

# The Name of the Lord is a Strong Tower

*Proverbs 18:10*

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*“The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.” – Proverbs 18:10 (Cf. 14:26; 29:25).*

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The idea of a “strong tower” is a familiar one in the Bible. In Judges 9 we read the account of the downfall of Abimelech who ruled Israel for some 3 years. Verse 23 of this chapter says that God sent a “evil spirit” between Abimelech and the men of Shechem, speaking of a real hatred and distrust that ultimately resulted in the men of Shechem “dealing treacherously with Abimelech (not that he was any prize himself). In the course of God’s providence, there appeared this jealousy, distrust and hatred and God allowed it to work as punishment for the idolatry and mass murder that had been occurring.

Abimelech attacked Shechem (v34f), He “lay in wait” for them in “four Companies”. Gaal the son of Ebed stood in the entrance of the city gate and Abimelech rose up and attacked them. Gaal resisted with those who were with him and ultimate the army of Israel drove them from the city. The next day ones described as the “people” went out into what is described as “the field”. In response, Abimelech saw them and rose against them and slew them. Then Abimelech and the ones with him dashed into the city and they fought against the city all day and captured the city. Viciously, Abimelech killed many people and then razed the city and salted the grounds. When the so-called leaders of the city, called the “tower of Shechem” heard of this, they they fled and entered the “Temple of Elbereth”. El was supposedly the father of the gods in the Canaanite pantheon. It is suspected that this was a reference to the same God mentioned at 9:4. It was this temple that had supplied Abimelech with money and it seems that now Abimelech returned to destroy it. This seems to be the tower that is mentioned in 9:51, the “strong tower” that stood in the center of the city. They eventually ended up on the roof of the tower.

In Psalm 61:3 David speaks of God as a refuge, namely a “strong tower” for him, a “refuge” against his enemies. These ideas give us some form under which we can gain clear interpretation to Solomon’s statement here is Proverbs 18:10.

The phrase “name of the Lord” is a fairly common one throughout the Bible.

- The first time it is seen is in Genesis 4:26. We’re told there it was at the time of the coming of a son, Enosh to Seth that men began to call upon the Name of the Lord.
- We’re told in Gen. 12:8 that, as Abraham began to act on the promises that God had made to him, he went to east of Bethel and pitched a tent between Bethel and Ai and built and alter to the Lord and began to call on the “Name of the Lord”.

- Just a bit later we read that left Egypt and had Lot with him, being rich with livestock, silver and gold. He went to the place we mentioned earlier and called on the Name of the Lord.
- We're told that Hagar, when expelled from Abraham's family structure, called on the Name of the Lord for aid.
- Gen. 21:33 records Abraham calling on the Name of the Lord when planted the Tamarisk tree in Beersheba
- In Gen. 26:25 we read of Isaac's interaction with Abimelech. When he had had his vision of God followed by this interaction with Abimelech we're told that he built an altar and called upon the Name of the Lord.
- In Exodus 20:7, as a part of the Law Israel was told to certain that they not "take the Name or the Lord" thy God in vain.

There are a host of other usages of this Name for God in both the Old and New Testaments as well, it has a total of some 100 or so other places where it is used. This particular form of the phrase appears only here in the Book of Proverbs. Solomon uses it to speak of a knowable or manifest perfectionist of God; for instance faithfulness, power, mercy, or wisdom. It is underscoring and call to our attention those things upon whom the righteous rely for their security. It is worth noting that, in Hebrew culture, a name was not merely a label, but usually an expression of the character of a person. God's covenant name, "Lord," is associated with His character as the Savior of His people.

What is especially interesting when we consider that this term, referring to the Person of God, including all that He is, is called here "a strong tower". The word "strong" can mean one of several things, depending upon the context in which it is used. It is yielded strength 60x, strong 17x (this being one of them), power 11x, and several more practical and specific things (might 2x, boldness, loud, and mighty 1x each). In general it speaks of the quality of strength in any one of a number of fashion (material, physical, personal, and even social or political). Here, the implication is of a material kind of strength with a clear spiritual application. Solomon is saying that in the difficulties of life and way those difficulties manifest themselves in the life of one of God's people, there is real and substantial shelter and protection available.

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This truth is clearly in Solomon's mind as where the righteous have their real and formidable security. It seems as though he is urging God's people to proceed to that place of safety as quickly as they can possibly get there. The reasoning for the believer is that there is sure security and safety and their trust is demonstrated in their willingness to take advantage of it.

To rehearse our interpretation - By "the Name of the Lord" we understand God as revealed to man in His Word - a gradual revelation, culminating in Christianity. "The righteous" are those who are in covenant with God, and

striving to live accordingly. To run into His Name as into a strong tower is equivalent to calling upon His Name, which rightly done secures salvation (Acts 2:21). But this is far more than invoking the Name of God. It is to believe in, to love, to fear, to put the whole trust in, to obey, Him. The soul that gives itself to Him is “lifted up” above the dangers which threaten it, is safe.

As with many such principles in Proverbs, there are a number of illustrations we can look to:

- These words are an echo of David’s words in Ps. 18:2.
- Long before David, the family of Seth, devout in the midst of a wicked generation, and strongly impressed with their own feebleness, had begun “to call on the Name of Jehovah,” had fled to “the ever-living Author of life,” as their strong Tower (Gen. 4:26).
- That Name was more fully revealed to Moses (Exod. 34:5–7), and still more, as time went on, to prophets (Isa. 32:1, 2; Jer. 23:6), and evangelists (Rom. 15:5, 13; 1 John 4:8). And so, long after Seth and David,
- We find men pointed to it as their only hope (Acts 4:12), running into it (Acts 2:21, 41) and rejoicing in God’s salvation (Acts 2:46, 47; 8:39).

By way of application – we can observe that this proverb has come before us already in contrast with another which speaks of a very different fortress (ver. 11). But it deserves to be considered by itself. For can I doubt my own need of such a Tower? Where, then, can I flee and be safe from an accusing conscience, from an avenging law? “*Salvation will God appoint (and He only) for walls and bulwarks*” (Isa. 26:1). Where shall I be protected against the fiery darts of the wicked one, and of those who do his bidding upon earth? “*God is faithful, who will not suffer (me) to be tempted above that (I am) able*” (1 Cor. 10:13). Where shall I find a refuge in the hour of sickness and sore temporal trial? “*The peace of God will ‘fortify’ or ‘garrison’ (my) heart*” (Phil. 4:7). And where in prospect of death and judgment and eternity? Only in the Almighty God, “*who is a most strong Tower to all them that put their trust in Him.*” These are “*great and precious promises.*”

But let me remember to whom they apply. To the “*righteous*” only - to him who dwells in Christ, “*the Lord our Righteousness,*” by sacramental union cemented by a living, fruitful, sanctifying faith. The Tower is not a sanctuary for the presumptuous, but for the penitent and believing soul. Outside is darkness, danger, death. Oh, may I remain within, where alone is light, security, and life—for evermore!