

Sermon #90 — *Isaiah Series*

Title **A REFUGE OF LIES**

Text: Isaiah 28:14-22

Subject: *The Refuges Men Make for Themselves*

Date: Sunday Morning — June 23, 2019

Reading: *Matthew 7:13-27*

Introduction:

Open your Bibles to the 28th chapter of Isaiah's prophecy — Isaiah 28. We will begin reading at verse 1.

(Isaiah 28:1) Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower, which *are* on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! (2) Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, *which* as a tempest of hail *and* a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. (3) The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet: (4) And the glorious beauty, which *is* on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, *and* as the hasty fruit before the summer; which *when* he that looketh

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upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

(5) In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people, (6) And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate. (7) But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment. (8) For all tables are full of vomit *and* filthiness, *so that there is no place clean*. (9) Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts*. (10) For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little: (11) For with stammering

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lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

(12) To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear. (13) But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

(14) Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem. (15) Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: (16) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth

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shall not make haste. (17) Judgment 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. (18) And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. (19) From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only *to* understand the report. (20) For the bed is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*. (21) For the LORD shall rise up as *in* mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as *in* the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. (22) Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

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We have just read one of the most astonishing passages of Scripture to be found in all the Word of God. God had sent his Word to Jerusalem. “Yet,” we are told, “*they would not hear*” (v. 12).

And now, in order to secure themselves from the wrath and judgment of God, the men and women of Jerusalem, being led into error by their civil and religious rulers, declare, “*We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves*” (v. 15).

What astonishing hardness! What astonishing rebellion! Men and women, being warned of the wrath of almighty God, made for themselves A REFUGE OF LIES, and found peace, comfort, and security in them! Those very things that the prophets of God told them would deceive them they trusted!

- Their Idols
- Their Wealth

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- Their Ceremonies
- Their Strength
- Their Policies — Alliance with the Ungodly.
- Their Pretended Uprightness

The Jewish nation and the refuge of lies which she built were long ago swept away by the blast of God's wrath. It is true — The Jews have gathered themselves again as a nation. And they have built another refuge of lies. But God has made Jerusalem a desolation and left that nation in the horrible blindness of spiritual darkness and unbelief. Their refuge of lies could not protect them from the judgment of God.

My concern is not to show you how this prophecy was historically fulfilled after the death of the godly king Hezekiah. It is my responsibility to show you the spiritual message of this text of Holy Scripture, the message of God for you in these words, and use it to set your heart upon Christ. So I want, by the help of God's Spirit, to talk to you as plainly, as bluntly, as forcibly as possible about A

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REFUGE OF LIES. That's my subject — **A REFUGE OF LIES.**

Proposition: Everybody has some kind of religious refuge in which he finds comfort when he thinks about death and eternity.

Divisions: Hold your Bible open on your lap and ask God the Holy Ghost now to speak his Word to your heart, as I endeavor to preach. I want to call your attention to four things in verses 14-22.

1. Man speaks about his refuge of lies (vv. 14-15).
2. God speaks about the only true refuge (v. 16).
3. The Lord God speaks about man's false refuges (vv. 17-20).
4. The prophet of God warns us of wrath to come (vv. 21-22).

MAN SPEAKS TO HIMSELF

1st — **In verses 14-15, man speaks to himself about his refuge of lies.**

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(Isaiah 28:14-15) Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem. (15) Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.

Here men attempting to soothe their consciences, pacify the terror of their souls, and silence the voice of guilt in their own hearts. Being warned of God's righteousness, justice, and wrath, man says to his soul — "Everything is all right. There is no cause for fear. We have a refuge! We have made a covenant with death. We have made a treaty with hell. Others may perish; but judgment will not come upon us. We have a refuge!" — Now give me your attention.

There are certain things that all religious people profess to believe. — No matter what church a person belongs to, Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, or

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otherwise, no matter what creed he holds, Calvinistic or Arminian, Conservative, or Liberal, there are some things all religious people profess to believe.

1. We believe in God.

- The Creator
- The Law Giver
- The Judge
- His Attributes

2. We believe in Jesus Christ.

- The Son of God
- The Savior — His Birth — His Life — His Death — His Resurrection — His Second Coming

3. We believe in the Holy Ghost.

4. We believe in eternity — Heaven and Hell.

We recognize that life is short, death is real, and eternity is long. We know that death is not the end of life. The grave is not the goal of manhood. We know

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that after death we must stand before God in judgment and spend eternity either in heaven or hell.

Believing these things, every man establishes some kind of refuge for himself. — All of us have a refuge, a hiding place, by which we hope to be delivered from the wrath and judgment of God. — **What are some common false refuges?**

1. **Many make a refuge for themselves by justifying themselves, by defining sin and righteousness as acts and deeds** (Luke 16:15).

(Luke 16:15) And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Sin is much more than a deed. Sin is a state of being. Sin is a condition. Sin is in the heart and nature of man. It is a condition of enmity against God (Romans 8:7). Sin is self-willed rebellion against

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God as God. Our acts of sin are only the fruits and symptoms of our condition. It will do no good to chop off the fruit until the condition is changed.

Illustration: Separatism denies what sin is.

Righteousness is not just a deed. Righteousness is a state of being and a condition.

- Imputed Righteousness (Romans 5:19).
- Imparted Righteousness (2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:5-10).

Righteous acts and deeds performed by God's saints are the fruit of righteousness, not the cause of it.

2. **Some people make a refuge of lies for themselves by perverting the attributes of God**
— *“Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself”* (Psalm 50:21).

Man attempts to mold God into his own image. In doing so, he has a perverted, twisted, warped idea of God's love, mercy, grace, and justice. He thinks the

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love of God is changeable and conditional. He thinks the mercy of God can be bought and earned. He thinks the justice of God can be counterbalanced and swayed by good works. But he is mistaken!

- The justice of God demands satisfaction. — Only Christ can do it!
- The mercy of God is in Christ.
- The love of God is in Christ.
- The peace of God is in Christ.
- Reconciliation to God is in Christ.

3. **Multitudes make for themselves a refuge of lies by making a profession of salvation that does not bring forth the fruit of the Spirit** (Galatians 5:22-23).

True faith is a faith that works by love. Without it religion is worthless (Galatians 5:6).

4. **A very common refuge, by which men and women speak peace to their hearts when there is no peace, is an old experience that stays old.**

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If you want to know whether a man is alive, you do not go to the courthouse and look up his birth certificate. You feel his pulse! And the proof of grace is not in an old experience. All the graces of the Spirit are living, growing, continual fruits of life.

- Faith is constant.
- Repentance is unceasing.
- Conversion is continual.

Everybody has a refuge by which they try to convince and persuade themselves that all is well. But, for most people, their refuge is a refuge of lies.

Read verse 15 again. — *“Ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.”*

- I Got Saved
- A Decision for Jesus
- The Sinner’s Prayer
- Baptism

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- Joined the Church
- A Changed Life

ONE TRUE REFUGE

2nd — In verse 16, the Lord God declares that there is only one true and sure refuge. — *“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”*

Notice the connection. — *“Because ye have said, we have made lies our refuge...Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste.”*

Of course, you know of whom the prophet speaks. He is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, the sure and precious Foundation upon whom alone we must be built, upon whom alone can build.

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- Jacob called him, “*The Shepherd, the Stone of Israel*” (Genesis 49:24).
- David sang of him, saying, “*I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The Stone which the builders refused is become the Head stone of the corner*” (Psalm 118:21-22).
- And Peter quotes this prophecy when he speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ in 1st Peter 2:6-8.

(1 Peter 2:6-8) Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. (7) Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, (8) And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

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Let's look at what the Lord God says here about Christ the Rock of Refuge upon which we must build, in whom we must hide.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Foundation God has laid.

- In His Eternal Purpose
- In His Substitutionary Work
- In His Mediatorial Glory

2. Christ is a Foundation laid by God in Zion.

- Zion is the church of God.
- Christ is the Foundation upon which the church is and must be built (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 3:11).
- It is in and by Zion, the church, that Christ is revealed and made known for what he is. — The Foundation and Refuge of our souls.

3. Christ is a Tried Stone.

- Tried by all the saints in all ages who have built their hope upon him and been saved by him.
- Tried and found unbreakable by Satan.

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- Tried by God the Father who laid upon his shoulders the whole work of saving his people.

4. **Christ is a Precious Stone.** He is the Pearl of great price, precious to his Father, precious to the angels, precious to his people. — “*Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious!*”

- His Person!
- His Incarnation!
- His Obedience!
- His Righteousness!
- His Blood!
- His Offices!
- His Names!
- His Relations!
- His Word!
- His Ordinances!
- His Gifts!

5. **Christ is the Corner Stone.** — He is the beauty and strength of his building, the church. It is Christ who knits us together, cements all the stones into

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their place, and keeps us one. — Christ is our point of unity and strength.

6. **Christ is the Sure Foundation.** — A sure foundation is one that will never crack, break, or give way. That is the Lord Jesus Christ! Everything that is laid upon or depends upon him is sure.

- The Covenant of Grace
- The Promise of God
- The Salvation of His People

7. **“He that believeth on him shall not make haste.”** — The words “*shall not make haste,*” mean “shall not be moved.” The house that is built upon the Rock Christ Jesus, shall not be moved by any storm.

- When Paul quotes this text, he says, “*He that believeth on him shall not be ashamed*” (Romans 9:33).
- When Peter quotes it, he says, “*He that believeth on him shall not be confounded*” (1 Peter 2:6).

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What is your refuge? Is yours a refuge of lies; or is your Refuge the Lord Jesus Christ? Be sure you are built upon that Foundation God has laid. Anything that is not built upon this Foundation God will destroy.

REFUGE DESTROYED

3rd — **In verses 17-20 the Lord God speaks about man's refuge of lies.**

(Isaiah 28:17-20) Judgment 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. (18) And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. (19) From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only *to* understand the report. (20) For the bed is

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shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*:
and the covering narrower than that he can wrap
himself *in it*.

Whatever your refuge is, if it is not Christ, God will find it out and destroy it. If your refuge is a refuge of lies, it must be swept away. God will destroy it and sweep it away. —

- Either by His Saving Grace,
- Or by His Wrath in Judgment!

In the Day of Judgment the Lord God will lay judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet (v. 17). Anything that is not in perfect agreement with the Foundation shall be cut off.

- In that day God will sweep away your refuge of lies and strike terror to your soul forever (vv. 17-19).
- Then, when it is too late, God will make you “*to understand the report,*” the doctrine of the gospel.

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- When you stand before God, you will find your own righteousness insufficient to comfort your soul (v. 20).

Oh, may it please God to sweep away your refuge of lies now by his grace, giving you refuge in his Son!

GOD'S WRATH

4th — **In verses 21-22 the prophet of God warns us, once more, of the wrath to come.**

(Isaiah 28:21-22) For the LORD shall rise up as *in* mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as *in* the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. (22) Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

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Judgment is God's strange work (v. 21). — “*He delighteth in mercy!*” — He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

(Ezekiel 33:11) Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

But judgment is God's sure work (v. 22; Psalms 7:11-17; 11:6-7). — “*The soul that sinneth, it shall die!*”

APPLICATION

I send you home and pray that you will never be able to cease thinking of judgment, of eternity, of heaven, and of hell. It is my prayer that you will be forced by God's grace to think on this question — What is my refuge? What is my hope of everlasting acceptance with God?

- Christ is the only true Refuge.

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- Every other refuge is a refuge of lies.
- Flee away to Christ and take refuge in him!

Illustration: *The Cities of Refuge*

(Isaiah 32:2) And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

Amen.