

## ***Session 2 The New Testament Model for Spiritual Warfare***

### **I. REVIEW: THREE TYPES OF SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS TO PULL DOWN**

- A. One expression of prayer is commonly referred to as “spiritual warfare” because it contends against spiritual strongholds affecting the culture along with the government of specific cities and nations.
- B. Paul exhorted us to pull down spiritual strongholds; three strongholds are commonly identified. Paul used the analogy of a stronghold, or fortress, to describe how we overcome Satan’s attack. A stronghold in the ancient world was a fort or fortified city, which was often surrounded by a large stone wall. The purpose of a fortress wall around an ancient city was to keep an invading army out.
- <sup>4</sup>For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup>casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. 10:4-5)***
- C. Spiritual demonic strongholds are established when people in a city individually or collectively open the door to Satan through embracing ungodly belief systems, values, or actions. When people receive demonically energized lies, it results in their lives or city being held a measure of bondage.
- D. ***Personal strongholds***: Strongholds in our mind start as ideas that are in agreement with Satan.
- E. ***Cultural strongholds***: Strongholds in cultures consist of beliefs, values, actions, and laws in specific regions in agreement with Satan and against God’s righteousness. Repenting for these actions and laws, along with interceding for God’s mercy, is one way to dismantle cultural strongholds. There are many ways in which people agree with Satan, keeping evil values entrenched.
- F. ***Cosmic strongholds***: Strongholds in the spiritual realm are caused by demonic principalities in the air that assault cities and nations with a focus on attacking and influencing government leaders.
1. These evil spirits are called principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual hosts of wickedness (Eph. 6:12).
- <sup>12</sup>We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6:12)***
2. They are high-ranking demonic beings that dwell in heavenly places (in the air), not in human beings (Eph. 2:2). These “*disembodied demonic spirits*” powerfully affect humans, but are different in function from demons who *dwell in humans*.
- <sup>2</sup>...you once walked...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience...(Eph. 2:2)***

- G. Just as there is a human hierarchy in the government of nations, so there is a demonic hierarchy of above each region of the earth that affects the city and/or nation under them (Dan. 10:12, 20-21). These spirits are sometimes referred to as “territorial spirits” since they influence specific areas.

## **II. CASTING DOWN SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS IN THE CULTURE**

- A. Whole cities, nations, or geographic regions can be affected by the same lies and assaulted by the same demonic activity. One way that we can recognize this is when we see a large amount of people in a region embracing the *same patterns of darkness* in their beliefs, values, and actions.
- B. ***Every high thing***: We are to cast down every high thing that exalts itself against God. This speaks of demonic activities and ideas that are like a powerful wall, hindering God’s blessing in the cities. Demonic powers exalt themselves by seducing people to believe lies that attack the truth about God. There are many ways in which people agree with Satan and keep evil values entrenched.
- C. Ways in which we cast down “high things” that are against God in the culture:
  - 1. ***We proclaim the truth about Jesus and God’s victory***: We publicly proclaim the truth of Jesus’ supremacy, victory, leadership, promises, values, etc. We expose the lies lodged in the culture. The declaration of truth is essential in dismantling cultural strongholds.
  - 2. ***We do the works of the kingdom*** as we confess our own sin and sin in the culture. We act in the opposite spirit of the evil that permeates a geographic area by doing godly deeds, calling the people and lawmakers in that region to repent of lies that they embrace as reflected in their ungodly beliefs, laws, values, and actions. For example, where oppression is identified as a spiritual stronghold, the church should focus on doing acts of generosity, servanthood, etc.
  - 3. ***We pray, asking the Father*** to intervene with His power and great mercy as we prophetically declare the truth of Jesus’ supremacy, victory, leadership, and promises. We pray the prayers of the Bible, remind God of His promises, and make prophetic decrees related to the supremacy of God and His purposes. Corporate prayer with fasting is helpful (Joel 2:12-17).
- D. See [mikebickle.org](http://mikebickle.org) to review Growing in Prayer, Part 1, Session 8 ***“The Value of Using Biblical Prayers”*** and ***“Appendix D for Prayers for Victory Over Cultural Strongholds*** focused on praying into issues related to justice, crisis events, politics, economics, families, media, educational, etc.

## **III. THE PRINCIPLE OF AGREEING WITH GOD**

- A. Engaging in spiritual warfare is essentially agreeing with God and disagreeing with the enemy in our beliefs, values, and actions. It involves reminding God of His character and covenant promises, agreeing with His Word, and declaring the supremacy of Jesus. It involves confessing sin, rejecting the works of darkness, and acting in the opposite spirit by doing the works of the kingdom.
- B. The method of “warfare” emphasized in Scripture is to agree with God in worship and intercession.

- C. ***Worship is agreement with who God is.*** In worship we declare truths related to who God is such as “Holy is the Lord,” “You are worthy,” “The Lord is good, and His mercy endures forever,” etc.
- D. ***Intercession is agreement with what God promises to do.*** In intercession we speak truths related to what God promises to do such as: “Lord, release a greater measure of Your Spirit’s activity to revive the church. Release the power of Your Word as confirmed with signs and wonders.”
- E. When we agree with who God is, we call it *worship*. When we agree with what God promised to do, we call it *intercession*. In heaven, worship and intercession flow as one river and are woven together in the exercise of God’s government. They overlap and are deeply related. Both are necessary, so we must value both activities in our approach to God-centered spiritual warfare.
- F. In addition to agreeing with God through worship and intercession, we also agree with Him through lives of holiness and in doing activities that bring blessing and healing to others.
  - 1. Holiness is agreement with God’s heart of love. This involves repentance that breaks any agreement with darkness and comes into agreement with God’s love and purity.
  - 2. Healing is agreement with God’s desire to restore life. We proclaim the truth of Jesus as Healer and break agreement with sickness, asking to see a greater measure of His power.

#### **IV. NEW TESTAMENT MODEL OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE PRAYER**

- A. There are differing views on “spiritual warfare prayer.” Some focus on God, while others focus on the demons attacking God’s purpose. The New Testament model is to *direct our prayers to the Father*; instead of demonic principalities, as the primary way to wrestle with the “disembodied” evil spirits in heavenly places (Eph. 6:12). Daniel prevailed over the principality of Persia (Dan. 10:12-13) as he fasted and prayed, *focusing on God* (Dan. 9:4–23), not on the demonic being itself.
- B. In my opinion, there are exceptions to this general rule, in which case we address our proclamations directly to a demonic principality. On specific occasions the Spirit may lead some to speak directly in intercession to a demonic principality. However, this is not the primary prayer model presented by the New Testament. Jesus and the apostles did speak directly to demons that were *dwelling in a person*—thus to an “embodied” demonic spirit. Not one apostolic prayer is addressed to the devil.
- C. All the prayers of Jesus that are recorded in the Bible were directed to the Father (Jn. 14:16; 17:5, 11, 15, 25). Jesus taught His disciples to direct their prayers to the Father (Mt. 18:19; Lk. 11:2, 13).
- D. The apostles’ prayers also teach us to address the Father when we pray. In the “warfare epistle” Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he addressed all his prayers to the Father (Eph. 1:16–17; 3:14, 16, 20).
- E. The apostolic prayers are positive prayers asking God for the *impartation of positive things* instead of the *removal of negative things*.

1. Paul prayed for love to abound instead of asking for the removal of hatred or speaking against the demon of hatred (Phil. 1:9).
2. Paul prayed for the impartation of unity instead of praying against division or the demon of division (Rom. 15:5). He asked for peace to increase instead of fear to be removed (Rom. 15:13).
3. Paul did not pray against sin, but asked for an increase of holiness, purity, unity, and love (1 Thes. 3:12-13).

**V. WHAT HAPPENS IN THE SPIRIT REALM WHEN WE PRAY? (DAN. 10)**

- A. Daniel 10 gives us a snapshot of what happens in the spirit realm when God's people pray. This is a favorite chapter for many intercessors because the veil is drawn back, allowing us to see how our prayers affect angels as well as demonic powers and principalities. It also reveals intense conflict between high-ranking angels and demons that is manifested in earthly spheres of government.
- B. In the spirit, angelic and demonic authority structures exist over each city and region in the world. There are high-ranking angels that serve God's purposes, and there are high-ranking demons that fight against His purposes. The conflict between these angelic and demonic beings is dynamically related to the prayers and deeds of the people in the city or region over which these beings preside.
- C. If we could see into the spirit realm, I believe we would be amazed by how much the heavenly host is involved in earthly affairs and how they respond to our prayers.
- D. There is a dynamic correlation between what people do on earth and the measure of demonic activity that is released in the areas in which they live. For example, as people sin more in a particular city or region, they give greater access to the demonic realm to increase the amount of spiritual darkness in that city or region. The same principle operates in the angelic realm—the righteous deeds and prayers of the saints affect the measure of angelic activity in a specific area.
- E. Political leaders and the governmental infrastructures under them are deeply affected by the activity of angels and demons, though many of these leaders are completely unaware that they are wrestling against, and being oppressed and influenced by, demonic powers and principalities (Eph. 6:12). Whether kings, presidents, or prime ministers, they have high-ranking angels and demons related to their political sphere of authority. The result of the conflict between these good and evil forces affects many events, political decisions, and the spiritual culture of the cities of the earth.
- F. I believe there are demonic assignments focused on deceiving and harassing every governmental leader from the highest office to the lowest position. When a person steps into office, he or she is stepping into an increased assault. For this reason we need to stand with them in prayer.

- G. When we pray, the Holy Spirit and the angels increase their activity on behalf of all those for whom we pray, and the result ultimately benefits us. Paul understood this truth, so he encouraged the body of Christ to make it a priority to pray for all in authority:

***<sup>1</sup>I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, <sup>2</sup>for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (1 Tim. 2:1-2)***

- H. Paul knew from the Scripture that the heart of a king or political leader is in the hand of the Lord. The Lord can turn it like channels of water, and He can use angels in this process.

***The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes. (Prov. 21:1)***

- I. Consider how our prayers might affect a political leader. Sometimes when the leader of a nation feels oppressed, it is due to the influence of a demon. For example, when the president of a nation is having a difficult day, he or she may think they are simply in a bad mood. It may be just that, but in sometimes it is related to a demonic spirit seeking to oppress them.
- J. One purpose of the oppression is to get the leader to establish new laws and make decrees while under the oppressive influence of a demonic power. As a result of our prayers, angels drive back demons and hinder their negative influence on a political leader.
- K. Just as demons can influence leaders to make poor decisions, angels can influence them to make wise decisions. When an ungodly king or president feels a sudden surge of peace in his heart, I believe is often related to the prayers of the saints. In this mindset, he or she is far more likely to make good decisions for their nation. The very tone and attitude in a president's cabinet meetings can be affected by prayers, which release angelic activity that hinders demonic oppression, etc.
- L. If the demonic hierarchy is not hindered sufficiently, then the human leader is influenced to make evil decisions. The leader has a free will, but if he or she has a mindset of peace, even though they may be an unbeliever, their decisions will be different from those made when angry, fearful, jealous, or oppressed. The leader still makes his own decisions, but under a very different influence, according to the angel or the demon that may be influencing their mind and body in that hour.
- M. Our prayers for kings, presidents, and others in authority really matter, and they can affect the decisions that our leaders make. Their decisions can affect our lifestyles, families, and economies. This is one reason Paul exhorted us to pray for all who are in authority "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life" (1 Tim. 2:2).

## **VI. DANIEL'S EXPERIENCE IN DANIEL 10**

- A. When Daniel was probably in his mid-eighties, he set his heart to pray for the Jews in Jerusalem. He prayed for twenty-one days with fasting because of the resistance against the remnant in Jerusalem.

***<sup>2</sup>I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. <sup>3</sup>I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. (Dan. 10:2-3)***

- B. In response to Daniel’s prayer a mighty angel came (Dan. 10:10-14). This high-ranking angel (Dan. 10:5-6) was similar in stature to the angel that John later saw (Rev. 10:1). The angel said to Daniel:
- <sup>12</sup>Then he [the angel] said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. <sup>13</sup>But the [demonic] prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael [the archangel], one of the chief [angelic] princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone [without the aid of a high-ranking angel] there with the kings of Persia. (Dan. 10:12-13)***
- C. The mighty angel pulled back the curtain in the spirit realm to allow Daniel to see a glimpse of the angelic and demonic authorities that are over the natural authority structures of the nations. He told Daniel that the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” withstood him when Daniel first began to pray.
- D. The prince of Persia is a reference to the demonic principality—a high-ranking demonic power—that was exerting his influence over the region of Persia (modern-day Iran) and was affecting the human prince of Persia in a negative way. This demonic prince of Persia was warring against Israel by seeking to stir up the human king of Persia against God’s people (Dan. 10:13, 20–21).
- E. A “chief prince” is an archangel, one who leads angels. Jesus can easily overpower a demonic principality. However, His authority is exerted or made manifest in the earthly realm through believers who agree with Him and who persevere in obedience and prayer with faith.
- F. Daniel fought the demonic prince of Persia by agreeing with God in prayer and fasting. The mighty angel informed him that, “Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help” (v. 13).
- G. ***From the first day:*** This is an important passage for understanding the theology of prayer. A mighty angel told Daniel, in essence, “From the very first day, twenty-one days ago, when you set your heart to humble yourself, I was sent to you.” The mighty angel made a dramatic statement: “I came because of your words.” This statement makes clear that angels respond to the prayers of the saints.
1. I believe that if Daniel had not continued in prayer, the mighty angel would not have arrived.
  2. It was important for Daniel to persevere in prayer even for full twenty-one days on that particular occasion to see the breakthrough that is recorded in Daniel 10.
- H. Daniel’s experience proves that there is a dynamic relationship between our prayers and how God visits a city or nation. This is not about “earning” anything, but about coming into agreement with God’s will. Our words are heard because of Jesus’s death and resurrection.

- I. The reason Jesus releases His power more through prayer is because He wants partnership with His people, and prayer is one of the main ways that partnership is strengthened.
- J. The spiritual events of Daniel 10 were recorded in the Scripture to give us a model of what God wants to do in our day to hinder the demonic principalities over Iran, Iraq, and every other nation.
- K. Demonic principalities can be withstood as the Spirit raises up a “corporate Daniel” to pray for angelic help to overcome the demonic powers assaulting Israel (Rev. 12:7-9).
- L. Indeed, Daniel 10 is a model of spiritual warfare for the end-time church. Let us take our stand before the throne of God as we follow this prayer model and ask for angelic intervention in our world today.