

Sunday, October 23, 2022—West Michigan Grace Bible Conference—Casting Down Imaginations & Every High Thing

Introduction

- II Corinthians 10:4—talks about how the weapons of our warfare are “mighty through God through God to the pulling down of strong holds.” I want to focus on that phrase as we get started here this morning.
- **Pulling Down**—the Greek word translated “pulling down” contains the idea of destruction or demolition. Through God, our weapons systems are capable of demolishing and destroying the enemy’s strong-holds.
 - II Corinthians 10:8, 13:10—“destruction”
- **Strong Holds**—the Greek word translated “strong holds” is found only this one time in the New Testament. According to *Strong’s Concordance* the underlying Greek word means:
 - 1) a castle, stronghold, fortress, fastness
 - 2) anything on which one relies.
- According to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*, the English word “strong-hold” means:
 - “A fastness; a fort; a fortified place; a place of security.”
- Ephesians 4:27—if you give the devil a place in your thinking, he will establish a strong-hold a deeply entrenched and forfeited position in your thinking process. From that command center he will wreak havoc upon your personal life and the life of the greater body of Christ.
- Colossians 3:1-3—we need to consider and evaluate our own lives/thinking for places that we have allowed the enemy to erect Strong-holds. What are your affections set upon?
- This morning we want to continue studying the passage so that we can learn how to pull down strong-holds in our thinking.

II Corinthians 10:5

- The first thing I want you to notice about verse 5 is that it is a continuation of the sentence that started in verse 3. Therefore, verse 5 is continuing with the thought that began in verse 3.

- I Corinthians 10:3—is very straightforward. Paul simply states that while we walk or conduct our lives in the realm of the flesh we do not fight/war after the flesh.
- I Corinthians 10:5—skipping the parenthesis of verse 4, this verse focuses our attention on the nature of our warfare not being after the flesh from verse 3. From the first half of verse 5 it is evident that the battlefield or arena for this conflict (not being the flesh) is going to be the believer’s mind.
- **Casting Down**—the Greek word translated “casting down” is very similar to the Greek word “pulling down” in verse 4. This word appears 11 times in 9 verses and carries the following meanings, according to Strong’s Concordance:
 - 1) to take down with the use of force: to throw down, cast down
 - 2) to pull down, demolish a) the subtle reasonings (of opponents) likened to a fortress, i.e. to refute, to destroy
 - Acts 13:19, Acts 19:17—“destroyed”
- II Corinthians 10:5—in this context, it obvious that “casting down” means to destroy or demolish. What is it that we are to cast down?
- **Imaginations**—we are to cast down “imagination(s).” According to *Strong’s Concordance* the Greek word translated “imagination(s)” means:
 - 1) a reckoning, computation,
 - 2) a reasoning: such as is hostile to the Christian faith,
 - 3) a judgment, decision: such as conscience passes.
 - Romans 2:14-15—“thoughts”
- Throughout the Bible the words imagination(s) are connected and tied to the thoughts of men.
 - Genesis 6:5
 - Genesis 8:21
 - Deuteronomy 31:21
 - I Chronicles 28:9

- Proverbs 6:18—“A heart that deviseth wicked imaginations”
- Romans 1:21—they exalted their own thinking and reasoning above the knowledge of God that they possessed.
- Since the fall, humanity has an imagination problem. Our minds are constantly thinking about stuff. Our minds are constantly imagining and running scenarios about what we want to say or do in each situation.
- II Corinthians 10:5—we need to cast down, i.e., destroy and demolish imaginations and “every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.”
- Not only are we instructed to cast down imaginations but also “every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.” The use of the word “and” between “imagination” and “every high thing” indicates that they are not the same thing. “High things” in addition to or along with “imaginations” are to be cast down and destroyed.
- **High Thing**—the exact meaning of this word has escaped many of the commentators on this passage. In his commentary on II Corinthians, Ernest Campbell writes, “The meaning of the Greek word translated “high thing” is elusive. In Romans 8:39 it means height, the opposite of depth. It may refer to every high, supernatural, demonic power pitted against the knowledge of God. Regardless of what “every high thing” may be, that exalts and lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, one thing is certain, the spiritual weapons of righteousness will defeat it and bring it into captivity.”
- Ephesians 6:12—we wrestle against “spiritual wickedness in high places.
- II Corinthians 10:5—notice that the “ever high thing” exalts itself against the knowledge of God. A “high thing” then is any type of thinking that seeks to supplant the knowledge of God.
- Romans 1:21-25—man knew who God was (v 21) but glorified him not as God (v 21). In the vanity of their imaginations and foolishness of their darkened hearts (v 21) humanity changed the glory of the God into an image (v 23) and thereby worshipped the creature more than the Creator (v 25). In essence, mankind left the knowledge of God that he had and created his own religion.
- Does this meet the definition of a “high thing” based upon II Corinthians 10:5? I believe it does man rebelled against the knowledge of God that he had and exalted his own thinking above God’s. Then for the exalted thinking of his own thoughts he created his own religion.
- The prophet Isaiah speaks repeatedly about the haughtiness of mankind.
 - Isaiah 2:11, 17—the Hebrew word translated “haughtiness” means high. Mankind is so lofty and arrogant. “The quality of being haughty; pride mingled with some degree of contempt for others; arrogance (*Webster’s* 1828).” In the day of the Lord the loftiness and haughtiness of man will be brought destroyed as the Lord alone is exalted.

- Isaiah 13:11, 16:6
- Proverbs 21:4
- Exodus 20:3-4—Israel is told not to place any other god before God and not to make or worship any graven images.
- Leviticus 26:27-31—what were Israel’s “high places?” They were places in which the nation of Israel would erect graven images in violation of God’s commandments.
- Where did/do the gentiles worship their own gods? In secret or in the highest most visible place possible?
- II Kings 17:7-11, 29-34—Israel adopted the gods and worship practices of the gentile nations surrounding them and built high places with idols and priests the ministered in high places.
- II Corinthians 10:5—remember that a “high thing” is anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Are the religious practices and philosophies of the gentiles a high thing?
- Colossians 2:8—philosophy, traditions of men, and the rudiments of the world (religion) are all high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God.
- I Corinthians 1:17-29—what was man’s original problem according to Romans 1? It wasn’t that he didn’t know who God was. It was that mankind glorified Him not a God and professed his own wisdom as superior to the knowledge of God that he possessed.
- I Corinthians 2:6-8—the wisdom of God is put on full display today by the revelation and preaching of the mystery. According to I Cor. 3:19 God takes the wise in their own craftiness. He deals with them in exact opposite way that man’s wisdom says he should.
- Ephesians 3:1-11—through the revelation of the mystery God’s wisdom and knowledge has been put on full display and according to verse 9 God desires that all men see it. Why don’t all men see it? Because they have allowed their minds to be saturated with “high things” that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God.
- II Corinthians 10:5—a “high thing” is any religion, philosophy, tradition, theology, or viewpoint that seeks to exalt itself against and supplant the knowledge of God. This would include any religion, theology, denominational, or tradition of men that does not acknowledge, believe, and proclaim the wisdom of God in a mystery.
- Imaginations are the random thoughts and musings of yourself in your own head. High things are the organized and structured philosophies and viewpoints of a world system that is in complete rebellion against God.

- Both of these things (imaginings and high things) need to be cast down and destroyed because if they are they will erect and fortify strong-holds in your thinking. How many strong-holds must an enemy possess before he controls the entire country, region, or territory?