



THE REFUGE OF LIES

"Judgments also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place" (Isaiah 28:17).

The word "refuge" implies danger or distress. A refuge is a place one flees to for protection or safety in time of danger or distress. Back in 1937, the flood waters in Kentucky and other states forced many thousands to flee from their inundated homes to other parts of the country for safety. These people were called refugees. Whole cities like Paducah had to be evacuated and smaller towns like Benton and Mayfield had to house these refugees in schoolhouses, church buildings and private homes. There are many displaced persons in the world today--people who have had to flee from home and country to escape the wrath of wild men like Hitler.



Location: 3.3 miles out Bryan Station Road. Right Briar Hill Road.

- Sunday School 9:45 a
- Worship Service 11:00 a
- Evening Service 7:00 p
- Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting 7:30 p

Air-Conditioned Nursery Provided

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Now the Bible is our authority for saying that a great peril is confronting this world of mankind. God the Creator and Judge of all the earth has been insulted and rebelled against by men, and His righteous wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Because of sin and judgment to come, every man in his natural state is in danger--he faces an awful peril--and he needs a place of refuge; a place of safety in the coming day of judgment.

Numerous are the stratagems of Satan to ruin men, but I believe his most successful trick is to get men to trust a false refuge. Satan does not object to a man getting religion if he can get him to take the wrong kind. He

does not care for the soul becoming sin-sick if he can prescribe the remedy. He does not object to the sinner becoming frightened if he can designate the refuge. And Satan's refuges are all refuges of lies--they are false plans of salvation.

I. SINNERS OFTEN FEEL THE NECESSITY OF A REFUGE. This feeling is sometimes:

1. From a sense of guilt. I suppose every man has at one time or another had a feeling that he was a guilty sinner before God. Even the heathen have these workings of conscience--these pangs of guilty fears. And they have their refuge from the danger of approaching judgment.
2. From the tragic events of life. Sudden adversity, like the loss of property, or health, or a loved one sometimes awakens the conscience of men and arouse them to think about a refuge.
3. From the supposed nearness of death. Men who mock at religion in health have been known to quail and tremble at the approach of death. Voltaire trembled in a storm. Nearly all criminals become religious before they go to the chair or scaffold. People turn to preachers when their time comes to die.
4. Under the alarming influences of the preached word. Felix trembled at the preaching of Paul. Many tremble who never trust. Like Felix they put off the matter of a refuge for a more convenient time.

II. SINNERS OFTEN BETAKE THEMSELVES TO REFUGE OF LIES. There is only one safe refuge. Only one refuge that will be a shelter in the coming storm of judgment. Let us think of some of these refuges of lies:

1. Reformation. Reformation is self-improvement. It is giving up the grosser sins of life, such as drinking, gambling, swearing, etc. These things ought to be given up, but this is not the way of salvation. This would make self the Saviour and give no place for Christ, the real Saviour.
2. The general mercy of God. Under a sense of guilt, men often find relief in the thought that God is merciful--too merciful to punish them in hell. I shudder as I think that for years this was my only refuge. In those days if you had asked me how I expected to escape punishment for my sins, I would have said that God is a merciful God, and that His mercy would take care of me. I did not then see that the channel of mercy is the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is God's mercy-seat. Come to Him.
3. Joining the church. There are others who think the church is a safe refuge. And under a sense of guilt, they will join some church and vainly hope they are safe.
4. The virgin Mary is the refuge of many. From the R. C. Mass Book we read: "We fly to thy patronage, O Holy Mother of God! Despise not our prayers in our necessities, but deliver us from all danger, O ever glorious and blessed virgin."

III. THE ONLY SAFE REFUGE IS JESUS CHRIST. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby

we must be saved" (Acts 4:12); "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5); "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26); "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3).

IV. THE HAIL OF JUDGMENT SHALL SWEEP AWAY THE REFUGE OF LIES.

The day of judgment will test all the refuges. One religion is as good as another until the day of judgment comes. Psychiatrists are recommending religion--just any religion--to their patients as a cure for mental and physical disorders. And most any religion will help so far as the ills of this life are concerned. But when the day of judgment comes--when the wrath of God is poured out there is only one Ark that will come through--the Ark of Christ. Those in Him will be safe; all others will be lost.

Let us look a moment at this idea that one religion is as good as another if one is sincere. Now I cannot judge as to the sincerity of any man in his religion. I cannot judge motives. So far as I know every communist is sincere in his religion that there is no God. So far as I can judge the heathen are as sincere in their worship of idols as I am in worship of the true and living God. Sincerity is no substitute for the truth. Isaiah describes the worship of the idolator. He holds his idol in his right hand and does not know that he is holding a lie--trusting something that cannot save him. He is sincere but ignorant.

Was Paul's religion before he trusted Christ as good as after his faith in Christ? He was just as sincere before as he was after. He was just as sincere when he rejected Christ and persecuted His people as when he trusted Him and gave his life in service for Him. Paul's old religion as a Pharisee was better for him so far as the comforts of this life were concerned. Before his faith in Christ, Paul was popular with his own people, but after trusting Christ to be his Saviour, he suffered many things, and his life of suffering ended in death as a criminal under the law of Moses and Caesar.

The only safe refuge is saving faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. All the elements in saving faith may be brought out by the use of an old illustration. The thoughts, feelings, and actions of a person who stands by a boat upon a small island which is threatened by rising waters, will represent the whole of saving faith. The person first regards the boat from a purely intellectual point of view. He believes the boat actually exists, just as the sinner believes there is a God and that there is a Saviour. As the stream rises and swells, the man will look at the boat with some sense of emotion and feeling of interest. And so the sinner under conviction of sin has a feeling of concern for his safety. When the man sees the rushing tide is about to sweep him into the raging waters, he gets into the boat as the only way of escape. Getting into the boat is what actually saves him, and he cannot be said to have trusted the boat until he gets into it. And so

the sinner may believe that Christ is the Saviour, but he is not saved until he gets into Him by faith--not saved until he relies upon Him for salvation. The very essence of faith is reliance or trust. Every believer gladly confesses: "I broke God's law, Christ came between, I'm depending on Him to save."

My dear reader, if you are lost, let me urge you to acknowledge before God and men that you have no righteousness of your own, and then trust Jesus Christ for the righteousness He has provided by His obedience unto death--even the death of the cross. Then you can say with Isaiah, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation: He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10).

—By the late C. D. Cole