

Proverbs 18:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

Analysis

The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. This proverb presents a vivid metaphor of divine protection and security found in God's revealed character. The Hebrew word shem (שם, "name") signifies far more than a mere label—it represents God's entire revealed nature, character, attributes, and covenant reputation. To invoke God's name is to appeal to all that He is and has made Himself known to be.

The "strong tower" (migdal-oz, מִגְדָּל־עֹז) evokes the fortified towers built into ancient city walls where defenders would retreat during enemy attacks. These towers, constructed with massive stones and strategic elevation, provided refuge when outer defenses were breached. Archaeological excavations throughout Israel reveal such defensive structures at sites like Lachish, Megiddo, and Jerusalem. The imagery would resonate powerfully with ancient readers who depended on such fortifications for survival.

The contrast between "the righteous" (tzaddiq, צִדְקָה) and the implicit unrighteous who seek security elsewhere is crucial. The righteous person actively "runneth" (yaruts, יָרַעַת)—not walks casually but urgently flees to this refuge. The verb suggests both speed and intentionality, depicting someone who knows where true safety lies and pursues it decisively. The result is being "set on high" or "safe" (nisgab, נִשְׁגַּב), a word meaning elevated beyond reach of danger, secure and inaccessible to enemies. This proverb beautifully encapsulates the biblical theology

of refuge in God—not a passive hoping but an active fleeing to His character for protection, vindication, and salvation.

Historical Context

Proverbs likely reached its final form during Solomon's reign (970-930 BC), though this collection reflects wisdom that predates Solomon and includes material added later. The book's ancient Near Eastern context included widespread wisdom literature—Egyptian instruction texts, Mesopotamian proverbs, and Canaanite wisdom traditions. Yet biblical wisdom is distinctive in being grounded in "the fear of the LORD" rather than pragmatic success.

The imagery of fortified towers reflects the constant military threats ancient Israel faced. Cities were built with concentric defensive walls, watchtowers, and citadel fortresses. During sieges, when outer walls were breached, defenders would retreat to the central tower—the last line of defense. The tower of Shechem mentioned in Judges 9:46-49, where people sought refuge (unsuccessfully, since human towers ultimately fail), provides a tragic contrast to the absolute security found in God's name.

The theological concept of God's "name" had been developed through Israel's covenant history. God revealed His name Yahweh to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14-15), proclaimed His name's character at Sinai (Exodus 34:5-7), and caused His name to dwell in the temple (Deuteronomy 12:11). To call upon God's name was to appeal to His covenant faithfulness, His revealed character of mercy, His commitment to His people. This proverb would resonate with Israelites who understood that their security ultimately depended not on physical fortifications or military strength, but on the character of their covenant God who had repeatedly delivered them.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. When facing fear, danger, or overwhelming circumstances, do you instinctively 'run' to God's character (His faithfulness, power, goodness) as your first refuge, or do you typically turn to human solutions, worry, or self-reliance before eventually remembering to pray?
2. What specific attributes of God's revealed character ('His name')—His sovereignty, wisdom, love, justice, mercy, faithfulness—do you need to 'run into' for refuge in your current circumstances, and how would meditating on that aspect of His nature change your perspective?
3. The verse emphasizes active running, not passive wishing. What practical spiritual disciplines or habits help you intentionally flee to God when temptation, trial, or trouble comes, rather than to comfort, control, or counterfeit securities?
4. Many people seek security in things that feel like 'strong towers' but ultimately fail—reputation, relationships, wealth, health, achievement. What false refuges are you tempted to trust in, and how does this proverb expose their inadequacy compared to God's name?
5. The righteous person knows where to run when danger comes. How well do you know God's character through Scripture meditation and relationship with Him, and how does that knowledge (or lack thereof) affect your confidence in fleeing to Him in times of need?

Interlinear Text

מִצְדָּל עַז שֵׁם יְהִי הַבָּזָן בָּזָן יְמִינָה צַדִּיק
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וְנִשְׁׁבֶּב:

into it and is safe

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Additional Cross-References

2 Samuel 22:3 (Parallel theme): The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.

Psalms 91:2 (References Lord): I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Isaiah 26:4 (References Lord): Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

Psalms 144:2 (Parallel theme): My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.

Psalms 27:1 (References Lord): The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Genesis 17:1 (References Lord): And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Psalms 18:2 (References Lord): The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

Revelation 1:8 (References Lord): I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Matthew 1:23 (Parallel theme): Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

1 Samuel 30:6 (References Lord): And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

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