

Briefing Document-Spiritual Strongholds

March 4, 2026

Executive Summary

The following document synthesizes a teaching on the biblical and practical applications of "strongholds." Historically and scripturally, a stronghold began as a physical, fortified structure used for defense and refuge. However, through the Psalms of David, the concept transitioned into a relational identity, where God Himself becomes the believer's stronghold.

The teaching identifies a critical modern conflict: the construction of "counterfeit" or personal strongholds—internalized attitudes, behavioral patterns, and self-reliance—that act as barriers between the individual and God. By examining the nature of "flaming darts" (lies and deceptions), the analysis concludes that spiritual maturity requires recognizing these internal fortifications and replacing them with faith in Jesus Christ, the only enduring stronghold.

Community Updates and Institutional Context

The session included several administrative announcements and prayer concerns pertinent to the community's current activities:

Upcoming Events and Ministries

Event/Ministry	Date/Time	Details
Java Cup Hospitality	March	Ministry of the month.
Men's Breakfast	March 14, 7:30 AM	Gathering featuring food and fellowship.
Women's Fellowship	March 21	Held at Benson City Grill for women of all ages.
Turning Point Visit	March 28	Representatives from Turning Point will be on-site.
Monthly Mission	Ongoing	Lighthouse ministry.

Prayer Requests and Intercessions

The community is currently interceding for the following specific needs:

- **Valinda:** Recovery from a concussion sustained in a multi-car accident in Tucson.
- **Renee:** Peace and resolution regarding the sale of her father's property.

- **Marty:** Support and healing during a difficult personal season.

The Biblical Evolution of the Stronghold

The concept of a stronghold undergoes a significant thematic shift throughout the Old Testament, moving from a physical necessity to a spiritual reality.

The Physical Fortification

In early biblical history, a stronghold was a literal fortified structure, often elevated for defensive purposes. It served as a place of retreat during times of conflict.

- **Historical Example:** The walls of Jericho represented a premier stronghold, with an inner wall six feet wide and an outer wall nine feet wide, both reaching heights of approximately 40 feet.
- **David's Refuge:** Prior to his kingship, David utilized physical strongholds to hide from King Saul. *David remained in the strongholds of the wilderness* (1 Samuel 23:14).

The Relational Shift

David eventually transformed the imagery of the stronghold from a "place" to a "person." In the Psalms, the stronghold is no longer a stone wall, but God Himself.

- *The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold* (Psalm 18:2).
- *The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?* (Psalm 27:1).
- *The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, A refuge in times of trouble* (Psalm 9:9).

This shift implies that a stronghold is not something one climbs into, but someone one runs to for protection and provision.

Counterfeit Strongholds and Idolatry

Biblical prophets frequently exposed "counterfeit strongholds"—things people trust in place of God, such as wealth, military alliances, or human strength.

Broken Cisterns

Jeremiah used the metaphor of "broken cisterns" to describe the futility of idol worship and self-reliance.

- *For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13).*
- **Analysis:** Just as a cracked cistern fails to hold water, trusting in human strength or idols provides no true security. Those who turn away from God and make "flesh" their strength are described as cursed (Jeremiah 17:5), while those who trust in the Lord are blessed (Jeremiah 17:7).

Internalized Strongholds and Personal Identity

A central theme of the teaching is the development of "internal strongholds"—habits, attitudes, and responses developed over a lifetime that eventually define a person's identity and obstruct their relationship with Christ.

The Construction of Personal Walls

Many individuals develop behavior patterns—such as anger, a critical spirit, or a need for control—as coping mechanisms. Over time, these become fortified barriers.

- **Identification:** People often excuse these patterns by saying, "That's just who I am."
- **The Barrier:** These attitudes act as a wall that prevents individuals from fully submitting to Christ and inhibits their ability to witness to others.
- **The Altar Conflict:** A common struggle involves performing a symbolic act of submission at the altar but unconsciously taking the "stronghold" (the old attitude or habit) back to one's seat because it has become part of their identity.

The Mechanism of Deception: Flaming Darts

The enemy uses lies to reinforce these internal strongholds. Paul the Apostle used Roman military imagery to describe this spiritual warfare:

- *Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one (Ephesians 6:16).*
 - **The Metaphor:** In ancient warfare, a "dart" (javelin) was wrapped in material, soaked in fuel, and lit. Upon impact, the fuel would splatter and spread the fire.
 - **The Reality of Lies:** A lie functions similarly; it starts as a singular point of deception but, fueled by a specific attitude, it splatters and spreads, eventually creating a fortified cycle of deception that is difficult to escape.
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Conclusion: Jesus as the Ultimate Stronghold

The primary takeaway of the teaching is the necessity of self-evaluation to identify which strongholds currently govern one's life. While physical structures fail and human effort is likened to a broken vessel, Jesus Christ is presented as the only trustworthy stronghold.

- **Trust and Worthiness:** Internal strongholds often stem from a lack of trust or a feeling of unworthiness. Faith in Christ allows an individual to dismantle these lies, recognizing that they are "fearfully and wonderfully made."
- **The Result of Spiritual Maturity:** Those who have successfully traded personal strongholds for the stronghold of Christ exhibit a personality marked by peace. They are not easily angered and do not allow themselves to be placed in positions where their character is compromised.
- **Final Call to Action:** Believers are encouraged to "unload" the burdens of anger, control, and past traumas, embracing the faith required to step out of self-made fortifications and into the protection of God.