



Taking down personal strongholds *(Victorious through the promises of God)* February 27, 2017

Please read your scripture prior to reading meditation. **1 SAMUEL 5:1-10**

David ruled for forty years altogether, seven and one half in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. In **verses 6-8**, David captured Jerusalem, which previously had remained the city of the Jebusites. Located outside the tribal territories, much like Washington, D.C., Jerusalem was literally the City of David. The choice of Jerusalem as capital did not favor one tribe over another. According to **verse 10**, David went from strength to strength. In the polls? In military victories? In moral and ethical conduct? Well, yes and no. The writer probes for a deeper analysis: "It was because Yahweh, the God of the heavenly armies, was with him." This literal translation boldly expresses the power of David's God.

The short sentence "I am with you" is at the heart of the good news in the Bible. Moses thought up five excuses in **Exodus 3-4** regarding why he should not be the leader in the Exodus. Then God said, "I will be with you" (**Exodus 3:12**), or "I will be with your mouth" when Moses tried the lame excuse that he did not know how to talk (**Exodus 4:12**). Jeremiah had argued that he was only a teenager and therefore could not be a prophet. God countered, "Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you" (Jeremiah 1:8). In Matthew's description of the significance of Jesus, he drew on the old word in **Isaiah 7:14**, "They shall name him Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us'" (**Matthew 1:23**). And the last word of Jesus in that Gospel is: "And remember, I am with you to the end of the age" (**Matthew 28:20**).

Why is "I am with you" so important? It means that David and all of us later royal and priestly children of God are never alone. However sinful and however lacking in confidence we might be, God is not ashamed to hang around with David, Bathsheba, or us. There is an implicit word of forgiveness in this simple sentence. Finally, "I am with you" is a statement of empowerment. Whether it is the ability to trust, to carry out our day to day vocations, or to face all the challenges of life -- including our mortality -- God's "I am with you" means that we have the promise of strength and encouragement to do what we have to do. More than anything else, we are victorious in all things according to God's plan.

This includes **STRONGHOLDS and FORTRESSES!!!!** A stronghold is defined as a mindset that accepts a situation as unchangeable, even though we know it is against the will of God. A stronghold is something that captures you and you see no way out! How does one become victorious over strongholds? Remember, God has destined all of us to make an impact that will glorify Him. He said He came to give us life more abundantly. However, sin is in the way -- but the blood of Christ conquered all sin! Therefore, the bondage we accumulate is bondage we have locked ourselves in to. The story of David in **2 SAMUEL 5:6-10** demonstrates how we as God's people can overcome strongholds in our lives. **THE CONCLUSION** - How easy it is for sin, which begins so small and seemingly insignificant, to grow until it has a strangling grip on our lives. And yet, Christ's death has eliminated the power of sin. Yes, the "creepers" of sins still cling and have a minor effect, but sin's power is severed by Christ, leading to the gradual erosion of sin's grip as it dries up and falls away. CHRIST HAS DESTINED YOU TO HAVE LIFE AND TO HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY.

SCRIPTURE READING: ISAIAH 23:11

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Give God Your Weakness and He'll Give You His Strength.