

# God's Name-A Strong Tower (II)

## WHY STUDY THE NAMES OF THE LORD?

Jesus helps us put the importance of the knowledge of the Names of God in proper perspective, teaching us how we should begin our prayers in Mt 6:9KJV-note...

### Our Father Who art in Heaven Hallowed be Thy Name ...

There it is! God's Name is to be **hallowed**, to be sanctified, to be consecrated, to be made (considered) holy, to be set apart (not just in our head but in our heart, in our lives of loving, Spirit filled/enabled obedience!). And so by focusing on God's Great and Glorious Names is ever how we are to begin our prayers, our petitions, our supplications, our requests, our cries for assistance! And so we must know what God teaches about His Great Name. For this reason we must study in depth the Names of God, not just knowing the Names "superficially" (e.g., knowing a specific title such as **Jehovah Jireh**, as excellent as that title is) but knowing His Names intimately, "Biblically" knowing **how** and **why** God chose to reveal them and **what** impact His self revelation had on the saints to whom they were revealed and continues to have on our lives today.

**J C Ryle** said "By the **"name** of God we mean all those attributes through which He is revealed to us—His power, wisdom, holiness, justice, mercy and truth. By asking that they may be **"hallowed**," we mean that they may be made known and glorified. The glory of God is the first thing that God's children should desire. It is the object of one of our Lord's own prayers: **"Father, glorify** (aorist imperative) **Your Name!"** (John 12:28). It is the purpose for which the world was created; it is the end for which the saints are called and convened (See Piper's sermon [God Created Us For His Glory](#)): it is the chief thing we should seek—"that in all things God may be praised (glorified through Jesus Christ)" (1Pe 4:11-note).

Therefore we must focus on God's Great and Glorious Names, so that we might be able to glorify His Name, so that we might, by His Spirit, be enabled to live in a manner worthy of His Great Name before a watching world in desperate need of a supernatural vision of the invisible God in and through the visible lives of His children (cp Mt 5:16-note, Phil 2:15-note)!

### And those who know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee For Thou, O LORD, hast not forsaken those who seek Thee

Psalm 9:10-[note](#)

**Matthew Henry** says that

**(1) The better God is known the more He is trusted.** Those who know Him to be a God of infinite wisdom will trust Him further than they can see Him (Job 35:14); those who know Him to be a God of almighty power will trust Him when creature-confidences fail and they have nothing else to trust to (2Chr 20:12); and those who know Him to be a God of infinite grace and goodness will trust Him though he slay them, (Job 13:15). Those who know Him to be a God of inviolable truth and faithfulness will rejoice in his word of promise, and rest upon that, though the performance be deferred and intermediate providences seem to contradict it. Those who know Him to be the Father of spirits, and an everlasting Father, will trust Him with their souls as their main care and trust in Him at all times, even to the end.

**(2.) The more God is trusted the more He is sought unto.** If we trust God we shall seek Him by faithful and fervent prayer, and by a constant care to approve ourselves to Him in the whole course of our conversations.

**(3.) God never did, nor ever will, disown or desert any that duly seek to Him and trust in Him.** Though He afflict them, He will not leave them comfortless; though He seem to forsake them for a while, yet He will gather them with everlasting mercies. (Ps 9:10-[note](#)) We never trust a man till we know him. The mother of unbelief is ignorance of God, his faithfulness, mercy, and power. They that know thee, will trust in thee. This confirmed Paul, Abraham, Sarah, in the faith. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2Ti 1:12-note). "He is faithful that promised," and "able also to perform." (Heb 10:23-note He 11:11-note, Ro 4:21-note)

**C H Spurgeon** commenting on Psalm 9:10 says we should be diligent to study God's Names because

Ignorance is worst when it amounts to ignorance of God, and knowledge is best when it exercises itself upon the Name of God. This most excellent knowledge leads to the most excellent grace of faith. O, to learn more of the attributes and character of God. Unbelief, that hooting night bird, cannot live in the light of divine knowledge, it flies before the sun of God's great and gracious Name. If we read this verse literally, there is, no doubt, a glorious fulness of assurance in the names of God... By knowing His Name is also meant an experimental acquaintance with the attributes of God, which are every one of them anchors to hold the soul from drifting in seasons of peril. The Lord may hide His face for a season from His people, but He never has utterly, finally, really, or angrily forsaken them that seek Him. Let the poor seekers draw comfort from this fact, and let the finders rejoice yet more exceedingly, for what must be the Lord's faithfulness to those who find if He is so gracious to those who seek... The names of God inspire trust. Jehovah Jireh, Tsidkenu, Rophi, Shammah, Nissi, ELOHIM, SHADDAI, ADONAI, etc... " ([Treasury of David - Psalm 9](#))

**Matthew Henry** comment on Ro 15:13 ("**God of Hope**")...

It is good in prayer to fasten upon those names, titles, and attributes of God, which are most suitable to the errand we come upon, and will best serve to encourage our faith concerning it. Every word in the prayer should be a plea. Thus should the cause be skillfully ordered, and the mouth filled with arguments. God is the **God of hope**. He is the foundation on which our hope is built, and He is the builder that doth Himself raise it: He is both the Object of our hope, and the Author of it. That hope is but fancy, and will deceive us, which is not fastened upon God (as the goodness hoped for, and the truth hoped in), and which is not of His working in us. We have both together, Ps. 119:49.

**Elmer Towns** encourages us to study God's Names reasoning that...

**(1) We come to understand people by their names and titles.**

David, the man after God's heart, is better understood by a study of his various names or titles. Knowing that David is described as a shepherd, warrior, king, poet and musician helps us understand his character and gives us insight into David the man. He was the son of Jesse and a great grandson of Boaz. David was from the line of Judah, the royal line from which many of Israel's kings came and from which Jesus Christ was born. **In a similar way, studying God's names reveals His character to us more intimately.** Among other names, for example, we know Him as Creator, Judge, Savior and Sustainer. By reflecting on His names, we can gain insight into His nature and understand more about how He works in our lives. While mortals cannot fathom His nature completely, God has revealed Himself through His Scriptures and has given us the Holy Spirit as a guide in knowing Him. While we remain human, we can only "know in part" (1Cor 13:12), and our limited understanding will never fully grasp all that an unlimited God is and does. But as we come to understand God's names, we approach closer in our understanding of God Himself.

**(2) A second reason for studying the names of God is in order to understand the different relationships we can have with Him.**

A young man calls his girlfriend "sweetheart," but after they marry they have a new relationship signified by a new name: "wife." She may have been Mary Jones, but after the marriage ceremony, if she follows the usual custom, she has a new name—perhaps Mary Livingston. Her new name tells everyone that she has a new relationship with her husband. The names of God become meaningful as we adjust to new or growing relationships with Him. Usually God revealed a new name to people at a fork in their road of life. He would help people through a difficulty by allowing them to experience Him in a different way, through a new name.

**Abraham seems to have learned more of the different names of God than any other person in Scripture.** Why? Because Abraham was pioneering new trails in the walk of faith. Each time God wanted Abraham to reach higher, He revealed a new name. Abraham had known Him as the LORD (Jehovah, or Yahweh—Gen. 13:4); but when he tithed to Melchizedek, Abraham learned a new name: El Elyon, the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth (Ge 14:18,19). When Abraham complained to God in prayer that he did not have an heir for the promised inheritance, God revealed another of His names—Adonai, Master or Lord (Ge 15:2). The eternal LORD God of heaven would care for Abraham in a Master-slave relationship. Later, Abraham learned that God would nurture and powerfully sustain him as El Shaddai (Ge 17:1); that the secret name of God is El Olam (Ge 21:33); and that God would provide for him as Jehovah-jireh (Ge 22:14). Each time Abraham entered into a deeper relationship with God, he learned a new attribute of God through a new divine name.

**(3) A third reason for studying the names of God is that through His names God reveals that He is the source and solution to our problems.**

When Israel fought Amalek, they learned the name Jehovah Nissi, the LORD Our Banner, meaning that God would and could protect them (Ex 17:15). As each name of God is unfolded, a new source of strength is revealed to His people. Moses learned the name Jehovah Rophe (from rapha, to heal), meaning that God would provide healing for the people (15:26). Later, Gideon learned of God as Jehovah Shalom, revealing a God of peace to a young man who was fearful and unsure of himself (Jdg. 6:24).

**(4) Finally, the various names of God teach us to look to Him in our crises.**

God revealed His different names in times of crisis to reveal how He would help His servants. Christians sometimes seem to think that they are immune to problems—that salvation solves them all. Of course this is shown to be untrue when problems or crises arise and we find ourselves crying out, *Why me? Why now? Why this?* God allows people to have problems for a number of reasons. Sometimes He wants to test us, to see if we will handle problems by faith or in our own strength. At other times He allows problems to overwhelm us so we will turn to Him. In our crises, God reveals Himself anew, just as He originally revealed Himself through His names when His people needed help. If we know God's names, we can more freely turn to Him in the name that fits our situation. (186 page book - [My Father's Names - Elmer Towns - online recommended resource](#)) ([Or here](#))

**James Montgomery Boice** wrote "The Names of God are windows through which His character is seen. The names tell us that He is the Most High God, Possessor of Heaven and Earth (El Elyon), the Almighty God (El Shaddai), the Eternal, Unchanging God (El Olam), the Lord (Adonai), the God Who Is There (Jehovah Shammah), and much more. Since the names of God declare His attributes, we are not surprised that the unparalleled revelation of God's wisdom and grace in Abraham's near sacrifice of his son (in Genesis 22) brings with it another of God's names: Jehovah Jireh, which means "the Lord will provide." (Boice Expository Commentary - Genesis).

**Kenneth Hemphill** gives a personal testimony to the power of the study of the Names of God in the introduction of his book on that subject...

This book has been a joy and a pilgrimage. I first preached a series on **the names of God** in 1990, while I was pastor at the First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Virginia. **The study and the messages had a profound and lasting impact on me.** The response of the congregation greatly encouraged me as they testified to a new awareness of God's sufficiency for daily living. Soon after I preached the series, I left First Norfolk to become the founding director of the Center for Church Growth under the auspices of the Home Mission and Sunday School Boards of the Southern Baptist Convention. (Now the North American Mission Board and Life Way Christian Resources, respectively.) After two years' service in that capacity, the Lord led me to Fort Worth, Texas, to assume the presidency of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The understanding I have gained of the character and nature of God has daily sustained me through this transitional period in my life. **I have frequently been reminded of God's sufficiency as I have called to remembrance the various names of God...**

Names are important because they are a method of self-revelation... The way various names and titles are used speaks of relationships... Even though we assign great significance to names and titles today, they were far more important to the men and women of the ancient Near East during biblical times. For them, the very existence of a thing was tied up with the revelation of its name... The prophetic pathos in the naming of the children of Hosea cannot be overlooked. The first child was named Jezreel, which meant "God sows." The second child was Lo-Ruhamah, which meant "no more compassion." Finally, the third child was named Lo-Ammi which meant "not my people." When you read the prophetic Book of Hosea, you will see that the names of the children were pregnant with meaning concerning God's judgment upon His people.

The divine name was critically important in the ancient Near East. The one who knew the divine name was able to invoke the presence and obtain help of deity...

**Why do we need to study the names of God? What difference will it make in our personal walk with Him?**... The first thing to remember is that God has commanded us to honor His name. Ex 20:7 simply states: "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain."... Do you realize that when you are in Christ, you bear His name? Your behavior reflects upon Him... Another reason to study the names of God is simply because of the inherent greatness of His name (Ps 8:1, Ps 48:10, Ps 75:1, Ps 76:1)... The Protection of the Name - A third important reason for us to know the names of God is found in Proverbs 18:10... In other words,

God's name is like a fort that provides protection for the believer. Through this study, we will come to understand the significance of names like Jehovah Rophe or Jehovah Nissi. In each case, we will learn how understanding that name becomes a spiritual fortress...

As we grow to understand the very nature and character of God we will find ourselves running to His name to find safety and strength. His name is like a strong tower! God's name stands for the manifestation of His presence in His revelation and His relation to His people. This can be one of the most exciting and encouraging studies that you have ever undertaken. It is essential to know God's name because we bear that name and we are commanded to live in such a way that will bring it honor. As we come to know the significance of each name, we will enhance the breadth of our ability to praise God and to live in His protection. (Hemphill, K. Names of God).

**Spurgeon** adds that ...

We are warranted in using all the various names of God, for each has its own beauty and majesty, and we must reverence each by its holy use as well as by abstaining from taking it in vain.

By the name is meant the revealed character and Word of God; we are not to worship "the unknown God," but we should seek to know the covenant God of Jacob, who has been pleased to reveal his name and attributes to his people. The glorious power of God defended and preserved the Lord Jesus through the battle of his life and death, and exalted him above all his enemies. His warfare is now accomplished in his own proper person, but in his mystical body, the church, he is still beset with dangers; the name of the God of Israel is still the defense of the faithful.

**We are to hallow the name of God,  
and we cannot do so if it slips from our memory.**

Ignorance is worst when it amounts to ignorance of God, and knowledge is best when it exercises itself upon the name of God. This most excellent knowledge leads to the most excellent grace of faith. By knowing his name is also meant an experimental acquaintance with the attributes of God, which are anchors to hold the soul from drifting.

**What a precious subject  
is the Name of our God!**

The Name of God is, even in a literal sense, a fortress and high tower for all His people.

**Daily Light on the Daily Path**

They that know thy name will put their trust in thee. Psalm 9:10 [note](#)

This is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. — I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor. — O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

The mighty God, The everlasting Father. — I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

The Prince of Peace. — He is our peace. — Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. — Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help. — As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it.

Jeremiah 23:6. Psalm 71:16. Isaiah 9:6. Jeremiah 10:23. Isaiah 9:6. 2 Timothy 1:12. Isaiah 9:6. Ephesians 2:14. Romans 5:1. Proverbs 18:10. Isaiah 31:1. Isaiah 31:5.

**Spurgeon...**

**The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.** Da 11:32b ([See Also Spurgeon's Sermon](#))

**The Lord is a Man of war, Jehovah is His Name.** (Ex 15:3KJV)

Those who enlist under His banner shall have a Commander who will train them for the conflict and give them both vigor and valor. The times of which Daniel wrote were of the very worst kind, and then it was promised that the people of God would come out in their best colors: they would be strong and stout to confront the powerful adversary. Oh, that we may know our God—His power, His faithfulness, His immutable love—and so may be ready to risk everything in His behalf. He is One whose character excites our enthusiasm and makes us willing to live and to die for Him. Oh, that we may know our God by familiar fellowship with Him; for then we shall become like Him and shall be prepared to stand up for truth and righteousness. He who comes forth fresh from beholding the face of God will never fear the face of man. If we dwell with Him, we shall catch the heroic spirit, and to us a world of enemies will be but as the drop of a bucket. A countless array of men, or even of devils, will seem as little to us as the nations are to God, and He counts them only as grasshoppers. Oh, to be valiant for truth in this day of falsehood" (**Faith's Checkbook**)

## A SIMPLE STUDY ON THE NAME OF GOD

Consider **meditatively** pondering (**inductive Bible study** facilitates the discipline of meditation) all the uses of the word **'name'** in the Psalms (most uses refer to God - just read the first one below to wet your appetite!). You will be blessed as you interact with the Spirit (Jn 14:16, 26, 16:13, 1Jn 2:20, 27, 1Cor 2:11-13, 1Jn 2:20, 27) and respond in prayer, praise and worship to His illumination of the truth about His glorious and majestic **Name**. Hover over these passages for the verse or click passage to read in context. If you desire a different version use the tool at top of page to change version.

- Ps 5:11 (cp Pr 18:10); Ps 7:17; 8:1, 9 ([How Majestic is Thy Name](#));
- Ps 9:2, 10; Ps 18:49 ([I Adore You](#));
- Ps 20:1, 5, 7 ([We Trust in the Name of the LORD](#));
- Ps 22:22; 29:2; 30:4 ([I Sing Praises to Your Name](#))
- Ps 33:21; 34:3; 44:5, 8, 20; 45:17; 48:10 ([No Other Name But Jesus](#));
- Ps 52:9; 54:1, 6; 61:5, 8 ([To Know Your Name](#));
- Ps 63:4 ([Blessed Be Your Name](#));
- Ps 66:2, 4; 68:4 ([In The Name Of The LORD](#));
- Ps 69:30, 36; 72:17, 19 ([Blessed be the Name of the LORD](#));
- Ps 74:7, 10, 18, 21; 75:1; 76:1; 79:6, 9; 80:18; 83:16, 18; 86:9, 11, 12; 89:12, 16, 24; 91:14; 92:1; 96:2, 8; 97:12; 99:3, 6; 100:4 ([I Can Only Imagine](#));
- Ps 102:12, 15, 21 ([We are Here to Praise You](#));
- Ps 103:1 ([Bless His Holy Name](#));
- Ps 105:1 ([Call Upon His Name](#)),
- Ps 105:3; 106:8, 47; 111:9; 113:1, 2 ([Blessed Are You](#)),
- Ps 113:3 ([From the Rising of the Sun](#)); ([Country Version](#));
- Ps 115:1; 116:4, 13, 17; 118:10, 11, 12, 26; 119:55, 132; 122:4; 124:8; Ps 129:8; 135:1, 3 ([Praise to the LORD, the Almighty](#)),
- Ps 135:13; 138:2; 140:13; 142:7; 143:11; 145:1, 2, 21; 148:5, 13 ([He is Exalted](#)); Ps 149:3 ([Sing Your Praise To The LORD](#)). ([Blessed Be Your Name](#))

**After** you have observed these passages **yourself**, you might consider pondering Spurgeon's devotional insights on the matchless Name of God in his opus magnum [The Treasury of David](#)

## RESOURCES FOR STUDY OF THE NAMES OF GOD

[Lord, I Want to Know You A Devotional Study on the Names of God - Kay Arthur](#) (The following version can be borrowed for 1 hour -[Lord, I want to know you](#)) This book is a self contained study on the names of God. Remember that a study of the names of God is really a study of His glorious ATTRIBUTES but in a way which is more "up close & personal" and personally applicable to real life situations. I have seen this study impact student's lives as much as any course I have taught over the past 15 years. This book would make a great morning devotional study but is equally useful in a small group setting or even a Sunday School class.

Instructional teaching tapes are also available to help you plan your lessons and Kay Arthur has accompanying lectures that compliment and amplify the material in the book. I can guarantee you will never approach the Names of God the same way after you've done this study. It is not redundant to say that this is a truly life changing study.

[Names of God - Nathan J. Stone \(Online Pdf version\)](#) - This is the classic modern work on this subject and is an excellent supplement to the study "Lord I Want to Know You". (Another source [Names of God in the Old Testament](#) by Stone, Nathan J)

[Names of God : instant access to key scriptures](#)

[Praying the names of God : a daily guide](#) (borrow for one hour) by Spangler, Ann [711 ratings](#) (See related [Immanuel : praying the names of God through the Christmas season](#) by Spangler, Ann) ([Praying the names of Jesus : a daily guide](#) by Spangler, Ann)

[Classic Sermons on the Names of God](#) - compiled by Warren Wiersbe - 11 sermons (Borrow this book for one hour)

[The Names of God by Ken Hemphill](#) - excellent expositional and devotional study of 13 Names of God. Highly recommended as a supplement to your own study of the Names of God using #1 and #2 above.

[Beloved names of God : \[life-changing thoughts on 99 classic names\]](#) by McLaughlan, David (borrow for one hour) - Each entry has 4-5 short facts followed by a short devotional thought. Simple but nourishing.

[The Names of God by Hampton Keathley III - short paper](#)

[Names and Titles of Jesus Christ - List with Scriptures](#)

[The Hebrew Names of God - mainly Hebrew names with a few commentary](#)

[The one true God](#) by Washer, Paul "In One True God Paul Washer has provided a sound, biblical, substantive theological study for those of us who have been longing for more. Anyone interested in bolstering their understanding of the doctrine of God will find this study immensely valuable" - Voddie Bauchum, Jr

[The Names of God by Lambert Dolphin - brief notes on each name, more notes on Trinity](#)

[My Father's Names - 12 studies \(free\)](#) by Elmer Towns - Studies on some common names and a few of the less common names of God - "Hallowed by Thy Name," "Jehovah Roi," "El Shaddai," "El Elyon," "El Olam," "El Gibbor," "Jehovah Melek," "Jehovah Sabaoth," "Adonai," "Elohim," "Jehovah," "Pater." (See also [My Father's names](#) - borrow for one hour)

[The Names of the Holy Spirit \(144 page study guide\) \(free\)](#) by Elmer Towns

[365 Ways To Know God by Elmer L. Towns \(not free\)](#) A guide to help you reflect on one name of God for every day of the year.

Our Stronghold: C H Spurgeon's sermon on Proverbs 18:10 - Take a few moments to thoughtfully read through this exhortative, instructional sermon and be blessed and edified

[Name of God - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [God, Names of](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [God, Names of](#)

[Jesus Christ, Titles of - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

[The Names of God - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

[The Names of God - Holman Bible Dictionary.](#)

- [ISBE Article on the Names of God](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Name of God](#)

[Names of God - Don Fortner](#)

Related Resources Proverbs 18:10 [Click](#) comparison of Proverbs 18:10,11.

- Proverbs 18:10 Commentary- Commentary on site
- [Proverbs 18:10 Commentary](#)- John Gill
- Proverbs 18:10-11 - Two Fortresses- Alexander Maclaren



- [Proverbs 18:10..Commentary](#) - J Vernon McGee (Mp3)
- [Proverbs 18:10 The Name of the LORD A Strong Tower](#) - Charles Simeon
- [Proverbs 18:10](#), [Proverbs 18:10b](#), [Proverbs 18:10c](#), [Proverbs 18:10d](#), [Proverbs 18:10e](#)- Chuck Smith
- [Proverbs 18:10 Our Stronghold](#)- C H Spurgeon text
- Proverbs 18:10 Our Stronghold – C H Spurgeon Mp3 with a British accent!

## THE NAME OF THE LORD IN MUSIC

- [All in All](#)
- [Strong Tower](#) (Proverbs 18:10)
- [No Other Name](#)
- [No Other Name](#)
- [Your Name by Paul Baloche](#)
- [How Majestic is Thy Name](#)
- [I Adore You](#)
- [We Trust in the Name of the LORD](#)
- [Sing To The King](#)
- [I Sing Praises to Your Name](#)
- [No Other Name But Jesus](#)
- [In The Name Of The Lord](#)
- [He is Exalted - Twila Paris](#)

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### [I Once Was a Stranger](#)

by [Robert McCheyne](#)

#### (Jehovah Tsidkenu, the LORD my Righteousness)

I once was a stranger to grace and to God,  
I knew not my danger, and felt not my load;  
Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree,  
Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me.

I oft read with pleasure, to sooth or engage,  
Isaiah's wild measure and John's simple page;  
But e'en when they pictured the blood sprinkled tree  
Jehovah Tsidkenu seemed nothing to me.

Like tears from the daughters of Zion that roll,  
I wept when the waters went over His soul;  
Yet thought not that my sins had nailed to the tree  
Jehovah Tsidkenu—'twas nothing to me.

When free grace awoke me, by light from on high,  
Then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die;  
No refuge, no safety in self could I see—  
Jehovah Tsidkenu my Saviour must be.

My terrors all vanished before the sweet name;  
My guilty fears banished, with boldness I came  
To drink at the fountain, life giving and free—  
Jehovah Tsidkenu is all things to me.

Jehovah Tsidkenu! my treasure and boast,  
Jehovah Tsidkenu! I ne'er can be lost;

In thee I shall conquer by flood and by field,  
My cable, my anchor, my breast-plate and shield!

Even treading the valley, the shadow of death,  
This "watchword" shall rally my faltering breath;  
For while from life's fever my God sets me free,  
Jehovah Tsidkenu, my death song shall be.

## A Simple Inductive Study on Proverbs 18:10

- What Does it Mean
- to be Safe in Jehovah's Name?

### Related Resources:

- Proverbs 18-10 Commentary
- Proverbs 18-11 Commentary
- For Background See inductive Bible study

Proverbs 18:10 in the **NASB**...

The Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower.

The righteous runs into it and is **safe**. (Margin note = "set on high")

**Proverbs 18:10** in other translations reads as follows...

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the [consistently] righteous man [upright and in right standing with God] runs into it and is safe, high [above evil] and strong." (Amplified Version)

"The name of the Lord is of great strength; and the righteous running to it are exalted." Septuagint (Greek translation of Hebrew OT)

"The name of the Lord is like a strong tower; the righteous person runs to it and is set safely on high." (Net)

"The name of the LORD is a strong fortress; the godly run to him and are safe." (New Living Translation)

"A tower of strength is the name of Jehovah, Into it the righteous runneth, and is set on high." (Young's Literal)

## OBSERVATION OF PROVERBS 18:10

### 1) What is in a name, especially the Names of God?

#### Related Resources:

- Observation of a Biblical text;
- Learning to practice querying the text

The Lord's name stands for His person, since it reflects His attributes, character and qualities. Here the name of God is Jehovah, His covenant Name by which He made Himself known to Israel. To know God in covenant is a strong tower.

**Moses** records his conversation with God where

"God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Ex 3:14) (Click here for more on this Name Jehovah)

Persons may confidently and safely take refuge in God's covenant Name which conveys an assurance of security to those who are



in covenant with Him by grace through faith (see Question #4 below)

**James Montgomery Boice** writes that...

"**the name of God**" is a Semitic phrase for speaking of God's attributes. To be protected by the name is therefore to be protected by the One Who is sovereign, holy, all-knowing, wise, compassionate, and anything else that can properly be said of God. And there is more, for to be kept "**in the name**" is not merely to be kept by God, as if He were only some distant force that could be called in to defend us if that were necessary. It is rather that we are actually in Him, much like being in a fortress. Thus, His power and other attributes surround us constantly. (The Gospel of John)

**Comment:** The verse Boice is commenting on is in Jesus prayer to His Father for His disciples where He prays...

And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, **keep** (tereo in the present imperative) them in **Thy name**, the **name** which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are. (John 17:11)

**Matthew Poole** explains that...

The name of the Lord, i.e. the Lord, as he hath revealed himself in his works, and especially in his word by his promises, and the declarations of his infinite perfections, and of his good will to his people.

**J R Miller** asks...

What are we to understand by the name of God? Among the ancient Jews there was one divine name which had peculiar sacredness. It was so holy that they never pronounced it in public. When they came to it in reading, they would pass over it in reverent silence, not daring to take it upon their lips. The Mohammedans, also, have a great reverence for the divine name. They will not tread upon a piece of paper, even the smallest torn fragment which they see lying upon the ground, but will reverently pick it up, saying, "It may contain the name of God." In this there may be little more than superstition in the outward honor shown to the divine name. Ofttimes men with wicked heart will treat the written or spoken name of God with seeming reverence, bowing at its every mention, while in their own life they have no true regard for God. It is very evident that more than this is meant in this petition for the hallowing of God's name. We must honor it in our heart and in our life.

In the Bible a name stands for the whole of the character of the person. Many scripture names have meanings in which are enshrined the qualities which belonged to the man. Even among us a name comes to stand for all there is in the person's life and character. A little child is born without a name, and when a name is given to it it means nothing as yet, for the child has no biography, no character, no personality, has done nothing to individualize itself. But as the days and years go on, and the child grows into manhood, everything he does and all that he is are gathered into his name, until by and by the name has a meaning wherever the man is known; is, as it were, a composite photograph made up of all the phases and aspects of his life. Any man's name when spoken in the ears of his friends conveys to them a conception of his personality, his character, his disposition, his whole story; all that his is is enshrined in his name. There are certain names in every community that by reason of the noble life which the persons live, or the great or good things they have done, mean a great deal, standing for honor, for patriotism, for heroism, for philanthropy, for beneficence, for religion.

So the name of God includes all that God is and all that he has done, that is, all the revelations which have been made to us of him. When we speak His name there arises before our mind a vision which gathers in itself all that we know about God — all our thoughts of him, our impressions of him, our experiences of His goodness, His mercy, His help. When we mention the name of Jesus Christ, the whole story of His life is suggested to us, — His condescension, His beautiful character, His gentleness, His works of power, His teaching — above all, His atoning death, and then His resurrection and ascension. Thus the name of God stands for God himself, all that God is. In this petition we pray, therefore, not merely for the formal honoring of a name, but for the honoring of God himself in the revelations of him which have been made in the world.

Of course we cannot add a particle to the essential glory of God's name. Nothing we could do would make His character any more glorious. We cannot add to the sun's brightness by lighting candles and lamps on the earth; nor can we, by anything we may say or do, make God any more glorious than he is in His essential character. (from [The Hallowed Name](#))

**Music Related to the Name of God:** [Blessed be Your Name](#); [Version 2](#); [Version 3](#)

## 2) What is the implied comparison?

The Name of Jehovah is pictured as if it were a strong tower (see discussion of metaphor) because the reader can more easily understand the value of a strong tower. The metaphor "strong tower" indicates that God is a secure refuge. This picture helps us understand the value of knowing and living in the light of the truth of God's Names of which there are many in Scripture. The Septuagint drops the metaphor of a tower and simply states God's Name is "of great strength" which is not quite as easy to understand as is a "strong tower" (a tower is easier to "run into" than a Name) In either case one can readily discern the great value of meditating on the glorious Names of God.

**Adam Clarke** writes that "The name of the Lord may be taken for the Lord himself; He is a strong tower, a refuge, and place of complete safety, to all that trust in Him. What a strong fortress is to the besieged, the like is God to His persecuted, tempted, afflicted followers.

## 3) What does a "tower" picture?

- [Strong Tower song on youtube](#)

**Webster** defines a "tower" as

"a building, either round or square, raised to a considerable elevation and consisting of several stories. When towers are erected with other buildings, as they usually are, they rise above the main edifice. They are generally flat on the top, and thus differ from steeples or spires. Before the invention of guns, places were fortified with towers and attacked with movable towers mounted on wheels, which placed the besiegers on a level with the walls."

**Another source** adds that it is "a towering citadel, a fortress, one that provides support or protection, a bulwark."

**Erdman's Dictionary** defines "tower" as "A defensive structure either built into a city wall or located on a hill as a watchtower. Towers (Heb. migdāl) were built into city walls at strategic positions such as corners, city gates, and vulnerable locations. Massive towers built as part of the city gate structure (e.g., Megiddo, Samaria, Hazor, Dan, Beer-sheba, Timnah) increased defense capabilities at a city's most vulnerable location. Towers, built into the walls at intervals to increase defense capabilities, usually jutted out beyond the city wall giving defenders a clear view of the wall's foundation and anyone attempting to breach the wall. This type of tower is typically taller than the adjoining city wall."

The image of a "tower" or "citadel" reminds us that as believers we are aliens and strangers in this world and are in a very real struggle every day for the rest of our life until we see Jesus face to face. In the meantime, we need to remember that when the battle wages fierce against us, we have an ever present towering citadel, our Jehovah God, wherein we can run and be safe, though the battle continues all around us! God's almighty providence is the surest and strongest defense against all enemies of whatever kind.

**J Vernon McGee** - The name of Jehovah is also the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is called Jesus because He saves His people from their sins. And He is called Christ because He is the Anointed One. He is the Lord of our life and our salvation. The Lord is a strong tower. You can run into it and be completely safe. This is a verse that many have used in speaking to children, and I have used it myself and found it very effective. It speaks of security and reminds us that no one can pluck us out of His hands. What a beautiful picture this is! ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#)) (Or [listen to an Mp3](#) )

The **Bible Illustrator** has this note on ancient towers - Strong towers were a greater security in a bygone age than they are now. Castles were looked upon as being very difficult places for attack; and ancient troops would rather fight a hundred battles than endure a single siege. He who owned a strong tower felt, however potent might be his adversary, his walls and bulwarks would be his sure salvation.

The **Pulpit Commentary** adds that "strong tower" "suggest to us an image of a disturbed country with a massive fortified tower standing in its midst, ready to serve as a refuge for the peasants, who till the fields when all is peaceful, but who flee to the tower for shelter when they see the enemy scouring over the plain. The baronial castles of England served the same purpose when our own country was suffering from the ravages of war. In the dangers of life the Name of the Lord is a similar refuge for his people."

What is the dramatic contrast to the Lord as our strong tower? See the immediate context...

**Proverbs 18:11** A rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his own imagination.

**Comment:** Note although verse 11 does not begin with a contrast word like "but", it is clearly a contrast to the truth of Pr 18:10. The rich man imagines that his wealth ("the shaky tower of the god mammon") can protect him from harm as a high city wall used to protect from enemy troops, but the rich man is dead

wrong. The danger of wealth is that it gives its possessor the illusion of greater security than it actually provides. Money simply cannot shield people from many problems and provides no hope for the greatest problem of all, the deadness of one's spirit because of sin.

All of us tend to have our "fortified cities." For some, it may be an advanced college degree with its ticket to a guaranteed position; for others, an insurance policy or a financial nest egg for retirement years. For our nation, it is a superior arsenal of weapons. Anything other than God Himself that we tend to trust in becomes our fortified city with its imagined unscalable walls.

**Alexander Maclaren** has a note contrasting **Pr 18:10** and **Pr 18:11**.

We have here the "**strong tower**" and the "**strong city**;" the man lifted up above danger on the battlements of the one, and the man fancying himself to be high above it (and only fancying himself) in the imaginary safety of the other.

#### **I. Consider first the two fortresses.**

One need only name them side by side to feel the full force of the intended contrast. On the one hand the name of the Lord, with all its depths and glories, with its blaze of lustrous purity and infinitudes of inexhaustible power; and on the other "the rich man's wealth."

(1) The name of the Lord, of course, is the biblical expression for the whole character of God, as He has made it known to us, or, in other words, for God Himself, as He has been pleased to reveal Himself to mankind. His name proclaims Him to be self-existent, and, as self-existent, eternal; and as eternal, changeless; and as self-existent, eternal, changeless, infinite in all the qualities by which He makes Himself known. But far beyond the sweep of that great name, Jehovah, is the knowledge of God's deepest heart and character, which we learn in Him who said, "I have declared Thy name unto My brethren, and will declare it." The name that is the strong tower is the name. "My Father!" A Father of infinite tenderness, and wisdom, and power.

(2) Look at the other fortress: "The rich man's wealth." Of course we have not to deal here only with wealth in the shape of money, but all external and material goods; the whole mass of the things seen and temporal are gathered together here in this phrase. Men use their imaginations in very strange fashion, and make, or fancy they make, for themselves out of the things of the present life a defence and a strength. Like some poor lunatic, out upon a moor, that fancies himself ensconced in a castle; like some barbarous tribes behind their stockades, or crowding at the back of a little turf wall, fancying themselves perfectly secure and defended,—so do men deal with these outward things that are given them for another purpose altogether; they make of them defences and fortresses. Of all delusions that can beset you in your course, none will work more disastrously than the notion that the *summum bonum*, the shield and the stay of a man, is the abundance of the things that he possesses.

#### **II. Consider next how to get into the true refuge.**

How does a man make this world his defence? By trusting to it. He that says to the fine gold, "Thou art my confidence," has made it his fortress; and that is how you will make God your fortress—by trusting to Him.

#### **III. We have, lastly, what comes of sheltering in these two refuges.**

(1) As to the former of them, as one of the old Puritan commentators has it, "The tower is so deep that no pioneer can undermine it, so thick that no cannon can breach it, so high that no ladder can scale it." "The righteous runneth into it and is perched up there."

(2) I say little about the other side. The world can do a great deal for us. It can keep the rifle bullets from us. But, ah! when the big siege guns get into position and begin to play; when the great trials that every-life must have, sooner or later, come to open fire at us; then the defence that anything in this outer world can give comes rattling about our ears very quickly. It is like the pasteboard helmet, which looked as good as if it had been steel, and did admirably as long as no sword struck it. (A. Maclaren, A Year's Ministry, 1st series, p. 301) (From "The Sermon Bible"; See full sermon Two Fortresses)

#### **4) Who "benefits" from the truth of Proverbs 18:10?**

The righteous man or woman or as the Amplified version reads "the [consistently] righteous man [upright and in right standing with God]".

"Righteous" is the Hebrew adjective *saddiyq/tsaddiyq* which is an adjective meaning just, righteous. The root basically indicates that

there is conformity to an ethical or moral standard. That standard could be "man" but the only standard acceptable to God is Himself. For practical purposes, one can say that righteousness is all that God is, all that God commands, all that God demands, all that God approves, and ultimately all that God provides in Christ.

And how does man conform to this "impossible" standard?

Paul summarized it in the introduction to his magnum opus, the epistle to the Romans writing that he was

"not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the **power** (dunamis = inherent power, God's power present in the message independent of the one who speaks it) of God for **salvation** (deliverance, rescue from penalty [eternal death] and power of sin) to everyone who **believes** (mental = mind understands the gospel and truth about Christ; emotional = embraces the truthfulness of those facts with sorrow over sin and joy over God's mercy and grace and volitional = sinner submits will to Christ and trusts in Him alone as the only hope of salvation. Genuine faith produces authentic obedience), to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the **righteousness** of God (better translated "righteousness from God") is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written (Hab 2:4 the gospel is in the Old Testament and has always been God's way of declaring sinners righteous as stated in Galatians 3:8), "BUT THE **RIGHTEOUS** man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." (Romans 1:16, 17-note)

"But now (not a time reference, but a change in flow of argument) apart from the Law (entirely independent of obedience to any law) the **righteousness** of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets (the gospel was present in the OT - it was foretold in types and shadows of sacrificial system requiring the shedding of blood for atonement and it was foretold by direct prophecies), even the **righteousness** of God through faith (utter reliance on the living Lord Jesus Christ as one's only Savior from sin and one's only hope for heaven) in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned (all are born in Adam, inherit his propensity to sin and therefore commit sins) and fall short of the glory of God, being **justified** (declared righteous - pardoned from guilt and penalty of sin receiving imputation of Christ's righteousness on one's "account", providing the righteousness sinners need to be accepted by God) as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** (click here for Greek word apolutrosis; see also How to do Greek Word Study) which is in Christ Jesus... For we maintain that a man is **justified** (declared righteous) by faith apart from works of the Law." (Romans 3:21-24-note; Ro 3:28-note)

"What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS **RIGHTEOUSNESS**... Is this blessing then upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS RECKONED TO ABRAHAM AS **RIGHTEOUSNESS**." (Romans 4:1, 2, 3-note; Ro 4:9- note)

From the passages clearly a man or woman is declared to be righteous the moment they place their faith and trust in the gospel of Jesus Christ, Old Testament saints doing so by believing the promises of the coming Messiah and New Testament saints by looking back in faith to the finished work of Christ on the Cross.

I would agree with the Amplified translation that it is the one who is "consistently" righteous who can run into the strong tower of Jehovah. In other words, it is not only the one who had been (past tense) declared righteous (Justified) upon the exercise of faith but the one who is living daily in the power God provides to live a righteous life (Sanctification).

##### 5) What action does the righteous man or woman need to carry out?

There is no safety in looking at the "strong tower". It is necessary to flee to God in order to be protected by Him.

The passage says they must "**run**". It does not say they are to amble or to stroll or to walk in a leisurely or idle manner but that they are to run. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary gives us the picture stating that **to run** is

"to go faster than a walk; specifically : to go steadily by springing steps so that both feet leave the ground for an instant in each step... to go without restraint... to go rapidly or hurriedly... to go in urgency or distress... to contend in a race."

The Hebrew verb (rus/ruwts) means to make haste, to travel or to journey by moving one's legs more rapidly than in walking and in some contexts it conveys the idea of a sense of urgency or a need to hurry.

Lane comments that...

"... the illustration not only indicates what the Lord is, but that **we have a responsibility if we are to avail**

**ourselves of His ministry.** A city's fortress is not where people live and work, but there for refuge in emergencies, so that the citizens can run to it and be safe. Thus there is no automatic security in having wisdom and being righteous — we have to exercise them. The **running** describes **faith and prayer**, which give direct access to God who responds by warding off the danger. Safe is literally 'lifted high', as if one who trusts God is not only behind thick walls, but above the range of the enemy's weapons." (Lane, E. Focus on the Bible: Proverbs) (Bolding added)

**C H Spurgeon** comments that the righteous run and "do not stop to make any preparation. And the running implies that they have nothing to carry; and that fear quickens them. When a man enters a castle, he is safe because of the impregnability of the castle, not because of the way in which he entered into the castle."

### How can we "run" into the Name of Jehovah?

Clearly this is not literal running (although that may be what we feel like doing when trouble knocks). The metaphor of "running" into the strong tower refers to a whole-hearted and unwavering trust in God's Name and His willingness and ability to provide protection. It is only by faith that we can go to an invisible God.

**Warren Wiersbe** - If you want to know how strong His name is, study the names of God in the Old Testament and the "I AM" statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. But be sure to imitate the psalmist and make it your practice to trust and honor His name in every aspect of life (v. 56, NIV), not just during emergencies... "The name of the Lord" in Pr 18:10 signifies all the glorious attributes of the Lord. Because of who He is and what He is, those who trust Him don't have to worry—because He is always their refuge and strength (Ps. 46:1).

**H A Ironside** - The name of Jehovah stands for the Lord Himself. To run into it, as into a strong tower, is to confide in Him in the time of trouble. This is the blessed privilege of every true saint. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep [i.e., garrison] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Php 4:6-note; Php 4:7-note). All that perplexes and oppresses the human spirit can be poured into God's ear. Then the soul can leave all burdens with Him and can confide in His love. Thus the heart will be at peace, protected as in a garrisoned tower, however the enemy may rage. See a lovely picture of this in the tower of Thebez (Judges 9:50, 51, 52, 53 54, 55, 56, 57)...Abiding under the shadow of the Almighty, all His people are protected from the power of the enemy.

The **Biblical Illustrator** adds the following thought on how we run into the Name of Jehovah - The righteous "runneth into the name" by the exercise of fervent prayer. Praying is the immediate and direct means of imploring the Divine assistance and protection. Faith is the habitual principle, and prayer is the actual application of it. Though God knows all our wants perfectly, He requires that we implore His assistance by prayer. And prayer is the natural remedy to which all are ready to fly in extremity.

In Paul's last known communication, he explained to Timothy that because he was a preacher, an apostle and a teacher of the gospel, he had experienced suffering. But he quickly added that he was not ashamed for (and I loosely paraphrase) he had "run" into the strong tower of the LORD, writing...

"for I know Whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day." (2Ti 1:12-note)

Paul expressed an unshaken confidence in the LORD's ability to do what he trusted Him to do. He not only **knew** the truth about the LORD (the Strong Tower) but he had become firmly **convinced** of this truth. There is practical difference between **knowing** truth of God's Names and being **convinced of** the truth.

### **The difference is that we hold the former While the latter holds us!**

Until the Word of Truth (the Name of God), becomes not just something we hold, but rather something which holds us, then we will likely not fully experience all that is available in the strong tower when the winds of adversity begin to blow.

### How can we be as "convinced" as Paul was?

We must first know the truth about God's Name and then we must obediently "traffic in that truth" by faith not by sight. Like Peter (at least momentarily), we need to look at Jesus rather than at the threatening waves in our life. God will give us ample practical exercises to work out this truth, so that we can one day say as Paul did...

"Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance **I have**

**learned the secret** of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:11, 12, 13-note)

Paul had learned the secret of the strong tower of Jehovah and we can do the same beloved.

## 6) What does it mean to be "safe" in the Name of the LORD?

**Safe** (07682) (**sagab**) is a Hebrew word that is associated with the notion of "height" and frequently has connotation of security. It can mean to be or make lofty. To make inaccessible. Thus by implication it conveys the sense of to make safe. Used both literally ("**high** wall" Isa 30:13) and figuratively (wealth = "like a high wall" Pr 18:11).

"May the Name of the God of Jacob set you *securely on high* (**sagab**)" ([See notes on Ps 20:1 below](#))

"City too high" (too strong) = Dt 2:36.

Another connotation is exaltation to a position of honor - LORD exalted = Isa2:11, 17, LORD's name exalted = Ps148:13, needy saints are "set on high" i.e. "exalted." = Ps107:41

**Sagab** - 20 times in the NAS - exalted, 7; high, 4; lifted, 1; raises, 1; safe, 1; securely on high, 1; set him securely on high, 1; set me securely on high, 2; set you securely on high, 1; sets the securely, 1; unassailable, 1."

Deut. 2:36; Job 5:11; 36:22; Ps. 20:1; 59:1; 69:29; 91:14; 107:41; 139:6; 148:13; Pr. 18:10, 11; 29:25; Isa. 2:11, 17; 9:11; 12:4; 26:5; 30:13; 33:5

### With this definition we can "amplify" the meaning of Proverbs 18:10 as follows

The Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower. The righteous runs into it and is **safe** or set securely on high above the difficult circumstances, afflictions, persecutions, etc. The circumstances may still be present (and in my experience often are) but one's perspective is altered as the one in the strong tower of Jehovah views those circumstances from "above the fray" even though still surrounded by it. Where do you run when trouble comes? Who do you go to seek respite and comfort? The righteous run to the Name of the LORD. God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble, to those who are willing to run to Him and to cry to Him. The safety and security of the righteous is dependent on the trustworthiness of God's Names, which are but a reflection of His righteous, unchangeable character. Ultimately only Jehovah (His Name) is the real source of safety and security.

One wonders if being set securely on high has any parallel with our position in Christ, a truth Paul explained to the saints at Ephesus stating that God has "and raised us up with Him, and **seated us with Him in the heavenly places**, in Christ Jesus" (Ep 2:6-note)

Another parallel thought is Paul's instruction to the saints at Colossae reminding them "you have been **raised up** with Christ, keep seeking **the things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind **on the things above**, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God." (Col 3:1, 2, 3-notes Col 3:1; 3:2; 3:3) These are profound truths worth taking time to ponder and meditate upon (or click here).

The **Preacher's Commentary** has the following comment on Proverbs 18:10...

Safety in danger is what He offers as well as deliverance in battle. His very "name," that is, His person revered for majesty, power, and truth, is like the "strong tower" of a fort. Those who are loyal to His will and ways ("the righteous") eagerly "run" to that name and find themselves as "safe" as though they were surrounded by high, insurmountable walls. This metaphor for dependence on God is colorful indeed in the context of a tiny land, always vulnerable not only to threat of major powers from the valleys of the Nile or the Tigris-Euphrates but also to opportunistic neighbors like Edomites and Philistines. A secure refuge in times of assault was indispensable. Whatever attack life hurled at them could not threaten the strong name of the everlasting Lord. Confidence in God was never misplaced." (Hubbard, D. A., & Ogilvie, L. J. The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 15 : Page 242. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson)

The **Pulpit Commentary** - The Name of the Lord signifies all that God is in Himself — His attributes, His love, mercy, power, knowledge; which allow man to regard Him as a sure Refuge. "Thou hast been a Shelter for me," says the psalmist (Psalm 61:3), "and a strong Tower from the enemy." The words bring before us a picture of a capitol, or central fortress, in which, at times of danger, the surrounding population could take refuge. Into this Name we Christians are baptized; and trusting in it, and doing the duties to which our profession calls, with faith and prayer, we are safe in the storms of life and the attacks of spiritual enemies.

**C H Spurgeon** - The believer in his high days (and they ought to be every day) is like an eagle perched aloft on a towering crag. Yonder is a hunter down below, who would fain strike the royal bird; he has his rifle with him, but his rifle would not reach one-third of the way. So the royal bird looks down upon him in quiet contempt, not intending even to take the trouble to stretch one of his wings, for he is quite safe, he is up aloft. Such is the faithful Christian's state before God.

**Matthew Henry** that Pr 18:10 speaks of "God's sufficiency for the saints"...

**His Name is a strong tower** for them, in which they may take rest when they are weary and take sanctuary when they are pursued, where they may be lifted up above their enemies and fortified against them. There is enough in God, and in the discoveries which He has made of Himself to us, to make us easy at all times.

The wealth laid up in this tower is enough to enrich them, to be a continual feast and a continuing treasure to them. The strength of this tower is enough to protect them; the name of the Lord is all that whereby He has made Himself known as God, and our God, not only His titles and attributes, but His covenant and all the promises of it; these make up a tower, a **strong tower**, impenetrable, impregnable, for all God's people.

**The saints' security in God.** It is a strong tower to those who know how to make use of it as such. The righteous, by faith and prayer, devotion towards God and dependence on Him, run into it, as their city of refuge. Having made sure their interest in God's Name, they take the comfort and benefit of it; they go out of themselves, retire from the world, live above, dwell in God and God in them, and so they are safe, they think themselves so, and they shall find themselves so. (Commentary on the Whole Bible)

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**Illustration of the Name of God as a Strong Tower.** A Still, Small Voice - Martin Neimoller was born on January 14, 1892, in Lippstadt, Westphalia. After serving as a German submarine commander during World War I, he studied theology in Münster and was ordained a minister of the church in Westphalia in 1924. He watched with growing concern the developing Nazi movement and the anti-Semitic rhetoric of Adolf Hitler.

In 1934, Hitler summoned Neimoller along with other German church leaders to his Berlin office to berate them for insufficiently supporting his programs. Neimoller explained that he was concerned only for the welfare of the church and of the German people. Hitler snapped, "You confine yourself to the church. I'll take care of the German people."

As the meeting was breaking up, Neimoller fired his final shot, "You said that 'I will take care of the German people.' But we too, as Christians and churchmen, have a responsibility toward the German people. That responsibility was entrusted to us by God, and neither you nor anyone in this world has the power to take it from us."

Hitler listened in stony silence, but that evening his Gestapo raided Neimoller's rectory, and a few days later a bomb exploded in his church. During the months and years following, he was closely watched by the secret police, and in June 1937, he preached these words to his church: "We have no more thought of using our own powers to escape the arm of the authorities than had the apostles of old. We must obey God rather than man." He was soon arrested and placed in solitary confinement.

Dr. Neimoller's trial began on February 7, 1938. That morning, a green-uniformed guard escorted the minister from his prison cell and through a series of underground passages toward the courtroom. Neimoller was overcome with terror and loneliness. What would become of him? Of his family? His church? What tortures awaited them all?

The guard's face was impassive, and he was as silent as stone. But as they exited a tunnel to ascend a final flight of stairs, Neimoller heard a slight whisper. At first he didn't know where it came from, for the voice was as soft as a sigh. Then he realized that the officer was breathing into his ear the words of Proverbs 18:10: **The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.**

Neimoller gave no sign of hearing the words, but from that moment his fear was gone, replaced by an indescribable peace and assurance that never left him, even during the next seven years of suffering, even through his darkest days at Dachau." ([Morgan, R. J. Real Stories for the Soul. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers](#))

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**Max Lucado's Devotional on God's Name in Your Heart** (Pr 18:10) - When you are confused about the future, go to your Jehovah-raah, your caring shepherd. When you are anxious about provision, talk to Jehovah-jireh, the Lord who provides. Are your challenges too great? Seek the help of Jehovah-shalom, the Lord is peace. Is your body sick? Are your emotions weak? Jehovah-rophe, the Lord who heals you, will see you now. Do you feel like a soldier stranded behind enemy lines? Take refuge in Jehovah-nissi, the Lord my banner. Meditating on the names of God reminds you of the character of God. Take these names and bury them in your heart. God is the shepherd who guides, the Lord who provides, the voice who brings peace in the storm, the physician who heals the sick, and the banner that guides the soldier. (Lucado, M., & Gibbs, T. A. Grace for the Moment : Inspirational thoughts for



### We can also glean some insights by reading Proverbs 18:10 incontext:

10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower. The righteous runs into it and is safe.

11 A rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his own imagination.

Solomon clearly meant these juxtaposed verses to bring out acontrast and he even used some of the same Hebrew words (strong = **oz** // safe = high = **sagab**) to highlight the contrast. The righteous man's strength is found in God. The ungodly man's strength in wealth. The righteous man is safe in God's strong tower. The ungodly man imagines he is safe enclosed by a high, secure wall of wealth.

**Lane** comments on the contrast writing that "The rich man feels he is more secure than 'the righteous'... 'The name of the Lord' is only words but he has tangible money and goods. 'The righteous' has 'a strong tower' but the rich has a whole fortified city. 'The righteous' is placed in a room at the top of the tower which will have steps up to it and which an enemy can climb, but the rich is behind an unscalable wall. True as all this is, the security of it is something they imagine. He might accuse 'the righteous' of living in an unreal world, trusting a God he can't see, hear or touch, while the rich has visible money and solid city walls. In fact, money, goods and fortifications are vulnerable commodities (Mt 6:19). Even if he retains them throughout his life they won't keep him from death and the judgment of God (Luke 12:19, 20, 21). On the other hand, God is eternal and faith which rests on him is for ever (Isaiah 26:4)." (Lane, E. Focus on the Bible: Proverbs)

If we are honest, each of us would admit that we have our "strong cities" that we tend to trust in rather than choosing to run first into the strong tower of God's Name. When we place our trust in anything other than God's Name (and all it entails), that which we trust becomes to us our "strong city" which may seem "real" but is in fact imaginary. Solomon is not saying we are to disregard the usual means of supply God has provided. It means we must not trust in them in place of trusting in God. A mark of Christian maturity is to continually trust the Lord in the minutiae of daily life. If we learn to trust God in the minor adversities, we will be better prepared to trust Him in the major ones. But whether the difficulty is major or minor, we must choose to trust God. God will not force us to run into His strong tower, but He will allow circumstances that encourage us to cease relying on our "strong cities" (whatever they might be) and choose to run into His strong tower! Beloved, the more you know God's Name, the more you will trust and believe Him.

### Related Resources Proverbs 18:10

- [Click](#) for more detailed discussion of the comparison of Proverbs 18:10,11.
- [Proverbs 18:10 Commentary](#)- Commentary on site
- [Proverbs 18:10 Commentary](#)- John Gill

### What is the contrast in these two verses?

A "strong tower" is a direct contrast with a "strong city", the former a metaphor for the name of the LORD, the latter a metaphor for personal wealth.

Below are some of the other uses of the Hebrew verb **sagab** to help understand the meaning of the Hebrew verb **sagab**.

**Moses** records that "From Aroer which is on the edge of the valley of Arnon and from the city which is in the valley, even to Gilead, there was no city that was too **high** (sagab) for us; the LORD our God delivered all over to us. (Deuteronomy 2:36)

In **Job** we read that God...

sets on high those who are lowly (humble), and those who mourn **are lifted** (sagab) to safety (Hebrew = yesha' = deliverance, protection that produces freedom from present danger) (Job 5:11)

## Insights into Meaning of "Sagab" From the Psalms

### Psalm 20:1

May the LORD answer you in the day of **trouble** (Hebrew = tsarah meaning anything narrow or confining = a situation or a time of extreme discomfort with focus on the emotional pain of the distress; Lxx = thlipsis = originally meant crushing beneath a weight)! May the **Name** of the God of Jacob **set you securely on high** (**sagab**)!

The "**Name**" speaks of both the authority and the presence of the person. "**The name of the God of Jacob**" refers to the God of the patriarch whose family was delivered from Egypt. The KJV translates "sagab" as "defend". The request that God "defend" literally means "to set on high" and so to place in a defensible position against enemies as the "God of Jacob" did for Israel in the Exodus. This is a great passage for we all at one time or another need the Lord's protection in the "**day of trouble.**"

**Spurgeon** commenting on this verse writes that "The Name of the God of Jacob **defend** thee; or, as some read it, "**set thee in a high place.**" By **the Name** is meant the revealed character and Word of God; we are not to worship "the unknown God," but we should seek to know the **covenant God** of Jacob, Who has been pleased to reveal His Name and attributes to His people. There may be much in a royal name, or a learned name, or a venerable name, but it will be a theme for heavenly scholarship to discover all that is contained in the Divine Name. The glorious power of God defended and preserved the Lord Jesus through the battle of His life and death, and exalted Him above all His enemies. His warfare is now accomplished in His own proper person, but in His mystical body, the church, He is still beset with dangers, and only the eternal arm of our God in covenant can defend the soldiers of the cross, and **set them on high** out of the reach of their foes. The day of trouble is not over, the pleading Saviour is not silent, and **the Name of the God of Israel is still the defence of the faithful** The Name, God of Jacob, is suggestive; Jacob had his day of trouble, he wrestled, was heard, was defended, and in due time was set on high, and his God is our God still, the same God to all his "**wrestling Jacobs**". The whole verse is a very fitting benediction to be pronounced by a gracious heart over a child, a friend, or a minister, in prospect of trial; **it includes both temporal and spiritual protection, and directs the mind to the great source of all good.** How delightful to believe that our heavenly Father has pronounced it upon our favoured heads! (Bolding added)

**Psalm 20 refers to God's Name two other times:**

**Psalm 20:5**

We will sing for joy over your victory, and in the **Name of our God** we will set up our banners. May the Lord fulfill all your petitions

**Psalm 20:7**

Some boast in chariots, and some in horses but we will **boast** (KJV translates it "remember". The Hebrew verb **zakar** conveys basic idea of mentioning or recalling something, in this case God's Name, either silently, out loud or by means of a memorial sign. It means to remember, to think about, to think on [sounds somewhat like meditating on His Name]. Do you from time to time, take a moment and recall His Name, taking a mental inventory of what that name signifies? It is a healthy practice to acquire.) in the **Name of the Lord, our God.** (**Comment:** Once again, as in Pr 18:10-11, we see a striking contrast between God's provision [His Name] and man's provision [chariots, horses] for victory.)

Williams has summarized the significance of the 3 references to God's Name in Psalm 20 as:

**The Defending Name**  
**The Displayed Name**  
**The Delivering Name**

**Warren Wiersbe** commenting on [Psalm 20](#) adds the following practical thought...

David wrote, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" (Psalm 20:7). The big question is, What are you trusting today? Everybody trusts in or believes in something. Some people trust in their money or credit cards. Some trust in their strength or expertise or experience. Psalm 20:1 and Psalm 20:2 say, "May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you; may He send you help from the sanctuary, and strengthen you out of Zion."

The Christian trusts in the Lord, and he exemplifies this trust by praying. When we are in trouble, what we do to solve our problems and turn our trouble into triumph is evidence of what or whom we're trusting. When the day of trouble arrives, some people reach for their checkbooks. They think money will solve their problems. Others reach for the telephone. They look to friends to solve their problems. While "some trust in chariots, and some in horses," Christians remember the name of the Lord (Psalm 20:7).

Our faith is in Jesus Christ, and we should not be afraid to let people know about it. "We will rejoice in your

salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners!" (Psalm 20:5). In other words, we do not hesitate to wave the banner of faith because He will not fail us. God's name is good. "The name of the God of Jacob defend you" (Psalm 20:1). Take time to trust the Lord. Roll your burden on Him. Get your strength from Him. Wave your banner in the name of the Lord, and He will turn your burden into a blessing. Where do you place your trust? Whereas wealth and others fail you, Jesus never fails. Take whatever burden you are carrying today and give it to the Lord. Trust Him, and He will work on your behalf. (in his devotional on the Psalms which I highly recommend entitled **Prayer, Praise and Promise**).

#### Psalm 59:1

Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; **Set me securely on high (sagab)** away from those who rise up against me.

**Spurgeon comments:** Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God. They were all round the house with the warrant of authority, and a force equal to the carrying of it out. He was to be taken dead or alive, well or ill, and carried to the slaughter. No prowess could avail him to break the cordon of armed men, neither could any eloquence stay the hand of his bloody persecutor. He was taken like a bird in a net, and no friend was near to set him free. Unlike the famous starling, he did not cry, "I cannot get out," but his faith uttered quite another note. Unbelief would have suggested that prayer was a waste of breath, but not so thought the good man, for he makes it his sole resort. He cries for deliverance and leaves ways and means with his God.

Defend me from them that rise up against me. Saul was a king, and therefore sat in high places, and used all his authority to crush David; the persecuted one therefore beseeches the Lord to set him on high also, only in another sense. He asks to be lifted up, as into a lofty tower, beyond the reach of his adversary. Note how he sets the title, My God, over against the word, mine enemies. This is the right method of effectually catching and quenching the fiery darts of the enemy upon the shield of faith. God is our God, and therefore deliverance and defence are ours.

In this use and the following psalm, the psalmist offers up a specific petition to be placed above the enemies, affliction and pain.

#### Psalm 69:29

I am afflicted and in pain. May Your salvation, O God, **set me securely on high (sagab)**.

**Spurgeon comments:** How fully has this been answered in our great Master's case, for he not only escaped his foes personally, but he had become the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him, and this continues to glorify him more and more. O poor and sorrowful ones, lift up your heads, for as with your Lord so will it be with you. You are trodden down today, but you will ride upon the high places of the earth ere long, and even now you are raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

#### Psalm 91:14

Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will **set him securely on high (sagab)**, because he has known My name.

**Spurgeon comments:** I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. The man has known the attributes of God so as to trust in him, and then by experience has arrived at a yet deeper knowledge, this shall be regarded by the Lord as a pledge of his grace, and he will set the owner of it above danger or fear, where he shall dwell in peace and joy. None abide in intimate fellowship with God unless they possess a warm affection towards God, and an intelligent trust in him; these gifts of grace are precious in Jehovah's eyes, and wherever he sees them he smiles upon them. How elevated is the standing which the Lord gives to the believer. We ought to covet it right earnestly. If we climb on high it may be dangerous, but if God sets us there it is glorious.

#### Psalm 107:41

But He sets the needy **securely on high (sagab)** away from affliction, And makes his families like a flock.

As you read these other uses of **sagab** you can begin to discern what it means to be **safe** in Proverbs 18:10.

As noted the definition of **Sagab** indicates this verb is often associated with the picture of "height" and in fact is sometimes even translated "exalted" (Ps 148:13).

The idea of **Sagab** is to be to make lofty and inaccessible and therefore by figurative extension it means to make safe, strong, secure -- the picture of one who is placed securely on high.

**Doesn't this simple Hebrew Word Study give added insights into how the Name of the LORD is our Strong Tower where we**

## can be SAFE?

As an aside, another rich resource is Torrey's Topic on "[Protection](#)" which has an entire page of encouraging Scriptures on the protecting hand of Jehovah.

If you are anxious or fearful, run to the truth in His Eternal Pure Tested Word and rest secure in His omnipotent hand of protection. (Click here for Biblical insights into [How to Handle Fear](#))

Remember that God Himself has given you His word in His **covenant** promise that

**I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU** (He 13:5-note - [Read Spurgeon's note](#) [Spurgeon's 2nd note](#))

One Scripture Torrey lists that is especially relevant to the study of the **Name of God** is is this wonderful prayer in Psalm 5:11-[note](#)):

### Psalm 5:11:

But let all who take refuge in Thee be glad (joyful). Let them ever sing for joy and may Thee shelter them, that **those who love Your NAME** may exult (Hebrew = jump for joy, rejoice) in You.

**Spurgeon** comments on Psalm 5:11 - Joy is the privilege of the believer. When sinners are destroyed our rejoicing shall be full. They laugh first and weep ever after; we weep now, but shall rejoice eternally. When they howl we shall shout, and as they must groan for ever, so shall we ever shout for joy. This holy bliss of ours has a firm foundation, for, O Lord, we are joyful in thee. The eternal God is the well spring of our bliss. We love God, and therefore we delight in him. Our heart is at ease in our God. We fare sumptuously every day because we feed on him. We have music in the house, music in the heart, and music in heaven, for the Lord Jehovah is our strength and our song; he also is become our salvation." ([Treasury of David](#)):

**Wiersbe** - Joy comes from trusting in and loving the Lord. This kind of joy comes from God's work on the inside, not from circumstances on the outside. (Prayer, Praise and Promises)

For some additional insight into the power of the LORD's Name when you are walking through the "dark night of the soul" carefully observe the truths (especially the verbs) in Isaiah 50:10+

### Isaiah 50:10+

Who is among you that fears the LORD (Jehovah), that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him **TRUST** in the **Name** of the **LORD** and **RELY** on his **God**. (Elohim)

**When one finds themselves in the darkness what are Isaiah's two exhortations?**

(1) First, trust in the Name Jehovah Who is the great I Am... the One to Whom we are bound by everlasting covenant and Who is "I Am... I Am anything and everything you will ever need, even in the darkness."

(2) Secondly, if we truly "trust" the Name Jehovah, we will manifest that trust by "relying" on Him.

### What does it mean to "RELY" on God?

**Rely** in Isaiah 50:10 is the Hebrew word **sha'an** What is the meaning this word conveys? One of the most profitable ways to gain insight into the meaning of a word in both the Old and New Testaments is to observe the other Scriptural occurrences of that same Greek or Hebrew word (in context). (Click here for discussion of how to do a Greek Word Study on the Web)

Let's do a simple study on [sha'an](#) to provide an example of a "technique" that you can easily apply to study any word in Scripture.

### Hebrew Word Sha'an

Gen. 18:4; Num. 21:15; Jdg. 16:26; 2 Sam. 1:6; 2 Ki. 5:18; 2 Ki. 7:2; 2 Ki. 7:17; 2 Chr. 13:18; 2 Chr. 14:11; 2 Chr. 16:7; 2 Chr. 16:8; Job 8:15; Job 24:23; Prov. 3:5; Isa. 10:20; Isa. 30:12; Isa. 31:1; Isa. 50:10; Ezek. 29:7; Mic. 3:11

Now let's work our way through the list -- can you glean any insight from the use of [sha'an](#) in Genesis 18:4 (translated "rest")?

What do you glean from the use in Proverbs 3:5 ("lean")?

Are there any additional insights from Isaiah 31:1 ("rely")?

Finally, observe Judges 16:26 for the literal meaning of [sha'an](#) (lean).

Judges 16:26 - Then Samson said to the boy who was holding his hand, "Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean [against](#) them."

**Comment:** Does this literal picture give you any added sense of what Isaiah is instructing us to do when we are walking in darkness (spiritually)?

What an incredible picture of placing one's weight and one's burden totally upon **God**, our Elohim, leaning on the Everlasting arms of the **Omnipotent** One. This truth can "enlighten" our minds spiritually, no matter how "dark" are our present circumstances! (see also Peace - Shalom)

What a perspective this great truth about "relying on God" gives to the hymn [Leaning on the Everlasting Arms](#) (see hymn below). Note especially the chorus "**safe and secure from all alarms**".

All of us are either in the midst of a fiery trial, just coming out of one or just about to go into one, so the question for application is...

#### "ON WHOM ARE YOU LEANING IN THE TRIAL?"

... His everlasting arms?

... your own understanding, etc?"

### SUMMARY OF RELY SHA'AN

**Rely** ([08172](#)) (**sha'an**) primarily means to lean on something (Saul on his sword = 2Sa 1:6) or someone (2Ki 5:16, 7:2, 17), to rest on, to support oneself (Jdg 16:26), figuratively to trust (2Chr 13:18NAS, Job 8:15NAS, other versions render with rely), to rest (Ge 18:4). Rely on (2Chr 16:7 - twice).

Micah 3:11NAS = "lean on the LORD" (NET = "claim to trust"). In Isa 30:12, Isa 31:1, Isa 50:10 we see "trust in" [batach](#) paralleled with "relied on" (sha'an)

**Sha'an** which is elsewhere translated as "**steadfast**" (see Isa 26:3).

**Gilbrant** - The meaning of the verb shā'an is "to lean on" something or someone. Saul leaned on his spear (2 Sam. 1:6). Samson leaned against the pillar (Judg. 16:26). This meaning led to the common usage of this verb as a figurative idea of "relying on" someone for help. Kings had a close aid or officer to "lean on" or accompany them and give advice, help and even protection (2 Ki. 5:18; 7:2, 17). The idea of having a sense of security and support is found in Job 24:23. A person can trust in his house (8:15). Abraham told the three angels to rest or recline under the tree, using this verb (Gen. 18:4). A graphic picture of leaning on someone for help who is the wrong source is Judah trusting in and leaning on Egypt like a staff and having it break like a reed and hurt them (Ezek. 29:7). Asa quit looking to or "leaning on" the Lord for help against enemies as he used to do and so was rebuked and punished (2 Chr. 14:11; 16:7f). Isaiah rebuked the people for rejecting God's Word and depending on oppression and deceit (Isa. 30:12), and for depending on horses and chariots instead of seeking the Lord (31:1). Micah 3:11 says the leaders were falsely ministering out of greed. They claimed that they leaned on the Lord and assumed that they were secure from enemy attack because God was in Judah. Often, this verb is used in parallel with the more common verb for "trusting," [batach](#). The most well-known verse which uses both verbs is Prov. 3:5: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding." ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

**Sha'an** - 20 verses in **NAS** lean(3), leaned(2), leaning(2), leans(2), relied(4), rely(4), rest yourselves(1), supported(1), trust(1), trusted(1), trusts(1).

Gen 18:4; Num 21:15; Jdg 16:26; 2 Sa 1:6; 2 Kgs 5:18; 7:2, 17; 2Chr 13:18; 14:11; 16:7, 8; Job 8:15; 24:23; Pr 3:5; Isa 10:20; 30:12; 31:1; 50:10; Ezek 29:7; Mic 3:11.

**Job 24:23** "He provides them with security, and they are **supported** (KJV = resteth; NIV, NET = "feeling of security"); And His eyes are on their ways.

**Proverbs 3:5 Trust** ([batach](#) = command to put your confidence in; Lxx = **peitho** = speaks of confidence, reliance, persuasion) in the LORD with all your heart and do not **lean** (sha'an - NET = "do not rely") on your own understanding.

**Isaiah 10:20** Now **in that day** (Always query **time phrases** with **5W/H'S** like "What day?", = Messiah's Second Coming marking the beginning of the Millennium) the **remnant** of Israel, and those of the house of

Jacob who have escaped, will never again **rely** (sha'an) on the one who struck them, but will truly **rely** (sha'an) on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.

### [Leaning On — the Everlasting Arms](#)

(Click title to play tune sung in movie "True Grit")

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

#### **CHORUS**

Leaning, leaning,  
**Safe & secure** from all alarms;  
Leaning, leaning,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,

Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Text: Elisha A. Hoffman

Music: Anthony J. Showalter

## **TWO DEFENSES: REAL AND IMAGINARY Comparison of Proverbs 18:10,11 Author Unknown**

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Proverbs 18-10 Commentary](#)
- [Proverbs 18-11 Commentary](#)

The two verses put side by side two pictures, two fortifications: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower"; that is so, whether a man thinks it or not; that is an objective truth and always true. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city," because "in his own conceit" he has made it so. So we have on the one side fact and on the other side fancy. The two pictures are worth looking at. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower."

Now, of course, I need not remind you that **"the name of the Lord"** or "the name of Jesus Christ," means a great deal more than the syllables by which He is designated, which is all that we understand generally by a name. It means, to put it into far less striking words, the whole character of God, in so far as it is revealed to men. So we have to recognise in that great expression the clearest utterance of the two thoughts which have often been regarded as antagonistic, viz., the imperfection, and yet the reality, of our knowledge of God. His name is not the same as Himself, but it is that by which He is known. Our knowledge of Him, after all revelation, is incomplete, but it is His name — that is to say, it corresponds to the realities of His nature, and may be absolutely and for ever trusted.

**The name of the Lord is a strong tower**, which, translated into plain prose, is just this — in that revealed character there is all that shelterless, defenceless men can need for absolute security and perfect peace. We may illustrate that by considering either Him who defends or him that is defended. On the one hand, perfect wisdom, perfect love, perfect power, that endure for ever; and on the

other hand, men weighed upon by sore distresses, crippled and wounded by many transgressions. These two, the defence and the defenceless, fit into each other like the seal to its impress, the convexity to the cavity. Whatever man needs, God is, and whatever dangers, dreads, pains, losses, sorrows, sins, attack humanity, in Him is the refuge for them all.

**“The name of the Lord is a strong tower.”** Do you believe that; and is it an operative belief in your lives?

**“The righteous runneth into it”**; and what is that running into it? Neither more nor less than the act of faith. One of the words of the Old Testament which is frequently translated — and rightly so — “trust,” has for its literal meaning to flee to a refuge. So, says our teacher, the way to get into the fortress, and to have the solemn battlements of that Divine name round our unarmed and else shelterless weakness, is simply to trust in Him.

But the word suggests the urgency and the effort that will always go with faith. **“The righteous runneth into it”** — not dawdles in it — **“and is safe.”** And that takes effort and means haste. Do not put off your flight. And stop in it when you are there, by that constant communion with the name of the Lord, which will bring you tranquillity. “In Me ye shall have peace.” Stay behind the strong bulwarks.

But there is a formidable word in this old proverb. **“The righteous runneth into it.”** Does not that upset all our hopes? I need not say anything about the safety, except to make one remark. The word rendered **“is safe”** “literally means “is high.” The intention, of course, is to express safety, but it expresses it in a picturesque fashion which has its bearing upon the word in the next verse, viz., it sets before us the thought that the man who has taken refuge in the strong tower goes up to the top of it by the winding staircase, and high up there the puny bows of the foe below cannot shoot an arrow that will reach him. That is a truth for faith. We have to bear the common lot of humanity, but the evil that is in the evil, the bitterness that is in the sorrow, the poison that is in the sting, all these may be taken away for us.

And now I need only say a word or two about the companion picture, the illusory imagination. **“The rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and a high wall in his own conceit.”** It is very hard to have, and to be concerned about, and to use, the external good without putting our trust in it. The Bible has no foolish condemnation of wealth. And we all know, whether in regard to money, or to earthly loves, or to outward possessions and blessings of all sorts, how difficult it is to keep within the limit, not to rely upon these, and to think that if we have them we are blessed.

What can we do, any of us, when real calamities come? Will wealth or anything else keep away the tears? What will prevent the sorrows, deal with the sins, or enable us to be of good cheer in the face of death and disease, and to say, “You cannot touch me”? Ah! there is but one thing that will do that for us. **“The name of the Lord is a strong tower.”** The other man has **“a high wall in his own conceit.”** Did you ever see the canvas fortifications at some entertainments that they put up to imitate strong castles? — canvas stretched upon bits of stick. That is the kind of strong wall that the man puts up who trusts in the uncertainty of any earthly thing, or in anything but the living God.

Let us keep ourselves within the Divine limits in regard to all external things. It is hard to do it, but it can be done. And there is only one way to do it, and that is by the same act by which we take refuge in the true fortress — viz., by faith and communion.

When we realize that God is our defence, then we can see through the insufficiency of the others