

ARE YOU REALLY MAKING JEHOVAH YOUR STRONGHOLD?

Note to the speaker:

Jehovah will be our stronghold if we make him such now. This means obeying his laws, putting him first in all areas of life, and relying on him when faced with problems. Prepare now in this way to endure the great tribulation

WILL JEHOVAH BE YOUR STRONGHOLD DURING THE APPROACHING TROUBLE? (10 min.)

Jehovah's people have long agreed with the sentiments of 2 Samuel 22:2, 3 (Read)

God's people collectively view him as their stronghold, but do we as individuals?

The Bible enables us to foresee a time of great trouble

Before that destruction comes, we expect a cry of peace and security (1Th 5:1-5; *g89* 12/8 24-7)

The great tribulation will evidently begin with the devastation of false religion (Re 17:15-18; *re* 256)

True worshipers will survive but are to be attacked by earthly forces of Satan, Gog of Magog (Eze 38:10-16)

Finally, Jehovah will destroy the rest of the wicked system in the battle at Har-Magedon (Re 16:16; 19:11-21)

That battle will clear the way for the reestablishment of Paradise on earth (*w86* 10/1 20)

Each of us should ask: 'How will the future affect me?'

No one can assume that he will easily pass through this period with no problems or trials

Many will seek the protection of human organizations (Read Revelation 6:15-17) (*re* 112)

Will we be able "to stand" in that day? What stronghold will we have and need?

Jehovah can be our stronghold, but are we now making him that? (Read Nahum 1:6, 7)

He is a stronghold to those "seeking refuge in him"; proves that it requires effort and attention

Even if we have made Jehovah our stronghold, well to ask: 'Can I now increase my reliance on him as my stronghold so that he will unquestionably continue to be my stronghold then?'

Let us consider a few areas of daily life and thinking to help us to see if we are making him our stronghold

This will also highlight ways in which we may be able to improve

MAKE JEHOVAH YOUR REFUGE AND STRONGHOLD RIGHT NOW (20 min.)

Recognizing Jehovah as a stronghold, or tower, is not limited to times of distress (Read Proverbs 18:10)

Name of Jehovah should be a stronghold when one faces danger, but this applies also to daily life

Since "name" involves his purposes, are you letting his purposes influence what comes first in your life?

Making Jehovah one's stronghold involves being submissive to his judgments and guidance

Name of God calls attention to his accomplishing his purposes (*na* 6)

We will have success by bringing our lives into full accord with his will and purposes

He would not be our stronghold if we tended to ignore his moral principles and laws

Must be morally upright to have God as one's stronghold (Read Proverbs 10:29)

"The way of Jehovah" is set in contrast to 'practicing what is hurtful'

Immoral conduct, such as adultery, fornication, and homosexuality, is obviously wrong

Those who make Jehovah their stronghold must avoid all hurtful conduct (Col 3:5)

Single Christian should not view dating as mere recreation or means for excitement (*yp* chap 29)

Close association with persons of the opposite sex easily can lead to kissing and petting

Bible warns against "uncleanness" (1Th 4:7; *yy* 152-4; *yp* 254)

Is such uncleanness "the way of Jehovah"? Could one share in it and still be viewed as having God as his or her stronghold?

A married Christian making Jehovah his stronghold would resist any tendency to flirt, deliberately making amorous advances toward someone who is not his mate (*w68* 476-7)

In the world, man's flirting or woman's being coquettish may be thought of as harmless

Such conduct frequently leads to hurting person with whom flirting is done or to hurting one's mate

Truly making Jehovah one's stronghold includes shunning fascination with illicit sex

Some who attend churches and claim to be moral find pornography thrilling (*g86* 12/22 3-4, 7)

Could such fascination be said to be 'deadening one's body members' as to unclean sexual appetite?

Each of us can ask: 'In these avenues, am I really making Jehovah my stronghold? Do I mold my thinking, desires, and actions to "the way of Jehovah," my stronghold?'

We are benefited if we do not let life hinge on having luxuries (*w87* 2/1 4-5)

As economic strains increase, area of employment may be an indication of whether you have God or riches as your stronghold (Pr 18:11)

Those now employed who make God's name (and purposes) their stronghold are benefited

They do not use cutthroat competition tactics to get or hold prestigious jobs; willing to work hard with their hands (Read 1 Thessalonians 4:11) (*w88* 8/15 18)

Those who make Jehovah their stronghold and accept this counsel likely will not be quickly dismissed but are valued (*hp* 51-4; *w84* 4/1 27; *yb89* 51 ¶3)

Making Jehovah your stronghold and following his advice should affect what comes first even in connection with your family and daily activities (Read 1 Corinthians 7:29-31)

Paul's counsel does not mean living in celibate marriage or leaving one's mate to pursue preaching

Christian should not devote self so fully to marriage that Kingdom interests are ignored (*w75* 351; *it-2* 343 ¶9)

Likely you know people who ignore virtually everything else to have a happy marriage and homelife

Is this the outlook for one making Jehovah his stronghold?

Paul's words also cover other aspects of daily life, about which we can examine self

Are advised not to be completely absorbed in sorrows, pleasures, or recreation

Do we guide aspects of life according to this counsel, making Jehovah our stronghold?

Making Jehovah your stronghold should thus be of personal concern; it should be done now

Ask self: 'Can I honestly say that in such areas I am making Jehovah my stronghold?'

What about in other areas—his counsel on controlling one's temper, drinking, or eating habits? being kind and forgiving with others? supporting elders in the congregation?

If we see a need for improvement, let us now seek and follow God's guidance more fully

The more we submit to his judgments and guidance, the more we are making his name our tower

IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTIES, RELY ON JEHOVAH (10 min.)

We make God our stronghold by following his guidance in our normal, day-to-day life, but he is a special stronghold during affliction (Read Psalm 18:2, 24-27)

If you are afflicted with declining health or strength, you can turn to your Stronghold

Paul and Timothy served God loyally and yet experienced sickness and physical problems (2Co 12:7; 1Ti 5:23; *it-2* 589 ¶3)

While not miraculously curing them, God helped Timothy and Paul to carry on and succeed (Php 4:13)

Faced with physical afflictions, we can gain help from our Stronghold

Through his spirit God is willing and able to support those who lean on him

Ask yourself: 'If I am afflicted with sickness or physical limitations, does this spur me to make Jehovah my stronghold, with my eyes on his everlasting reward?' (2Co 4:16-18)

During difficulties caused by the imperfections of others, will you make God your stronghold?

Paul was troubled by "superfine apostles," a few men in the congregation who resisted his efforts (2Co 10:10; 11:5; 12:11, 12)

Someone in your congregation may turn aside or cause problems; will you make God your stronghold, trusting that He will handle matters in His own way and time?

During severe persecution, now or in the future, continue to make God your stronghold

It was regarding this type of affliction that David knew Jehovah to be his stronghold (Ps 18, superscription)

He did not try to match strength with his persecutors but relied on God (Ps 18:2; *w80* 12/1 16)

Rather than taking refuge in our own might, we need to rely on Jehovah

Trusting in God as our stronghold involves knowing he will justly pay back persecutors and reward the persecuted

God assures us relief at the revelation of Jesus (2Th 1:4-8)

Until that occurs, God is able to strengthen all who make him their stronghold

JEHOVAH WILL NOT ABANDON THOSE MAKING HIM THEIR STRONGHOLD (5 min.)

Those making Jehovah their stronghold will experience no eternal loss (Ps 116:15; *ka* 407-8)

One making money, job, marriage, pleasures, or schemes of men his stronghold cannot prevent or reverse death (Ps 49:6, 7)

Psalmist urges trusting in Jehovah (Read Psalm 62:7, 8) (*w72* 331 ¶20)

He is able to satisfy our daily needs now and assures us of prospect of eternal life in Paradise

He alone is able to guarantee eternal salvation for one who is faithful even to death

If you really make Jehovah your stronghold now, you will be in position to rejoice forever (Ps 5:11, 12)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need to be read)