

God Is My Source Pt1

Titles that refer to God as our source

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Introduction:

God in simile and metaphor: (from ENGB; Every Name of God in the Bible)

One of the most delightful things about the Hebrew language is its use of vivid images. Instead of saying "I feel depressed" or "I'm really down," an ancient Hebrew was likely to say the following: My eye wastes away with grief, Yes, my soul and my body! For my life is spent with grief, And my years with sighing;... And my bones waste away (Ps 31:9-10).

While someone might argue that this is poetry, the fact remains that the ancient Hebrews tended to think in images rather than abstract concepts. For instance, Amos calls wealthy women who lived in luxury at the expense of the poor "cows of Bashan" (4:1), vividly bringing to mind fattened cattle. Furthermore, Amos describes the coming "day of the Lord" as "darkness, and not light," and he says, "It will be as though a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him!" (5:18, 19). The use of vivid images, of simile and metaphor, not only enrich the Scriptures, but also make translation of the Old Testament into other languages both a challenge and a joy. How it enriches our sense of who God is when He is called a rock or a fortress. What warmth is communicated when God presents Himself as our shepherd.

As the names and titles of God found in Scripture help us see Him more clearly, so do images of God provided in simile and metaphor.

Three Kinds of metaphors:

Exalted images of God:

Just as there are names and titles of God that exalt Him by emphasizing His majesty and power, so there are exalted images of God.

(There are 8 exalted images of God; Consuming Fire, Wall of Fire, Fortress, Strong Tower, Horn of My Salvation, Rock, Shield, Sun)

Relational images of God:

The most powerful metaphors for God in the Old Testament are relational. While we appreciate those passages in which God is seen as a rock or a shield, we rightly are struck with wonder when God presents Himself in human guise.

(There are 4 relational images of God; Father, Husband, Shepherd, Helper)

Descriptive images of God

Metaphors and similes are used to help us better understand God and what He intends to be for us. To accomplish this purpose, God is often spoken of in unlikely ways. Each of these images convey fresh insights into who the Lord intends to be for us.

(There are 8 descriptive images of God; Hiding Place, Keeper, Lamp, Light, Light to the Gentiles, Potter, Refiner, Refuge)

Note: In our study we will not try to separate these metaphors into the above categories. We will look at them from the view that they communicate to us that God wants to be our source for...

The source of light:

1. The Lord is my lamp -

He gives light (illuminates) to my darkness

2Sa 22:29 "For You are my lamp, O LORD; And the LORD illuminates my darkness.

2. The Lord is my light -

He gives salvation - protection

Ps 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?

As a light He illumines my darkness

Mic 7:8 Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise; Though I dwell in darkness, the LORD is a light for me.

The light of Israel - protection, (He only destroys thorns and briars)

Isa 10:17 And the light of Israel will become a fire and his Holy One a flame, And it will burn and devour his thorns and his briars in a single day.

The light to the Nations - appointed as a covenant to the people

Isa 42:6 "I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,

3. God is the Father of the heavenly lights

Jas 1:17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

4. The Lord is a sun - shield - protection, gives great blessings

Ps 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

The metaphor of God as a sun is found only in Ps 84:11. It occurs near the end of the psalm, as the sons of Korah express their wonder at God's graciousness toward people and their delight at being in His presence.

The meaning of the metaphor seems uncertain, simply because it can be interpreted in so many ways. The sun is the source of light. (from ENGB)

The sun gives vision to see; guidance.

The sun is also the source of warmth. God comforts us and pours out His love on us.

The sun is a source of life. God enables us to grow.

The source of strength

1. LORD is my strength

Ex 15:2 "The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol Him.

Ps 18:1 "I love You, O LORD, my strength."

Ps 28:7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart exults, And with my song I shall thank Him.

Ps 37:39 But the salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their strength in time of trouble.

Ps 81:1 Sing for joy to God our strength; Shout joyfully to the God of Jacob.

Isa 12:2 "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the LORD GOD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation."

2. Tower of strength

Ps 61:3 For You have been a refuge for me, a tower of strength against the enemy.
(Prov 18:10)

In Old Testament times even smaller cities were often walled. Fields around the city were cultivated during the day, and the farmers came inside the walls when night fell. Cities also had “daughters,” a name given to clusters of four or five outlying homes near the city. In times of danger the people who lived in these tiny settlements also hurried to the walled city for protection. The walled city was the fortress of ancient times (2 Sam 5:7), within which a person felt secure.

Larger cities not only were protected by walls but also contained one or more “strong towers.” These towers were strongholds within the fortress cities, where resistance could continue even if the outer defenses fell.

While the fortress cities of the ancient world provided security against raiding enemies, a determined and powerful foe could take the strongest fortress. Siege engines battered the walls. Fires were set to weaken the limestone out of which the walls were built. Often ramps of dirt and stone were constructed that reached the top of a city’s walls and over which an invading army might advance. While earthly fortresses offered some security, however great a city’s walls might be, the only true security a believer could find was in God.

And so David, looking beyond earthly walls made of stone, celebrates the Lord as the fortress in whom he places ultimate trust. “You, O God, are my fortress” (NIV), David cries out in Ps 59:9. He wrote this psalm as he lay huddled in his home and while Saul’s troops watched his house, waiting to kill him (1 Sam 19:11). In the midst of this turmoil, David imagined God as being a fortress. David confidently affirmed, “My God of mercy shall come to meet me” (Ps 59:10).

The metaphor of God as a fortress, stronghold, or place of refuge is found many times in the Old Testament, primarily in the Psalms, but also in Isaiah 17:10 and Jeremiah 16:19. Yet perhaps the clearest expression of what it means to know the Lord as a fortress is seen in Psalm 61:3-4, where God is portrayed as a strong tower. (from ENGB)

3. God is my stronghold - gives strength

Ps 59:9 Because of his strength I will watch for You, For God is my stronghold.

Ps 59:17 O my strength, I will sing praises to You; For God is my stronghold, the God who shows me lovingkindness.

4. God is our refuge & strength

Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.

5. He is not far off, is ready to help me

Ps 22:19 But You, O LORD, be not far off; O You my help, hasten to my assistance.

The source of security & protection

1. Shield - of help

Gen 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.”

Dt 33:29 “Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, Who is the shield of your help And the sword of your majesty! So your enemies will cringe before you, And you will tread upon their high places.”

(Ps 5:12; 28:7; 84:11; 115:9; Pr 2:7; 30:5)

The shield in ancient warfare was used for defense. Most shields were made of layers of hardened cowhide, and some were strengthened with metal studs. Shields were used in close combat to turn the thrusts of enemy swords and to deflect rocks thrown from city walls. While shields were not offensive weapons, they were essential in battle.

It is striking that the sword is never used as a metaphor for God. How fascinating then that God is depicted as a shield some twelve times in the Psalms and twice in Proverbs. Perhaps the people of Israel, surrounded by hostile nations, were more concerned with defense than with conquest. What was important to Israel was preservation in the land God had given them so that they might wait for the promised Messiah to appear and bring in the golden age. With no driving urge to conquer foreign lands or to build a great empire, what was important to the men and women of the Holy Land was that they could count on the Lord to shield them. (from ENGB)

2. Rock - for protection;

2 Sa 22:3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,

Dt 32:4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.

(Ps 19:14; Is 26:4; Hab 1:12)

As the Rock, God is faithful (Dt 32:15), holy (1 Sam 6:14), a stronghold, and a refuge (2 Sam 22:3).

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament suggests that the underlying impression is one of total reliability. "He is a sure source of strength, and he endures throughout every generation" (2:762).

Anyone who has driven through the mighty Rockies or stood below the peaks of the Tetons will understand the awe and the comfort that the image of God as a Rock provides. Surely the mountains can never be moved, and the same is true of those who take their stand in God. As David wrote in Psalm 62:1-2 (from ENGB)

A) Rock Of My Strength

Ps 62:7

B) Rock Of Israel

2 Sam 23:3

C) Stone:

Ps 118:22

D) Cornerstone

Ps 118:22

E) Stone of Israel

Gen 49:24

3. Horn of salvation - strength, power

2 Sa 22:3 My God, ...and the horn of my salvation,

This image occurs only in 2 Sam 22:3 and Ps 18:2.

Horn is used literally of the horns of various animals;

Symbolically the horn stands for the animal's strength or power.

For instance, in Daniel 8:5, 8, 9, 21, the "horn" is used to indicate powerful rulers or nations.

However, no human power can stand against the Lord, (Ps 75:10).

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament explains the reference to God as "horn of salvation" by saying that since "God is the source of all true salvation, he is termed the horn of salvation". The fact that God is greater than any worldly power guarantees the salvation He provides for His own. (from ENGB)

4. Savior

2 Sa 22:3 My God, ... My savior, You save me from violence.

5. Strength

Ps 28:7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart exults, And with my song I shall thank Him.

Ps 43:2 For You are the God of my strength; why have You rejected me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

6. Refuge

Ps 46:1 ... A very present help in trouble.-

Ps 61:3 ...A tower of strength against the enemy.

Ps 91:2 I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!"

Ps 91:9 For you have made the LORD, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place.

Ps 119:114 You are my hiding place and my shield; I wait for Your word.

Ps 142:5 I cried out to You, O LORD; I said, "You are my refuge, My portion in the land of the living.

Rock of refuge

Is 17:10 For you have forgotten the God of your salvation And have not remembered the rock of your refuge. Therefore you plant delightful plants And set them with vine slips of a strange god.

7. Stronghold

Ps 9:9 - for the oppressed, ... in times of trouble;

Jer 16:19 O LORD, my strength and my stronghold, And my refuge in the day of distress, To You the nations will come From the ends of the earth and say, "Our fathers have inherited nothing but falsehood, Futility and things of no profit."

(2Sa 22:3; Ps 18:2; 144:2)

Joel 3:16 The LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth tremble. But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel.

Na 1:7 The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him.

A) Stronghold - for protection

Ps 18:2 The LORD 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.

(Ps 18:30; 2 Sa 22:3, 31)

B) A hiding-place

Ps 32:7 You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance.

C) A fortress

Ps 62:2 He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.

(Ps 62:6 I shall not be shaken)

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

Jer 16:19 O LORD, my strength and my stronghold, And my refuge in the day of distress, To You the nations will come From the ends of the earth and say, "Our fathers have inherited nothing but falsehood, Futility and things of no profit."

8. A defender of the helpless (the orphan, widow, and alien)

Dt 10:18 "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.

Ps 68:5 A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows, Is God in His holy habitation.

Pr 23:11 For their Redeemer is strong; He will plead their case against you.

Ps 140:12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted And justice for the poor.

1 Sam 2:8 "He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them

Ps 35:10 All my bones will say, "LORD, who is like You, Who delivers the afflicted from him who is too strong for him, And the afflicted and the needy from him who robs him?"

Ps 145:13-14 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations. 14 The LORD sustains all who fall And raises up all who are bowed down.

Ps 146:7-9 Who executes justice for the oppressed; Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free. 8 The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; The LORD raises up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous; 9 The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow, But He thwarts the way of the wicked.

Isa 25:4 For You have been a defense for the helpless, A defense for the needy in his distress, A refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; For the breath of the ruthless Is like a rain storm against a wall.

The following References were used in this study:

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