

# SPIRITUAL WARFARE—IDENTIFYING STRONG MEN

An adequate understanding of spiritual warfare is essential for believers in the last days. Knowing the enemy is part of any successful battle. Believers are held responsible for what the word of God reveals about the subject, such as 2 Nephi 12:23-29:

For the kingdom of the devil must shake,  
And they which belong to it must needs be  
    stirred up unto repentance,  
Or the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains  
    And they be stirred up to anger and perish.

For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts  
    of the children of men and stir them up to anger  
    against that which is good;  
And others will he pacify and lull them away  
    into carnal security, that they will say;  
“All is well in Zion;  
Yea, Zion prospereth, all is well.”

And thus the devil cheateth their souls and leadeth  
    them away carefully down to hell.

And behold, others he flattereth away and telleth  
    them there is no hell,  
And he saith unto them:  
“I am no devil, for there is none.”

And thus he whispereth in their ears until he grasps  
    them with his awful chains from  
    whence there is no deliverance;  
Yea, they are grasped with death and hell;  
And death and hell and the devil and all that have been  
    seized therewith must stand before the throne of God  
    and be judged according to their works,

From whence they must go into the place prepared  
for them, even a lake of fire and brimstone,  
which is endless torment.

The following notes and the description of the twelve strongmen are certainly not complete, but are a beginning to help us get started on the subject of spiritual warfare.

Matthew 28:17-18 And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

These verses tell us that Jesus gives us His power and that His power is greater than any other power. Jesus prayed that He (and therefore His power) would be in us:

And now Father, I pray unto Thee for them,  
And also for all they which shall believe on their words,  
that they may believe in Me,  
that I may be in them as Thou, Father, art in Me,  
that we may be one. 3 Nephi 9:23

This prayer will be answered and the recipients of this prayer will have all the power necessary to accomplish the will of the Father, which includes the defeat of all evil. This is the power of the endowment as is the following:

And our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly  
can command in the name of Jesus,  
And the very trees obey us,  
or the mountains,  
or the waves of the sea;  
Nevertheless, the Lord God showeth us our weakness,  
that we may know that it is by His grace and His great  
condescensions unto the children of men  
that we have power to do these things. Jacob 3:7-8

It could be said that our weaknesses include a lack of understanding of the powers of evil and of the spiritual power of the Lord that we can exercise in the name of Jesus:

And Christ hath said:

“If ye will have faith in Me, ye shall have power  
to do whatsoever thing is expedient in Me.” Moroni 7:35

Again, it is the will of God that we have the Spirit of Jesus Christ within us and His Spirit is stronger than the devil:

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4

However, the Lord has given us our agency—the right to choose. It is probably the only thing that we can call our own and the Lord will not violate it. As strong as Jesus is, He can not help us if we choose the devil:

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?  
Romans 6:16

The Book of Mormon echoes this theme:

“But O my people, beware lest there shall arise contentions  
among you and ye list to obey the evil spirit  
which was spoken of by my father Mosiah!  
For behold, there is a wo pronounced upon him  
that listeth to obey that spirit;  
For if he listeth to obey him and remaineth and dieth in his  
sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul. Mosiah 1:73-74

We are told to give no place to the devil (Ephesians 4:27). Nephi adds:

Awake, my soul! no longer droop in sin;  
Rejoice, O my heart! and give place no more  
for the enemy of my soul. 2 Nephi 3:46-47

It has been said that if we invite the devil (give place) he will never leave but has to be thrown out. Also, the influence of the devil in our lives is a step-by-step process as is our spiritual growth when we are obedient to the Lord. The initial step may seem like a small thing, something we may not view as being evil but it will lead to the next step and beyond until we

become aware that we are headed in the wrong direction. By this time it will be a greater struggle to break free from the devil's influence than to have resisted the initial step (Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7). The devil starts out with a flaxen cord which, if not resisted, will result in bondage with strong cords forever (2 Nephi 11:94). Proverbs speaks of the cords of our sins (Proverbs 5:23). The word of God (which is like a sword—Hebrews 4:12) will cut the cords which bind us.

Matthew 12:38-39 is a revelation about demons:

And then said unto them, When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none; but when a man speaketh against the Holy Ghost, then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth him empty, swept and garnished; for the good spirit leaveth him unto himself. Then goeth the evil spirit, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there; and the last end of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

We learn the following things about demons from these verses:

1—demons walk

demons can travel from place to place; they are spirits without bodies; they want bodies so they can manifest themselves; there is only one devil but many demons

2—demons seek, search

demons have intelligence; can look, search for people or animals

3—demons seek rest

this means that demons have emotions

4—findeth none

demons can see

5—sayeth

demons can talk

6—will

demons have decision making ability

7—return

demons can think; they have imagination

8—to my house

demons have faith; he has faith he will get his "house" back

9—demons can remember

from whence I came out

10—demons examine  
finds it empty and swept

11—demons plan  
finds seven others more wicked; knows how to call for help

Do not forget to deal with the strong men behind the demons. Jesus asks us how can we enter into a strong man's house and spoil his goods unless we first bind the strong man (Matthew 12:23-24)? The strong man is the equivalent of the devil's apostle. The devil is a copycat. He copies Jesus as closely as possible. Jesus has 12 apostles so the devil has his own version, called the 12 strong men. Twelve means perfect organization. Jesus rules through the 12 apostles and the devil rules through the 12 strong men.

### **THE TWELVE STRONG MEN**

They rule over lesser demons in their part of the kingdom of the devil. The lesser demons or the symptoms of their activity are listed under the strong men.

#### **1—JEALOUSY—Numbers 5:11-14**

rage, anger, hate

jealousy is the rage (demon) of a man—Proverbs 6:34

for Satan putteth it into their hearts to anger against you—D&C 63:8d

at that day shall he (the devil) rage in the hearts of the children of men

and stir them up to anger against that which is good—2 Nephi 12:24

wo unto all they that tremble and are angry because of the truth of God—2 Nephi 12:33

revenge

murder (see Ether 3:100-101 under **LYING SPIRIT**)

Cain murdered Abel because of jealousy—Genesis 5:6-18

that same being (the devil) who did plot with Cain,

that if he would murder his brother Abel—Helaman 2:151

competition

restlessness

suspicion

#### **2—LYING SPIRIT—2 Chronicles 18:22**

And it bringeth to pass the destruction of all people;

For it is built up by the devil, which is the father of all lies,

Even that same liar which beguiled our first parents,

Yea, even that same liar which hath caused man

to commit murder from the beginning—Ether 3:100-101

adultery

sodomy

homosexuality (a combination of 3 strong men: lying, whoredoms, perversion)

lust

profanity

vanity

hypocrisy

religion, religious demon: (Jeremiah 23:14-16) esteem themselves higher; isolate

themselves, continually accuse (say they love you), church-hoppers looking for the

perfect body—can't find so they begin their own church in their house and gather like

spirits; can never win an argument with them; avoid and ignore them; Ezekiel 2:24—

those who operate in vanity (lies) will move into divination or witchcraft

### **3—FAMILIAR SPIRIT**—1 Samuel 28:7; Mormon 1:20

all forms of the occult: astrology, fortune-telling, horoscopes, sorcery etc.; demons are

moved by hearing, seeing, smells; they look for images in your home; anything unnatural;

they look for invitations every day; do not burn Indian incense or play rock music etc.

### **4—PERVERSION**—Isaiah 19:14, perverse: Hebrew—to make crooked; 2 Nephi 12:18;

Moroni 8:17

hate toward God—Proverbs 14:2

lust—Proverbs 23:33

breach (crushing) of spirit, have a wounded spirit—Proverbs 15:4; 1 Nephi 3:179;

Jacob 2:8

doctrinal error—Alma 16:85-87

lovers of self more than God—2 Timothy 3:2; includes everything sexual

twisting of the word of God—Acts 13:10

### **5—HEAVINESS**—Isaiah 61:3

grief

self pity

rejection

despair, hopelessness—Moroni 10:16

loneliness

gluttony

gloomy, sorrowful, troubled etc.

**6—WHOREDOMS**—Ezekiel 16:28; Hosea 4:12; Jacob 2:32

can not be satisfied, never have enough

fornication (a combination of 3 strongmen: lying, perversion, whoredoms)

idolatry—love of the world, money—Alma 1:48; D&C 52:9b

prostitution

**7—INFIRMITY**—Luke 13:11-13; 3 Nephi 3:64

all sickness and disease

**8—DUMB & DEAF SPIRIT**—Mark 9:15-24; 3 Nephi 8:9

suicide

epilepsy

seizures

insanity, lunatic—Matthew 17:15

**9—FEAR**—2 Timothy 1:7

terror, torment

timidity

phobias

nightmares

worry

inferiority complex

feeling inadequate

fear of the dark, the fear of men

fearlessness is a sign of the true believer; fear is a sign of unbelief—3 Nephi 1:20

**10—PRIDE & HAUGHTINESS**—Proverbs 16:18; 2 Nephi 12:13-14; D&C 38:9b

mockery

stubbornness

gossip

contention—2 Nephi 2:20-23; Mosiah 1 :73-74

wrath

arrogance—Jacob 2: 16

self-righteousness

controlling spirit

King Saul was full of pride; pride and witchcraft are relatives

**11—BONDAGE**—Romans 8:15; D&C 83:7g

cannot call on God as Father  
bitterness—Mosiah 11:191  
anguish—Exodus 6:9  
addiction (nicotine, drugs etc.)  
spiritual blindness—1 Nephi 3:216

**12—ANTICHRIST**—1 John 4:3; Alma 16:7, 13

legalism  
appoint themselves to oppose men of God and spiritual gifts  
persecute the saints  
attack your testimony  
will not talk about the blood of Jesus Christ—Mosiah 1:118; 2:3; Moroni 10:30  
disturb services  
blasphemy

Many of these evil spirits can be “handed down” from one generation to another. This is called a generational curse. This kind of curse can and should be broken.

One reason for the wars in The Book of Mormon is that they are a type for spiritual warfare. For example, in Alma 20:49, the Lamanites, in this case a type for the forces of evil, smote the Nephites firstly in the head, then the chest and then the arms. This is the sequence the devil uses with us. He first attacks our minds. If we receive the evil thoughts then our heart is affected and finally our actions as typified by the arms.

The Book of Mormon has a second witness, at least in part, to the teaching on the 12 strong men:

O the wise and the learned and the rich that are puffed up  
in the pride of their hearts!  
And all they that preach false doctrines,  
And all they that commit whoredoms  
And pervert the right way of the Lord;  
For the kingdom of the devil must shake. 2 Nephi 12:18, 23

In these verses we have reference to the kingdom of the devil and to three of his strong men—pride, whoredoms, perversion and to one sub-demon, false doctrine. We are not to be fearful about the devil and all of his demonic spirits but neither are we to be ignorant of them. If we are followers of Jesus Christ we will do what He did, promote the kingdom of God and deal with the opposition, the kingdom of the devil, whenever necessary.