

2 Corinthians 10:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Analysis

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God (τὰ γὰρ ὅπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ)—Hopla (ὅπλα, "weapons") denotes both offensive and defensive armament (cf. Eph 6:13-17). These weapons are dunata tō theō (δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ, "powerful to/through God")—their efficacy derives entirely from divine power, not human skill. Paul's "weapons" included gospel proclamation, apostolic authority, Spirit-empowered ministry, and suffering love.

To the pulling down of strong holds (πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὄχυρωμάτων)—Ochyrōmatōn (όχυρωμάτων, "strongholds/fortresses") were fortified positions in siege warfare. Spiritually, these represent entrenched ideological systems, false worldviews, and intellectual structures that resist God's truth. The gospel doesn't merely persuade—it demolishes (kathairesis, complete destruction) rebellious thought-systems and establishes Christ's lordship over human reasoning.

Historical Context

Corinthian believers lived under Roman military dominance. Fortresses (όχυρώματα) were strategically positioned strongholds requiring prolonged siege to conquer. Paul's metaphor communicated the comprehensive, violent overthrow of anti-God ideologies—not gentle persuasion but demolition of rebellious intellectual fortifications through Spirit-empowered truth.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What 'strongholds'—persistent thought patterns, ideologies, or worldviews—resist God's truth in your mind?
2. How have you experienced God's Word 'demolishing' a false belief system that once seemed impregnable?
3. Why is human eloquence or philosophical argument insufficient to overthrow spiritual strongholds, requiring divine power instead?

Interlinear Text

τὰ γὰρ ὅπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ¹
G3588 (For the weapons G3588 warfare G4752 of our G2257 are not G3756 carnal G4559

ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὄχυρωμάτων
G235 but G1415 mighty G3588 through God G2316 to G4314 the pulling down G2506 of strong holds G3794

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 6:7 (References God): By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

Jeremiah 1:10 (Parallel theme): See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

1 Corinthians 2:5 (References God): That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

1 Timothy 1:18 (Parallel theme): This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

Romans 13:12 (Parallel theme): The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (References God): But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 (Parallel theme): But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

Romans 6:13 (References God): Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

2 Corinthians 3:5 (References God): Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

Psalms 110:2 (Parallel theme): The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.