

Yahweh Mauzzi: The Lord Fortress

Jeremiah 16:19

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Let's start with a Biblical Hebrew. Elohim Strong Creator God, Yahweh The Relational God, Yahweh Elohim Yeshua Lord God of My Salvation, Adonai Master of All, Ruach Hakkodesh Holy Spirit, Yahweh Shalom the Lord our Peace, Yahweh Jireh Provider.

When Lonie and I arrived in Coshocton we bought our big house. We were planning on two things with the house, making it an antique shop and a bed and breakfast. Both ideas came to an end due to the amount of work the house needed and the number of hoops required to bring those two things to reality. There was another reason for buying the house. I had imagined for years buying an old house and fixing it up.

I like to demonstrate my power. I like to prove that I can do things. I can take a late 19th Century Queen Victorian house and remodel it. It was about me.

I am at times my own worst enemy? Can you identify with that? We have enemies, people and things that come against us. We try to fight our enemies with our own power, protecting ourselves and looking for a safe place.

I find myself crying out more often Lord, give me strength. Do you call out to the Lord for strength? Not just calling to be strong physically, but emotionally, and spiritually. Do you call out to the Lord for protection to win the battle? Not just calling out for protection physically, but emotionally, and spiritually. Do you seek out the Lord as your refuge? Not just seeking refuge physically, but emotionally, and spiritually.

Today we are going to explore Jesus, our Lord, as our strength, our fortress, and our refuge. Jeremiah, the Lord's prophet, called out to Yahweh as the Lord of strength, the fortress Lord, and the Lord the refuge. By calling out to Yahweh Jeremiah was seeking the very heart of God, naming the God he needed.

O Lord, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in time of distress, to you the nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, "Our fathers possessed nothing but false gods, worthless idols that did them no good. Do men make their own gods? Yes, but they are not gods!" Jeremiah 16:19–20 (NIV)

The Lord is the power, the protection, and the safety we need. We are never without His power, His protection, and His safety. Today we are exploring three of the names that describe God. The three names are ***STRENGTH Uzzi, FORTRESS Mauzzi, REFUGE machsi.***

Jeremiah uses three words to describe God: strength, fortress, refuge. They appear together at other occasions. They appear alone. They have similar and unique meanings. His choice of all three reveals his relationship with Yahweh, the God who created us to be in a relationship with Him. Their similarity could point to the God who is always available to protect. We need protection against our enemies. God is powerful and a protector and a place of safety. The three characteristics are true even if they are never exercised. These characteristics of God help people when they are weak,

when they have no protection, when they need to be rescued. This is Yahweh the God who created us for a relationship.

Jeremiah shares one prophecy after another of judgment and destruction for the nation of Judah or the Southern Kingdom. This kingdom includes the city of Jerusalem. The destruction of the city results in seventy years of exile for God's people. The people and their kings have worshipped Idols, chased their own desires, and rejected the Lord. They became their own worst enemy. Now the nation faced an enemy army they could not defeat.

Jeremiah offers this prayer of acknowledgement and confession. The people worship idols, but the Lord is still his fortress. Nothing compares to Yahweh: strong, protector, and a safe place.

Let's take a look at each one in order. ***STRENGTH Uzzi. Psalm 28:7 (NIV) The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.***

FORTRESS Mauzzi. Psalm 46:7 (NIV) The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

REFUGE machsi. Psalm 91:2 (NIV) I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

There are no secrets in these words. They are straightforward. Individually each one contributes significantly to our awareness of our Lord and Savior. They are more than words or characteristics. This is the Living God, Yahweh Uzzi, Yahweh Mauzzi, Yahweh Machsi. This is the Lord of life that personally provides strength, who forms a walls of protection around me, and who is always a refuge. As we trust the Lord wherever we go or whatever the circumstances we are made strong, we are protected in the battle, and we have refuge to be renewed.

This is not strength in an army, or protection in a building, or refuge in a hidden place. This is the Yahweh the God whose relationship with is strength, a fortress, and a refuge. Think like this: you have Yahweh's strength. There is a fortress surrounding you, His name is Yahweh. Yahweh is restoring and renewing you.

Jeremiah 16:19 (NIV) O Lord, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in time of distress.

Our time of distress is not the only time to call upon the Lord. We try to be strong, self-sufficient, and self-reliant. Maybe you don't but I know that I do. If there is an unspoken theme of my life, that represents my human nature, it is I try to be self-reliant.

Can I help you carry that refrigerator into the house? No thank you, I've got it. Do you need help setting up your new phone? No thank you, I've got it. What can I help you find? No thank you, I've got it. Every time, an hour later, I want some help.

I've heard you say, I don't want to be a bother. Or, I don't want anyone to go out of their way. Then there's I just can't do what I used to do. I've watched you work morning, afternoon, and evening for weeks on end and never stop until you finished the project. I've watched as you committed yourself to more work than can be done in day. I've paid attention when you rode off in the sunset tired and weary. Then we pray for power, protection, and a safe place.

We're taught to be responsible for our actions and our thoughts. We interpret that as independence and a solo warrior. Responsibility is different than self-sufficient, and self-reliance. To be responsible means we admit our mistakes and short-comings, ask for help, and recognize our need for other people. It is not a weakness to live in His Fortress, His Strength, and His refuge.

Let me share about God being our fortress, our Yahweh Mauzzi. He is not merely protection, thick walls, a mote around the castle. The Lord is not simply a place to hide. The Lord our Fortress goes with us wherever we go. The Fortress God has every possible provision we could ever need. Not just what is needed to survive, but also what is needed to defeat our enemies.

Inside the fortress of our God is the truth that the Lord is God. The Lord is not made of wood, or stone, or metal, He is God. There is no falsehood or deception. This the Lord who made us to be in a relationship with Him. He is alive, He is speaking to us, He is providing us with all the resources of heaven. He gives us wisdom for the battle. He provides protection. He gives us a sword, and a spear, and a bow. He is a shield, a high and mighty wall of protection. The Lord is victorious over all of His enemies.

Those who are self-reliant, self-sufficient, and strong can't handle the enemy solo. But as for those who trust the Lord, every moment is an opportunity to walk in His fortress, be renewed in His refuge, and receive the power of His strength. They are ready to fight the battle and be victorious.

Jeremiah 16:19–20 (NIV) O Lord, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in time of distress, to you the nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, "Our fathers possessed nothing but false gods, worthless idols that did them no good."

Living with the Lord as our strength, fortress, and refuge makes us people after His heart.

There is no better place to be than seeking Jesus. Since Jesus is strength, Yahweh Uzzi, we need to seek Him and not our own strength. Since Jesus is the fortress, Yahweh Mauzzi, we need to seek Him as our protection. Since Jesus is the refuge, Yahweh Machsi, we need to seek Him as our place of safety.

From the beginning the Lord created us to be in a relationship with Him. In that relationship He would be our strength, our fortress, and our refuge because we loved Him. This is not a relationship of power over us, but power within us. Our relationship with Jesus is based on our love for Him. In our relationship we reject all other power, protection, and safety. That means we reject our own strength, self-sufficient, and self-reliance. This is when we discover true power, a victorious fortress, and a restorative refuge.

When we reject the power of our own knowledge and choose Jesus, we are strong. When we cast off our own defenses and choose Jesus, we are living in His fortress. When we stop looking for empty promises and choose Jesus, we find a true refuge. This is what it means to love Yahweh Uzzi, Yahweh Mauzzi, Yahweh Machsi. We are living as Jesus intended us to live when He created you. This is righteousness, this is holiness. This is being in a right relationship with God. This is being set apart from the sin that has overtaken the world.

The ancient Hebrew people, the people of Jeremiah's time, trusted in false god, idols. They believed in the walls of the city. They trusted in their traditions. They were convinced their armies and their allies could save them from the dangers and the distress of the world.

Jeremiah was right to call upon the Lord of all power, the Lord who protects, and the Lord who provides a safe place. The fortress of the Lord isn't merely stones and bricks, but Jesus and His Holy Spirit. When we call upon Jesus we are seeking living power, protection, safety.

How do I make this clear? Picture yourself with a wall of protection in front and behind you, and on each side of you. Picture a floor and a ceiling of protection below and above you. This shield around you is always present. These walls go with you wherever you go. You are continually in a safe place. You are constantly protected. You are forever strong. The enemy may attack. The enemy may appear overwhelming. The enemy may make threats. You have Yahweh Uzzi, Yahweh Mauzzi, Yahweh Machsi with you. You are in the fortress of Jesus and His Holy Spirit. There is no safer place. There is no greater power.

Jeremiah 16:20 Do men make their own gods? Yes, but they are not gods!"

Reject every idol and live in the fortress of the Lord. Nothing is impossible for our Lord and Savior. Jesus, Yahweh, Elohim are all one. There is no other God. These are the names we call Him. He is the Strong Creator, the Lord of relationships, the Master of All, the all powerful Spirit. He is Peace. He is the Provider. He is Salvation.

So when we call upon Jesus we receive everything He has to offer. What Jesus offers is more than we need. No enemy can stand against Him. There is no power greater than His power. There is no fortress that can stand against Him. There is no place that is more safe than Him.

Everything, including my own might and my own thoughts, is a false god, and idol compared to Him. My only hope is Jesus my Uzzi, Mauzzi, Machsi. He is your only hope. Without Jesus we are at peril. The enemy will attack and we won't have the strength to overcome. The enemy will throw everything at us and our protection will fall. The enemy will pursue us and there will be no place to hide.

Jesus is the only God we need. He is our salvation. We have the opportunity to choose Him. We face the moment each day to make Jesus our Strength, our Fortress, our Refuge, our Savior. As the enemy comes against you call upon Jesus' power, live under His protection, and take refuge in Him.

Say to Jesus, You are my Strength, be my power. Say to Jesus, You are my Fortress, be my protection. Say to Jesus, You are my refuge, be my safe place. Stand firmly upon each promise. Claim each promise over and over and over again.

We have all failed. We have all made idols and have false gods. There are two choices: either keep living with your idols or reject them. There are two choices: either choose Jesus or choose your idols.

Your idols have been shallow, empty, and worthless. Your idols have been your power, your self-sufficiency, and your self-reliance. This idol worship has brought more trouble and less power, less control, less safety.

You need Jesus to be with you. You need Jesus to save you. You need Jesus. Call out to Jesus.