

## **GATES OF BRONZE, BARS OF IRON**

### **INTRODUCTION**

God has been speaking to the church about some things and they seem to come up over and over. We need to sit up, take notice and walk in obedience.

One of these areas which has come through in both preaching and the prophetic word, is the need for breakthrough, and in particular, the breaking of bondage.

2017 is a year of Jubilee. It speaks of the captives being set free!

**Isaiah 61:1** (NKJV) "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

Jesus came to set the captive free and open the prison for those who are bound! This week we will speak about God's plan to give us freedom from captivity and bondage. Satan's gates of bronze & bars of iron need to be smashed!

### **MESSAGE**

#### **GATES OF BRONZE AND BARS OF IRON**

**Psalms 107:16** (NKJV) For He has broken the gates of bronze, And cut the bars of iron in two.

We need to understand what bronze and iron represent in the Bible:

#### **Bronze**

- Represents **judgement**:
- God's judgement - In showing His anger over a certain city the Lord would say that the "heavens have turned bronze." Read about it in Deuteronomy 28:15 and 23 – **This means unanswered prayer!**
- Self-judgement too - The priests had to wash their hands in the bronze laver. Their faces would reflect in the water, they had to do some self-introspection and judgement, cleansing themselves and getting ready to enter clean into God's presence. **Bronze therefore also represents sin.**
- "Bronze," naturally, is used in Scripture as the symbol of what is firm, stubborn, strong and enduring – **think of stubborn sin!**
- When Moses raised the bronze serpent it spoke of the power of the serpent being judged through the raising of the Son of God.
- Bronze also represents something that **imitates the real thing**. Bronze shines like gold, but at closer inspection, it's true nature can be seen.

## Iron

- The Roman empire was represented by iron – they ruled **heartlessly and fearlessly with an iron fist**.
- Iron is a metal used to break other things – it’s a destroyer!
- Fetters; chains and handcuffs were made from iron, they were instruments of bondage!
- Jesus our Lord was nailed to the cross with nails of iron!
- Polished iron can look like silver, like bronze, it **imitates the real thing**
- The gates were made of bronze and strengthened with iron – bronze and iron work together as tools of captivity, the iron strengthens the bronze.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO US?

**Psalm 107:10-12** (NKJV) Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, Bound in affliction and irons—11 Because **they rebelled against the words of God, And despised the counsel of the Most High**, 12 Therefore He brought down their heart with labour; They fell down, and there was none to help.

The Israelites turned their back on God! They rebelled against Him and disobeyed Him. God Judged them and they were taken into bondage and captivity!

- We are not exempt! Romans 3:23 states “for all have sinned”
- Stubborn sin, unforgiveness, lack of repentance and hard-heartedness will result in spiritual bondage! So will disobedience to God’s Word.
- Satan wants nothing more than for us to experience a heaven of bronze so that God does not answer our prayers.

We may not be carried away into physical captivity, but we can face spiritual bondage such as:

- Addictions, demon possession and oppression, unexplained sicknesses and unanswered prayers.

***Are you experiencing any of these symptoms? You may be experiencing spiritual bondage.***

## REGARDLESS OF BONDAGE, GOD HAS A PLAN FOR US!

**Psalm 107:13-16** (NKJV) 13 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, And He saved them out of their distresses. 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, And broke their chains in pieces. 15 Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! 16 For He has broken the gates of bronze, And cut the bars of iron in two.

Gates of bronze and bars of iron can be destroyed by God, and He desires to make us free!

**Isaiah 45:1-2**(NKJV) "Thus says the Lord to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held—To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut: 2 'I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron.

The Israelites had been taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. They were in bondage in Babylon. But the Lord raised up Cyrus, to deliver Israel. God would, by going before him, "break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron."

Cyrus longed to enter into and take possession of the city of Babylon; but there were mighty obstacles to his entrance, it had eight massive gates that led to the inner city and 100 brass gates inside. In fact the name Babylon comes from "babilu" which means "gate of god". Cyrus saw it firmly closed against him with those gates of brass and bars of iron. These effectually barred all progress, he could not achieve the object of his desire. They were continually before his eyes, too strong for all his weapons of warfare; and unless battered down or broken to pieces, he could not capture the city.

Many of us will identify with this desire of Cyrus? There is a longing in our soul for victory, such as the overcoming of an addiction, or controlling a bad temper, or finding peace in Christ. But when, in pursuing it, instead of victory, what do we find in the road? Gates of brass and bars of iron. And these obstructions stand in the way, blocking our access to the enjoyment of the desired breakthrough.

Look for instance at our very prayers. Are not the heavens sometimes brass over our heads, so that, as Jeremiah complains, "they cannot pass through"? Is not our own heart itself sometimes a gate of brass, hard, stubborn, and inflexible?

What about other hindrances and enemies of our souls such as Satan, self, and the world that fight against all that is good and Godlike - may not all these be considered "gates of brass," barring out the wished-for access into the city?

In addition, there are also "**bars of iron**". These strengthen the gates of brass and prevent them from being broken down or burst open, the stronger and harder metal giving firmness and solidity to the softer and weaker one.

**Preacher J. C. Philpot in 1853 described these bars of iron:** These bars can be an unbelieving heart; the secret infidelity of the carnal mind; guilt of conscience produced by a sense of our base and innumerable wanderings and backslidings from the Lord; doubts and fears often springing out of our own lack of consistency and devotedness; apprehensions of being altogether deceived, from finding so few marks of grace and so much neglect of

watchfulness and prayer- all these may be mentioned as bars of iron strengthening the gates of brass.

We can no more you break to pieces these gates of brass, or cut up the bars of iron than what Cyrus could? He doubtlessly had a large and powerful army, who possessed great fighting skills; but before them there stood Babylon's gates of brass and bars of iron. He may have looked at them in all their depth and width; but looking at them would not remove them. He may have wished them broken away and cut to pieces; but wishing would go a very little way towards making them fall down. There they remained standing before his eyes, impenetrable.

So too with the child of God. We can no more break down our hardness of heart, darkness of mind, unbelief or infidelity than Cyrus could break to pieces the gates of brass of ancient Babylon. We can no more subdue the workings of a deceitful and desperately wicked heart than the King of Persia could by drawing his sword cut up the bars of iron which strengthened the gates of brass.

But Cyrus didn't have to find a way to break those gates of bronze and bars of iron, **God did it for him!!!**

Here then, when so deeply needed, comes in the blessedness of the promise. "I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron."

**The words, spiritually taken, speak about removal of all hindrances that block up the road, but man can't remove them, only God can!**

When we look at the holiness and justice of God, which cause Him to close up the heavens because of our disobedience, there is only one way these gates of bronze and bars of iron can be destroyed, **only through Jesus**, who by His sufferings and death, His obedience and divine sacrifice, satisfied God's justice and opened an entrance for His people into the city of God.

Peter realised this and then look what Jesus said:

**Matthew 16:15-18** (NKJV) He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

**Gates of bronze and bars of iron can't keep those who rely on the grace we have in Christ Jesus.** The gates of hell as it were can't stand when a person calls on the name of the Lord and desires to be set free from bondage!

## **GOD WILL RESTORE WHAT THE DEVIL HAS STOLEN!**

The Lord further told Cyrus that He would be given the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of the secret places.

**Isaiah 45:3**(NKJV) I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel.

Nebuchadnezzar had pillaged the temple. In some dark dingy room stood all the treasures he had stolen from the temple of the living God. When God tore down those gates of bronze and bars of iron, Cyrus uncovered the treasures in Babylon's dark and secret places, and those treasures were restored to Israel!

***What has the devil stolen from you. What once was yours is currently a treasure of darkness. It's time to take it back!***

- ***It could be a ministry, or your dreams, your joy or your health. Maybe it's your marriage or employment.***
- ***The enemy has to give it back. It's time to take back what the enemy has stolen from you!***

## **CONCLUSION**

What has caused you to experience bronze heavens – unanswered prayers? Why are you in bondage to sin today, what has caused the hardened heart?

God is giving us a promise today that He wants to break the gates of bronze and their iron bars that are keeping His people in bondage, but it's going to take some altar time, a time of confession and repentance and calling out to God to give us softened hearts and deal with our stubbornness and disobedience.

**Romans 5:8** (NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Isaiah 59:2 tells us that our sins separate us from God and result in unanswered prayers.

- But God's love still reaches us in our sinful state through Jesus sacrifice on the cross.
- The love of Christ has dealt with the sin-separation.

**Romans 8:38-39** (NKJV) For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All we have to do is take hold of the grace we have in Jesus Christ, seek forgiveness and the love of God will break through like the morning sunrise, destroy those gates of bronze and the bars of iron that have kept us in bondage!