Notes on Steps to Bind the Strong Man

When it comes to binding the strong man, the Bible gives us more than just a vague idea about what we should do practically.

Lk. 11:21 ***"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armour in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils."***

Six Steps

1. **Identify the strong man**

   Ultimately this is Satan, but without getting into the territorial spirits controversy, there are demonic principalities and powers seeking to control situations, countries, towns etc. The control they primarily seek is organising an effective defence against the Gospel!

   Here are some indicators as to the nature and defence tactics the strong man is using:

   - <u>The armour he is wearing</u>

     The term used in Lk. 11:21 and in Eph. 6:12-18 is 'panopleia' – meaning 'the full armour'. In Ephesians it is the full armour of God and in Luke the full armour of Satan.

     The 'full armour of God' is a set of 'life disciplines' that God wants to establish in our lives that will enable God to work in us and through us and that will prevent (and in the early days restrict) Satan wounding or disabling us.

     The 'full armour of Satan' is also a set of 'life disciplines' – a means of operating that Satan wants to establish in our lives that will allow him to work in us and prevent or restrict God from working in us!

     The 'life disciples' of Satan will be the reverse of the 'life disciplines' God wants to establish in our lives.

The armour of God	**The armour of Satan**
Truth	Lies – deception
Peace	Strife – contention – violence – war
Righteousness (right-relatedness)	Alienation – rejection – tribalism
Faith	Mistrust – suspicion – doubt
Hope	Despair – depression
The Word of God	'Human' rationalism
Prayer	Occult mediation

     If we can identify some of the major components of these 'life disciplines' in an individual or in a city/people group, we can begin to extrapolate backwards to identify the armour (i.e. the strategies) of the strong man.

   - <u>The state of the 'house'</u>

     In this case 'the house' is the area that is demonised – an individual/city/country etc.

     Mark 9:3 – the 'house' is occupied by as deaf and dumb spirit.

     Luke 4:33 – the 'house' is occupied by an unclean spirit.

Acts 16:16 – the 'house' is occupied by a spirit of divination.

Sometimes Jesus asked the name of the demon – but not always. It is clear that Jesus always knew **the nature** of the spirit He was dealing with. We must seek to know this too.

2. **Get more power on your side than the strong man has on his side**

Eph. 6:10-18 implies that we are not engaged in a metaphorical war but in a real spiritual war and that overcoming the strong man will not be a 'push over'.

- Our strength lies in our confidence in the **absolute victory** brought about by the death and resurrection of Christ over Satan and all his hosts. Christ disarmed them on the Cross (Col. 2:15). It also lies in our personal relationship with the Victor Himself. The emphasis of Ephesians is on being ***"in Christ"***.
- Our confidence also lies in the certainty of the authority that has been given to us to preach the Gospel in all the world – to every country, city, tribe and individual. see Mt. 28 and the 'Great Commission'.
- We also need to put on the whole armour of God – i.e. the 'life disciplines' that enable us to overcome. These 'life disciplines' require appropriation and daily obedience.

But until Jesus returns binding the strong man will always have a **relativity** about it. We may not manage it alone. We often need to call in help – the ***"all prayer"*** of Eph. 6.

Warfare is a corporate activity. Paul was familiar with the strength of the Roman army. This lay in the fact that they had mastered the art of fighting in large units. In warfare victory goes to the side that can muster the superior strength. See Rom. 13:12-14.

"The night is far gone. The day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime – not in orgies and drunkenness – not in sexual immorality and sensuality – not in quarrelling and jealousy. But <u>put on the Lord Jesus Christ</u> and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."

3. **Get on the attack**

One of the most common manifestations of demonization is **passivity** – i.e. a person's will is inert, their mind is dull and their spirit is torpid and lifeless.

- Under these conditions Satan has all the initiative!
- Under these conditions – attack! Defence is inadequate because in a believer he is already greatly weakened and at this point defence, at best, can only prevent further defeat. It can never win the battle.
- The Biblical principle is always attack! attack! attack! Is there a Biblical instruction for fortifying a defensive position? I don't think you can use Nehemiah rebuilding the walls and the gates of Jerusalem.
    - Joshua goes out to fight Amalek
    - David runs out to meet Goliath
    - The Lord Jesus goes out into the desert to encounter Satan

  The attitude of many evangelical churches worldwide is nearly always an attitude of defend – defend – defend. This also seems to be the attitude of Middle East churches. The result is a shrinkage of the 'territory'.
- Attack seizes the initiative from the enemy. It dictates the terms of the battle and chooses the ground where the battle is to be fought. I am so encouraged that this has been a key strategy of the many workers in the Muslim World over the years.

- The grounds of our victory is <u>always</u> rooted in Calvary.

  "For the accuser of our brethren who accuses them before our God day and night, has been <u>hurled down</u> (strong language). ***They overcame*** (or conquered) ***him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony for they loved not their lives even unto death"*** Rev. 12:10-11.

  So the strong man's position is vulnerable, but it is only vulnerable if it is attacked!

4. **Overpower him!**

   The attack must be **continually pressed** until the strong man is overpowered. So we can never give up on the Shi'a in Iraq!

   Even in the ministry of the Lord Jesus deliverance was not instantaneous. There was resistance and argument. Mark 5, where Jesus delivers a demonised man, is instructive. The demon/demons say, ***"Swear to God that you won't torture me!"*** They even use God's name to resist God's power! [This is not so unfamiliar to us who work in the M.E.]

   Apparently Mark 5:8 is, ***"For He <u>had been saying</u> to him, 'Come out of the man you unclean spirit' "***. In other words it was continuous action on the part of the Lord Jesus to overcome all resistance.

   Ultimate victory comes in insisting that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. So we need to persist in our attacking stance in faith until resistance crumbles, as it ultimately must.

5. **Take away the armour in which the man trusted**

   This is dealing with those 'life disciples' that have enabled the strong man to maintain his control – his grip – on a person's life. It is critical that this happens for this is the only way to dismantle the demonic strongholds and set people free. See 2 Cor. 10:4-5.

   "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

   - **Individually** this involves:
     - Freeing the person's **will** so that he/she can make wholehearted choices for the Lord Jesus.
     - Dealing with a disciple's sins one by one – their enslaving habits/fears and releasing them from all the bondages of the evil one. It involves repentance, forgiveness, cleansing and the re-ordering of a disciple's thought life/patterns including their lifestyle and their worldview. This is in the process of discipling.
   - **Collectively** we can see it on two levels:
     - **The church** in a part of a town/city/people group. Ultimately this results in continuous revival! But we all know local churches living in a defensive and often defeated mode. They need to go through the 'steps' starting with the church leadership.
     - **The unbelieving world:** there are some very good YWAM books on 'Discipling the Nations'. A helpful book written from a western cultural perspective is **Shaking the Nations – a future and a hope** by Clifford Hill. He covers the very rapid changes in our western cultures, the causal factors, the blocking of people's aspirations and the negativism. It also covers the breakdown of family and morality and gives examples of G.K. Chesterton's observation, *"When men cease to believe in God they don't believe in nothing. They believe in anything."*

Essentially the process of taking 'the armour' of a nation is much the same as taking that of an individual. Change comes in a chain reaction:

Beliefs ⟶ Values ⟶ Norms ⟶ Behaviour

Study how the prophet Azariah brought change in the nation in 2 Chron. 14-15. You can clearly see several steps. The description in 2 Chron. 15:5-6 sounds just like today in the Middle East:

Step 1: Beliefs – 15:8

Step 2: Tackling the values 15:12-15

Step 3: Norms and behaviour 15:15

Our role in this also includes the **prophetic** (cf. Azariah)

6. **Divide up the spoils**

This is releasing life into the fullness of its potential. The **problems** of a person or people group are nearly always a pointer to their potential. This is because Satan will try and spoil a life along the line of its greatest strengths.

People atrophy under Satanic control. Liberation releases them to begin to become all that God created them to be. The final liberation will be seen when we are all around the throne. Rev. 7:9-10 is a picture of enjoying the spoils of war in a spiritual sense!