

REFUGE

Text: Deut. 33:27-29

INTRO: The word refuge means a place of protection or shelter. Related words that come from the same Latin root are refugee and fugitive. The words of our text are the words of Moses, just preceding his death. First, he spoke words of exhortation & encouragement to each individual tribe of Israel--& then these words to all Israel: "The eternal God is your refuge..."

Moses, having braved the deserts of Egypt & Sinai, understood the importance of finding shelter in times of desert storms. The desert traveler, seeking refuge from the blowing sands, would seek out some great rock that jutted up from the desert landscape, & hiding behind the shelter of that rock, he could wait out the storm.

The Biblical writer that had by far the most to say about refuge was David. As a shepherd lad, it was frequently necessary to seek shelter & protection for himself & his sheep from storms, fierce animals & possibly other dangers. As a young man, it became necessary for him to often seek refuge from the deadly threats of King Saul.

Solomon, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, also wrote somewhat about the idea of refuge. In one chapter of his prophecy, Isaiah contrasts the inadequacies of the refuge of backslidden Israel with the true refuge, the solid Rock foundation provided by God.

As time permits, we will look at some of the many Bible passages that have bearing on our subject.

I. PSALM 91.

- A. The Psalmist's personal conviction, vs. 1-2.
- B. His confidence that other may experience the same provision & protection, vs. 3-13.
- C. The Divine assurance that what the Psalmist had said, God has approved & endorsed, vs. 14-16.

II. PSALM 46.

- A. In troublesome times, we need a place of refuge, vs 1-3.
- B. There is an all-sufficient/never-failing place of refuge, vs 4-7
- C. When trouble drives us to God, it has served a useful purpose in our lives, vs. 8-11.

III. ISAIAH 28:14-19.

- A. The rulers of backslidden Israel had sought through deceit and political intrigue to protect themselves from the growing threat of an Assyrian invasion. They had sought out a false & inadequate refuge, vs 14-15.
- B. Meanwhile, God promised to provide a refuge that was entirely adequate, vs. 16.
- C. God would sweep away their false refuge & their nation along with it, vs. 17-19.
- D. N.T. fulfillment. The passage had a fulfillment in O.T. times, as the Assyrians invaded Israel & carried them away in exile. But their duplicity & false trust became a **type** that was fulfilled in the time of Christ.
 - 1. Jewish leaders rejected the Son of God, put their future in the hands of Gentile politicians and sought a covenant of death for Jesus.
 - 2. God annulled that covenant of death by raising Jesus from the dead. Jesus became the true foundation, the true refuge--& once again the Jewish nation was swept away by the overflowing scourge of Roman armies.

IV. MATTHEW 7:24-27.

Jesus tells us, in the conclusion of His sermon on the mount, the basis for building a successful life & finding adequate refuge from the storms & troubles of life.

CONCLUSION: As we bring the lesson to its conclusion, I want to read once more the 46th Psalm, this time as paraphrased in rhyme and meter.

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Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, July 20, 2003