritual Warfare General Says We Must Cast Down Evil Strongholds to Build Up the Kingdom

Read Time: 6 Minutes 4 Seconds

We see an instructive statement in Jeremiah 1:9 and 10: "Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: 'Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.'"

Over 35 years ago, my mentor, Dr. Guy Duffield (who went to heaven 22 years ago) told me that if it's in the Bible once, obey it ... if it's in the Bible two times, get it deep in my spirit and if it is there multiple times ... I better really study it, believe it and practice it well.

Since we see the same theme five times in Jeremiah alone ... Dr. Duffield would admonish us to sit up and pay close attention (see Jer. 18:7-9; 24:6; 31:28; and 42:10). The more I studied these five scriptures in Jeremiah, I sensed, for us, this is about spiritual warfare. There are a total of six action words; four of which are throw down and destroy related, and two build up and plant related. As I paused, He brought to mind my prayer life back then, and the prayer style of many prayer meetings I have attended over the years. Most of them had very little, if any, of the first set of action words.

Now I understand that if you are a missionary contractor, you might view the above scriptures as tearing down the old structure in another country and building a new one. Or if you are a farmer, you might view them as plowing the weeds or

harvested crop under, working the ground and preparing the soil for fall or spring planting.

Or if you are a counselor, you might view the Scriptures as rooting out and getting rid of old beliefs and habits that are pulling one down and replacing them with encouraging words that God says about us to build one up. But, since my wife and I have been involved with spiritual warfare for many years, we will view these verses through that lens.

Long ago, I realized that prophetic and intercessory prayers pluck up and plant; they destroy and build up. Our prayers bind and loose as we are instructed in Matt 16:19 and 18:18. Keeping this in the spiritual warfare arena, we see an example of pursuing and destroying enemies in Psalm 18:37-42 where David pursued, overtook and destroyed them (we all know who the real enemy is). God uses similar language in Micah 5:11-15 against nations that do not listen and obey Him: "I will cut off... and throw down... I will pluck... I will destroy...".

Let's review another example of tear down, cut down and build in Judges 6:1-26. In verse 11, we find Gideon hiding in a winepress threshing wheat so as to not be seen by their enemy, the Midianites. So, how did they get in bondage to the Midianites? We read the answer in verse 1; "Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. So, the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian...". After seven long years, an angel of the Lord shows up and tells Gideon to tear down the altar of Baal that his father had, to cut down the wooden image beside it (a pagan goddess Asherah pole) and build an altar to the Lord on top of the rock.

To go a little deeper into how the Israelites ended up in this position, let's look at Judges 1:27-34, where they were originally instructed in Exodus 34:11-16, to drive out all the inhabitants... but, they did not obey the voice of the Lord, thus there was an incomplete conquest of the land. Judges 2:1-3 reiterates they were to make no covenants with the

inhabitants and to tear down their altars. "But," God says, "you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?" God goes on to say He would not drive their enemies out and they would be thorns in their side, and their gods shall be a snare to them. That's an understatement!

It goes on to state in Judges 2:10 that when all that generation had died... another generation arose who did not know the Lord, nor the work He had done for Israel. This generation did evil in the sight of the Lord, followed other gods, provoked God as they forsook Him and served Baal and the Ashtoreth's. So, He delivered them into the hands of their enemies (Judg. 2:10-15).

We see yet another example in Deuteronomy 7:1-5 where God told the Israelites to go into the land He has given them, possess it and cast out the nations before them. He instructed them not to give their daughters or sons for marriage to the inhabitants of the land for they will turn them away to serve other gods. He firmly instructed them to destroy their altars, break down their sacred pillars, to cut down and burn their carved images with fire. But they did not obey the God that delivered them from 400 years of bondage and led them into the promised land of milk and honey with one astounding miracle after another.

Second Corinthians 10:3-4, tells us "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds...". Do we understand we are in a war? Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, used the Greek word *strateuomai*, which means "to contend, go to war, warfare". We have been given weapons (*hoplon*, implement, tool, especially offensive for war, weapon), three of them being, the name (Jesus), the blood and the sword of the Spirit/His Word; and for warfare, Paul used *strateia*, which means "military service, warfare." Why is Paul telling us we have weapons? Why do we need weapons unless we really are in a war? And why use

the word warfare, unless that is the actual case; do we realize this? Our weapons are not carnal, of the flesh, but mighty (dunatos or powerful, capable, mighty, strong) for the pulling down of strongholds (ochuroma or fortify, hold, a castle, stronghold; anything opposing or against God's will).

In conclusion, let's revisit Jeremiah 1:10 "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant." Since there are four demolishing words and two constructive words mentioned in this Scripture ... maybe we should spend at least half to two-thirds of our intercession time casting down evil strongholds the Holy Spirit reveals to us and the rest of our time building up the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. Rebuking and binding the strongman over a situation and loosening or releasing the Spirit of God into that situation to build and to plant another kingdom—His.

We might be thinking, "oh, but I don't have the power or authority to do that." Luke 9:1 informs us that Jesus gave His disciples (mathetes or learner, pupil, follower) power and authority over all demons. And Luke 10:19 states Jesus has given us authority over all the power of the enemy.

The Psalms instruct us to speak, proclaim, shout and pray His Word out loud, so let us take ownership over this word, put on our armor of God, pick up our weapons and declare that our King Jesus has set "us" (you and me) over the nations to root out and pull down, to destroy and throw down (to wrestle, contend with) principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness and then to build. We're instructed to plant His glorious kingdom of justice and righteousness in the land, (study Eph. 6:10-18).

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