

## What is a Stronghold In The Bible?

Cinnamon Study #305

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**\*This lesson is greatly connected to “Cinnamon Study #303” and can be found fruitful reading them together.\***

In **Study #303** we already established that there are two different types of foundations in which we can rest. A faulty foundation built with asphalt (counterfeit stone- genesis 11:3) or on The rock, which is Jesus, The Truth, The Word.

With this in mind, we are going to discuss the meaning of strongholds and what that means biblically using the verse found in 2 Corinthians 10:4 and examining it word for word:

**“ (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”**

Analyzing each and every word does take time, but it is incredibly fruitful on understanding exactly what Scripture has to say, as well as being a very capable **guard** against our own opinions defining what the Bible says. We always want Jesus to give us the truth, rather than our opinions on *what we think it should say*.

The word “*weapons*” here in this verse is ὄπλον, which is the Greek word hóplon (Strongs 3696).

This is a word to describe an instrument used in warfare, with emphasis on God always giving us the resources we need to prevail in every form of spiritual warfare. Another word for this would be *armor*.

Naturally we have to define *warfare*, because without doing so we wouldn’t understand the weapons needed or able to identify what type of war we are fighting against.

The word *warfare* in this verse is the word στρατεία, which is the Greek word strateia (Strongs #4752) which comes from *strateuomai*.

This can be defined as military service, especially when referencing the apostolic career, which is one of much danger and hardship and **contending with carnal inclinations** (*like your opinion on what the Word means*). In other words, it is a military term about the believer being at war with not only their **self**, but with surrounding false doctrines and beliefs in the Church and among different religious groups.

As a believer we must persevere (endure) in sound doctrine, and that is a war for only the strongest soldiers to take on- the Believers.

“ This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;”

### 1 Timothy 1:18 KJV

In the fourth chapter of James, he exposes that the source of spiritual warfare is not a demon, as popularity suggests, but **your own idea** of the knowledge of God- what *you* think vs what Scripture actually says.

“ From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?”

### James 4:1 KJV

Peter doubles down on this and says your desires war against your soul.

“ Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;”

### 1 Peter 2:11 KJV

Moving on to the next term in the verse: “fleshy.” This is the word σαρκικός or sarkikos (Strong's #4559) coming from the word sarx ( Strong's #456)

This is a term that pertains to the unregenerate, in other words, an animal. It describes behavior that is human nature, with emphasis on the base of physical desires. When we look at the meaning of sarx, we find that its meaning is driven on the fact that it is from human origin or empowerment meaning that it is not capable in contrast with the next word in the verse we are examining (mighty/powerful) where something is powered by God and therefore capable.

“Flesh” or “carnal” typically resembles unaided human effort or decisions, actions, or ideas that originate from self or are self-empowered. These decisions, opinions or ideas are always done without faith, meaning independent from Gods in-working. Thus what is "*of the flesh (carnal)*" is by definition displeasing to the Lord – even things that *seem* “respectable.”

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

### **Romans 7:18 KJV**

The next term we are going to look at is “mighty/powerful” which is the word δυνατός, or dunatos (Strong's #1415).

This word essentially means “it is powerful because its driving force is God rather than self.”

I think of the following verses in regards to this word:

“And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:”

### **Luke 24:19 KJV**

“And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.”

### **Acts 7:22 KJV**

“Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”

### **Mark 9:23 KJV**

“The Lord Jesus Christ comes to open up our minds by the opening up of the Scriptures to our understanding....the Word of Truth. This is His “testimony”....the opening up of the Scriptures to our hearing ears in this last time.

It will not align or conform with what the word of man has been deceptively preaching for generations.... man’s various private interpretations of the Scriptures in order to deceive many and get paid for it.

One must overcome our own religious thoughts/understanding and ways for His thoughts/understanding and ways (which are higher than ours) when we hear the Word of Truth.

The hearers of His words....the hearing of what the Spirit is saying today to the churches... are to overcome those things that He points out. We must hear the Spirit of Truth today and overcome.

Paul overcame his own religious thoughts and ways....counting all those things but a loss....in order to gain the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ the Lord...and we are to do the same today and not hold on to the thoughts and ways of our church "fathers". We are not to be found defending their "knowledge" nor their ways...their handwriting of church dogmas...the doctrines and commandments of men.

Philippians 3:6-10 KJV (6) *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. (7) But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. (8) **Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,***"

Paul was found in Christ instead of going about defending his own righteousness."

The word "pulling down/demolition" is the word καθαίρεσις or Kathairesis.

It comes from two words:

**Kata-** meaning to take down or destroy and

**Haireomai-** to take for oneself/ prefer. It emphasis personal choice or self interest of the one preferring to grasp or take

This word highlights God's ability to topple whatever presses His redemptive purpose.

This reminds me of a verse in Luke 12:18 where the rich farmer declares, "I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones." Here the word exposes worldly self-reliance. God's overnight judgment (Luke 12:20) reminds disciples that earthly securities can be dismantled in a moment, urging stewardship in view of eternity (Luke 12:21).

Knowing all we know now of the preceding words in this verse, lets take a look at the word "stronghold" and define it biblically.

It is the word ὀχύρωμα, which is the Greek word ochuróma (Strong's #3794).

This word is one of the most fascinating of definitions because it is not how I would assume the word stronghold to mean.

This word means castle/ false argument.

If you are wondering how those two very different English words are connected, strap on your seatbelt because I went for a wild ride wondering the same thing.

Essentially, a false argument/opinion/idea is a safe fortified place in which a person seeks shelter to escape reality/truth. Synonyms for this word in the Bible are castle, tower, fortress, prison. In a negative sense, they symbolize spiritual or intellectual defenses that resist Gods rule.

Lets compare what I mean in regards to a “positive and negative sense” looking at a positive verse example (Psalm 18:2) and a negative verse example (Nahum 3:12).

POSITIVE:

“*The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*”

**Psalm 18:2 KJV**

(Are we putting together the references from **cinnamon study #303** yet?!)

NEGATIVE:

“*All thy strong holds shall be like fig trees with the firstripe figs: if they be shaken, they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater.*”

**Nahum 3:12**

I’ve explained the meaning behind Psalm 18:2 in **study #303**, however, allow me to explain the meaning of Nahum 3:12:

Essentially, negative strongholds, that is, a false belief about the knowledge of God, are very easy for God to destroy. God compares this with a metaphor that our false beliefs are as easy to destroy as ripe figs fall easily off the tree with little to no effort. It is nothing for God to destroy our false beliefs, ideas, or arguments and opinions over things that are not of truth, meaning not of God.

Some more positive examples of strongholds in the Bible include:

“*The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*”

**Proverbs 18:10 KJV**

“*To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.*”

**Isaiah 42:7 KJV**

“*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised*”

### **Luke 4:18 KJV**

In the negative sense, it brings more deeper scriptural meaning on the “Tower of Babel.” (This was discussed thoroughly in study #303)

Similarly, in other verses we see the same meaning with the given context like in Isaiah 2:14-18:

“*And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,  
And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall,  
And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.  
And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.  
And the idols he shall utterly abolish.*”

As mentioned previously, **towers represent human built defenses, power structures, false arguments, twisting of truth and pride.**

The Hebrew word for tower comes from the Hebrew word גָּדַל or gadal which means to magnify, make large, twist together (threads) and is also applied to wrestling/contending. The can be applied in both positive and negative contexts. It also describes speaking arrogantly or proudly.

I've noticed that in the English transcripts it is translated “magnified” pretty often. Lets take a look at a couple more verses to demonstrate what we are discussing:

“*But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done **great things.***”

### **Joel 2:20 KJV**

“*Her filthiness is in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter. O Lord, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath **magnified** himself.*”

### **Lamentations 1:9 KJV**

**“**Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.”

**Psalm 35:26 KJV**

The goal of the war we are in is to get from *captivity to freedom*, using the armor of God and His word which is a weapon, which is truth, and truth sets us free and it is given to us by God and God alone.

**“Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.”**

**Jeremiah 10:14 KJV**