The Name of Yahweh is a Strong Tower
by Rev. John Cortright

The book of Proverbs offers a tremendous metaphor describing the strength and safety in the name of Yahweh.

Proverbs 18:10
The name of the LORD [Yahweh] is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe.

Here, the name of Yahweh is called a “strong tower.” In his book, *Shattering the Conspiracy of Silence*, author, Nehemia Gordon, provides a beautiful Hebraic understanding of this metaphor. He was giving an American family a tour of a place in northern Israel called *Nimrod’s Castle*. While taking the family up the mountain to the top of the castle’s tower, Gordon explained this phrase.

*Today we live in un-walled cities, I explained, leaving the image of a “strong tower” sounding like a bunch of meaningless words. The purpose of our hike was to experience the power and magnitude of a “strong tower.” I told them how every ancient castle had a central fortification, which served as a last refuge when the outer walls were breached. In ancient Hebrew this was called “migdal oz”, literally, a “strong tower.” In European castles, this central fortification was called a “keep.”... When we reached the top of the keep about fifteen*
minutes later, the proverb really came to life. From up there we could see the thick walls of the keep, the outer walls of the castle, the dry moat, the trail up from the base of the mountain, and the Hula valley at the foot of the mountain, where we started our hike. The view said it all. It took us two grueling hours to reach this point, and this was without any resistance. An ancient army trying to capture this position would have to fight every inch of the way up the mountain, cross the moat, breach the outer walls, and only then lay siege to the strong tower. This is what the proverb meant when it said the name of Yehovah is a “strong tower.” His name is not just a mountain top fort. And it’s not just a castle. It’s a “migdal oz”, a strong tower, a keep – the last refuge when everything else fails. “The righteous run into it and are safe.”

This Hebrew phrase, strong tower (Hebrew: migdal oz), is used at two other places in Scripture. One use is in the book of Psalms.

Psalm 61:3-4
For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower [migdal oz] from the enemy.
I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

Here, as in Proverbs, the strong tower is a metaphor emphasizing the protection of Yahweh. He is a shelter, a strong tower from the enemy. When we have no strength on our own; when we need a hiding place – a place of protection and security; when we need a
refuge from the storms around us, we can run into our strong tower – the name of Yahweh.

There is one more use of a *migdal oz* in the Bible. This use is not a metaphoric use, but it is a literal use of a strong tower. It is a very interesting account from the book of Judges, where the people literally ran into a strong tower for safety. After the death of Gideon (Jerubbaal), one of his sons, Abimelech, was appointed king by the people of Shechem. Abimelech then killed seventy of his brothers, all sons of all Jerubbaal. After three years of reigning over Israel, a revolt was sparked in the land. Abimelech took his forces and began quenching the rebellion, killing men and women along the way. This finally ended in the city of Thebez. The city had a *migdal oz*, a strong tower. The people ran into the tower, and were delivered through a remarkable circumstance.

Judges 9:51-56
But there was a strong tower [*migdal oz*] in the center of the city, and all the men and women with all the leaders of the city fled there and shut themselves in; and they went up on the roof of the tower.
So Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it, and approached the entrance of the tower to burn it with fire.
But a certain woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelech's head, crushing his skull.
Then he called quickly to the young man, his armor bearer, and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, so that it will not be said of me, 'A woman slew him.'" So the young man pierced him through, and he died.
When the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, each departed to his home. Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father in killing his seventy brothers.

This record in Judges provides an understanding of what it means to run into a strong tower. It was their final refuge from certain destruction. The city walls had been breached. Their only hope for deliverance was in the keep. In the migdal oz, they received their deliverance.

A similar word in Hebrew is misgab which means high place, refuge, secure height, a high tower, a stronghold, a refuge. King David, being a man of war, understood the security, the safety, from having a strong, high place of defense. Yet for David, his true place of refuge was not in a physical structure, but his stronghold was in Yahweh his God.

2 Samuel 22:2-3
He said, "The LORD [Yahweh] is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold [misgab] and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence.

Psalm 18:1-2
"I love You, O LORD [Yahweh], my strength." The LORD [Yahweh] is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold [misgab].
Psalm 9:9-10
The LORD [Yahweh] also will be a stronghold [misgab] for the oppressed, A stronghold [misgab] in times of trouble; And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O LORD [Yahweh], have not forsaken those who seek You.

Psalm 62:5-8
My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold [misgab]; I shall not be shaken. On God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Psalm 144:2 My lovingkindness and my fortress, My stronghold [misgab] and my deliverer, My shield and He in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me.

God is a refuge for all those that are willing to put their trust in him. The name of Yahweh is a strong Tower for those who are willing to run to Him for protection and safety. The righteous run to Him and are saved. Praise Yahweh!

---