

# Satan's Strongholds

*"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 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; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." II Corinthians 10:3-6*

**M**any years ago, I was called to the mental ward of the Methodist hospital in Houston Texas to pray for a lady. She was tormented by visions of snakes and spiders, and every kind of creeping creatures. These were continually before her both day and night. The doctors had found nothing to help her, nor had the prayers of others ministers. I also prayed for her without any result. After that first prayer, I questioned her about the things she was seeing. She described them to me, and added, *"If it weren't for the face of Jesus, I believe I would go crazy."* I asked what she meant by *"the face of Jesus."* She said the face of Jesus also would appear to her in the midst of the snakes and spiders, with a smile for her. She said, *"I just love when Jesus smiles at me."* I asked what the face of Jesus looked like, and she told me it was the same face she saw *"on the screen door"* in Port Neches Texas. In 1969, there was the phenomenon of a face that appeared to be Jesus on the screen door of a woman's house. Thousands of people came from everywhere to see this. I asked, did you go to Port Neches to see this *"face of Jesus,"* and she said she went several times. Suddenly I knew why no one could help this lady. Satan had established his stronghold, and no one could help her if they did not discover and pull down the stronghold.

In the many years since that time, I have ministered to many people who were held captive in Satan's stronghold. I could help all those who received what I told them about Satan's stronghold in their life, but neither I nor any other man of God could help those who refused. The greatest stronghold the adversary can have in any person is to give them something they believe is from God, but is not. I explained to the lady in the mental ward that the *"face of Jesus"* she so loved was not Jesus, but was actually the stronghold from which the demon spirits could not be cast out as long as she believed it was Jesus. I told her, *"If you will let me pray again, I will rebuke the false face of Jesus, and the snakes and spiders that torment you will have no place to hide."* Incredibly, a very simple prayer, against what she had believed to be the *"face of Jesus,"* and the lady was instantly free, never to be tormented again.

Another lady called me a number of years ago. She had been referred to me by one who believed I could help her. She went in great detail telling how an unclean spirit would take total possession of her body. During these times she would

use filthy four-letter words and vulgar hand signs against the Holy Ghost. She asked me if I could help her. What she described to me was total demon possession, so I asked her if she had ever been saved or filled with the Holy Ghost. Her answer floored me. *"I am saved and filled with the Holy Ghost. In fact most people tell me I have the most wonderful gift of prophecy they have ever heard."* She told me how words of prophecy were continually flowing in the background of her mind, and all she had to do was open her mouth for those words to pour forth. Immediately I saw the stronghold Satan had in her life. I told her I could definitely help her if she would receive what I would tell her. The stronghold Satan had in this woman was her *"gift of prophecy."* I said to her, *"The spirit in you that curses God is the same spirit that blesses people."* The scripture tells us both bitter and sweet water cannot come out of the same fountain James 3:11. I asked her how she received her *"gift."* She was a member of the largest charismatic church in Houston at the time. A famous visiting preacher gave her instructions to *"practice prophesying,"* and when she obeyed, her *"gift"* came to her. She was totally convinced it was of God because of the amazing things she had foretold in the lives of people. She had visited several famous healing ministries seeking deliverance from the filth, and they all assured her that her gift was real, but none could help her. She wanted to prophesy to me so I would also know it was a gift of God. I said to her, *"I do not have to hear you prophesy to know your gift is not of God. Any spirit that blesses men and curses God cannot be of God."* Finally, she said to me, *"I perceive you do not believe in the gifts of God,"* and hung the phone up on me. Unless this lady came to a place to reject and denounce her *"gift of prophecy,"* she would never be free.

I preached a revival in Albany Georgia. One night a lady came forward with a similar problem. When she would pray at home, filthy words would come out of her mouth, and she could not stop them. Could I help her? I asked her if she had ever received the Holy Ghost, and she said, *"Yes, it is when I am praying in my prayer language that the filthy words come out."* I told her I could help her *"If you will receive what I tell you. The spirit that is in you is not the Holy Ghost."* She was somewhat indignant. *"Oh no, my pastor has heard me speak in tongues, and he assures me that I have the Holy Ghost."* I could do nothing for that lady because she held to the stronghold which Satan had established in her life.

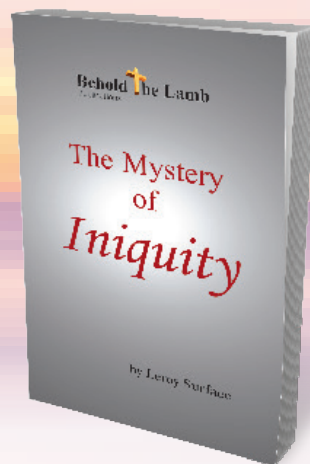
I was preaching a special one-night service in North Little Rock Arkansas. I had finished my service and was leaving the building while people were still worshipping in the altar. I noticed a young man stand up from the altar and began to sing in tongues. I had heard the old saints of God do this many times, but something was very wrong in what I was hearing. I put my overcoat on and walked out into the cold

night, saying to myself, *"This is the pastor's problem."* The Spirit of God stopped me and said, *"No! It's your problem. The pastor doesn't even know what this is."* The spirit the young man yielded to was not the Holy Ghost. I returned to the service. By this time the entire congregation seemed enraptured by what they were seeing and hearing. I said to God, *"If you have ever been with me, be with me now."* I laid my hand on the young man's shoulder. He turned away, and continued singing. I shook his shoulder until he stopped singing and began speaking in tongues in a rebuking form. Now I really shook him and made him face me. I said to him, *"I believe you are very sincere. I believe you love God with all your heart, but did you know that the spirit that is in you is not the Holy Ghost?"* He hung his head, and said, *"All I know is there is something wrong inside of me."* I asked him if he wanted to be free, and he said yes. At that moment, I touched him on the forehead and commanded the *"filthy religious demon"* to *"come out of him in the name of Jesus Christ."* He fell backwards, roaring like a lion. That "lion's roar" seemed to fill the entire building. Lying on his back as stiff as a board, the roaring continued until the blood vessels in his face were bulging. I kept my hand on his forehead until the roaring stopped, and out of his mouth gushed pure blood upon the floor. I remembered the scripture where Jesus cast a "dumb and deaf spirit" out of a man, and *"the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead..."* Mark 9:26. After a moment he sat up and with many tears began thanking Jesus for setting him free. Within ten minutes, the Holy Ghost did fall upon this young man, and he began speaking in other tongues as on the Day of Pentecost. It was obvious to all who heard, it was different than before; a different language, and a different presence, because it was the presence of God Himself.

For the past fifty to sixth years, many in the charismatic movement have believed they could *"teach you how to speak in tongues, how to prophesy, and how to operate all the spiritual gifts."* At the same time, the church has become filled with "gifted people" who cannot live for God. Through trying to do what only the Holy Ghost can do, they have opened themselves up to unclean religious spirits. Consider during this time how many of the largest ministries have fallen to sex scandals. These were not evil people. They did not set out to deceive, but Satan established a stronghold in their life. The "stronghold" is never sin; it is rather something they believe to be of God in which sin can revive. How could a man who preached to hundreds of thousands in his crusades also hire a prostitute at the same time? He believed that God told him he was the one chosen to reach the entire world. *"Don't fail me; you are the only one who can do it."* The brother believed a lie, and it became a stronghold in his life. We saw the prosperity revival in the 1980's, the "laughing revival" in the 1990's, and numerous other fad revivals in the 2000's. All these ended in shame, but today may be the worst of all; the *"company of prophets"* who have been "taught how to prophesy." They think they can *"speak a thing into existence in the spirit world,"* and it is our fault if

we do not believe enough to bring it to pass. Oh church! How far we have fallen. As Jesus said, we *"strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel"* Matthew 23-24. "Fake it till you make it" was a term coined in the charismatic movement by one of the faith teachers of that day. The scripture says of the gifts of the Spirit, *"all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit"* I Corinthians 12:11. Those who seek to "learn how" to do things only the Holy Ghost can do open themselves up to other spirits. Often an unclean religious demon will find occasion to pretend to be the Holy Ghost, and the one who *"faked it"* will think they have *"made it."* The lady in the example I used *"practiced prophesy"* until her anointing came. Her *"anointing,"* however was not the Holy Ghost, as proven by the filthiness that also came out of her mouth. God chose King Saul when he was "little" in his own sight, and the Holy Ghost came upon Him to prophesy I Samuel 10:6. When Saul became "big" in his own sight, God rejected him, but he continued to prophesy by an evil spirit that came to him I Samuel 18:10. The "strongholds" are many, but the gospel of *"Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"* I Corinthians 2:2 is greater. The true gospel of Christ is the weapon God has given to *"pull down strongholds"* and *"cast down imaginations."*

*"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."* II Timothy 2:24-26



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