

THE REFUGE OF LIES

The Lord blesses you. We are continuing with our general topic, God's Pattern Church. The last four editions centred on some erroneous practices, under the subject heading of Giving, Tithing and Offerings. In this edition, we will take another aspect of the general topic. The meditation is drawn from a consideration of the seventeenth verse of Isaiah 28. We will like to read the sixteenth and seventeenth verses. Come with me to Isaiah 28:16, 17. Notice, although this passage is in the Old Testament, several references to it in the new show that it has a New Testament application. Isaiah 28:16, 17,

"...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.

Judgement also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the water shall overflow the hiding places...."

In "*the hiding places*" we see certain erroneous practices drawn from a false premise. By recourse to some order in the Old Testament, some men and women under the colour of religion, hide to do certain things, which are contrary to God's, will. We know that there is a close relationship between the building up of the house of God and God's glory appearing to His people. The sixteenth verse is quite useful, Christ is the foundation, Christ is the Building, and when the foundation, Christ, is laid, the characteristic lines we see in the foundation measure all things that are built. That is what we see in the opening part of verse seventeen. It says, "*judgement also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*". There is a measurement, there is a judgement, and there is an assessment of that which is coming up from the foundation to see whether it corresponds to what is found in the foundation.

We shall again strengthen our understanding of the fact that this passage has a New Testament application. Ephesians 2:19-21

"...Now there fore ye are no more strangers and foreigners... "

Paul was writing to non-Jewish, gentile Christians and he was showing them that they are no longer strangers and foreigners but have been drawn into something in Christ. We read verse 19 again;

“...Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone....”

This (verse 20) agrees with what we find in Isaiah 28. It says, “*I lay in Zion....*” Zion is a prophetic word used to symbolise the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 20, says;

“...In whom (that is, in Christ, the chief corner stone, in the foundation) all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord....”

There is a close connection between God’s church as it is supposed to be, coming up into more and more of the image of Jesus Christ, and the teachings that are given her weekly meetings.

Let us turn our minds back to Isaiah 28. There are two divisions of things that sponsor error in the visible church systems. We have touched upon one, which is “*the hiding place*”. In this edition, we are considering the second, which is the refuge of lies. Now, in order to have a clear understanding of this, we will look at some Old Testament usage of the word refuge in relation to the welfare and warfare of the Lord’s people. The first that comes to mind is Psalm 91. Once we see the positive usage of the word “*refuge*”, then we may be able to understand clearly what is presented in Isaiah 28. Turn with me therefore to Psalm 91: a chapter in which the spirit of prophecy reaches the highest point concerning aspects of the total salvation that God has purchased for His people in Christ Jesus. Through Christ, is total salvation from sin, sickness and death. Death is not a friend, and a people shall come forth at this last hour that will have full victory over death.

Come with me to Psalm 91, we will be looking at the first five verses only and there we will find four main points that assist us to understand the use of the word refuge, God being the refuge of His people, and such associated things in this passage.

“...He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in him will I trust.

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day....”

There is one condition, four benefits, which we see in this passage. Psalm 91 actually contains sixteen verses, but the first five verses sets in motion what is contained in the whole sixteen verses. Let us look at the one condition. It says, “*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High*”. We ask what is the secret place of the Most High? The reference is to setting forth certain spiritual truth in contrast to what we see in our present visible world. That is, there is a knowledge

that is not commonly shared by the world of mankind but known to a special class of people called believers in Christ Jesus. Now, the secret place of the Most High God is the possession of the spirit of faith: total heart reliance upon God, His power, His plans, and His purposes. The possession of the spirit of faith is coming into the secret place of the Most High God. That is one condition.

Now, when we dwell in secret place of the Most High God, we are told we shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty God. Now, there are two contrasting shadows taught in scriptures: the shadow of death and then the shadow of life. The shadow of death continues to minister death to those who are in its environment, while the shadow of the Almighty God ministers life. Now, the reference here (Psalm 91) is to what we see in the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness. You will recall that there was the pillar of cloud, which at night was like a pillar of fire. It is a column of light reaching up and spreading forming a dome shape to cover the children of Israel. And, in the presence of the immortal God (that cloud of His presence), the people were preserved in life; the Bible says there was none feeble. Again it says their garments did not wax old. Again, we are told that none of them was sick all throughout the forty years of their wilderness wanderings (Deuteronomy 8:4; Psalm 105:37). The same situation of the cloud of His presence exist today, and we come into it by faith, and are maintained and sustained in it by the spirit of faith, abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

Next, we learn in verse 2 of Psalm 91, that the individual possessed of the spirit of faith, has faith – filled confessions. This draws our mind back to what we are considering: the word “*refuge*”, its usage in the Old Testament in relation to who God is to His people. It says, “*I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Him will I trust*”. These are no vain words. The writer says, “I will say of the Lord”. That is what happens when an individual is possessed of the spirit of faith. It leads the individual to faith – filled words. In II Corinthians 4:13, Paul says, “*Because we have the spirit of faith, we say*”... and he draws his inspiration from Psalm 116:8... “*According as it is written, we believe therefore have we spoken*”. He who is possessed of the spirit of faith is able to testify to the realities, the spiritual realities within the shadow of the almighty. “*I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom will I trust*”.

This is the first characteristic of the one that is dwelling in the secret place of the Most High God. Secondly, in verse 3, we are told that the one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High God is delivered from the snare of the fowler. Verse 5 confirms unto us that the snare of the fowler is the spirit of fear. Fear torments, and all the expressions of the effects of the fall in our world today, flow from the spirit of fear. Verse 5 says *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day*. In this uncertain world, there is an assurance of preservation and deliverance that flows from the shadow of the Almighty. The second benefit is that the individual is delivered from the snare of the fowler. He is delivered from the noisome pestilence. Fear and death go together; faith and life go together. That is the second thing that is true of one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High.

We come to the third. The third, we can get from verse 4. Verse 4 simply tells us that the spirit of faith must be maintained in the dynamics of fellowship. It is in communion with the Lord that faith is fed. Faith is fed by the quickening power of God’s word. God’s spirit, who indwells us at the coming of Christ into our lives at the point of salvation, quickens us. He quickens us in

harmony with the written word. When the word, by the spirit of God, is quickened to our understanding, it brings a great effect upon our spirits, souls and bodies. Verse 4 says, *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.* Notice the close connection between God being the Shield and Buckler of His people, and the truth of His word. It says, *“his truth shall be thy shield and thy buckler”*.

So, that is the third particular that we are drawing from this passage: that the word of God, the quickening power of God’s word, will maintain us under the shadow of the Almighty. And finally, deliverance’s from all kinds of physical and spiritual mishaps. That is the fourth. And, from verse 6 down to verse 16, it is abundantly testified that the Lord’s people can be free from all the evil effects of living in a world that is perilous, that is full of danger.

The sense in which the Old Testament uses the word “*refuge*” when the thought is to what God is to His people. We will still take yet another reading that talks about the blessing of man living in Christ, both now and in the future. Psalm 46, there again, God is set forth as the refuge of His people. In Psalm 46, we read the first five verses in the following words,

*“...GOD is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;...”*

These are prophetic words that speak of the calamities, great destruction that shall adorn the closing days, years of this age. All believers are aware of what is generally called the “*great tribulation*”. Make no mistake about it, the Lord’s people shall be kept, preserved and protected in those terrible times, not by merely wishing for it, but by being prepared for it. One of our purposes in these ministrations is to, by the spirit of God’s arouse the Lord’s people to the things that belong to their preservation and peace, rather than build hope on mere falsehood. And the Lord shall help us in this regard. Verse 2 again, Psalm 46.

*“...Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof Selah.
There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; She shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early....”*

There are a people, and they are increasing by the day, that the Lord is drawing to a peculiar fellowship with him. Christ’s saving power shall not be philosophical, men and women shall walk who are attended to by the power of God, keeping and delivering them from all evils

In second passage given to us above, we find that God being our refuge is something eminently practical. It has to do with deliverance, both now and in future. Like we saw, it also has to do

with the life of God flowing into our lives to quicken us. God's power comes into our lives through the spoken or revealed word, as we hear and receive it by faith.

Now coming back to Isaiah 28:17. We may now be able to talk about "*the refuge of lies*". God is our refuge. He makes Himself our refuge by showing us principles of His word, which keep testifying about Christ and the redemption that is in Him. Anything that is contrary to the plans and purposes of God in Christ Jesus, but which men put their hearts, hope, and confidence into, can only be a refuge of lies. Erroneous teachings... (and we are not so much concerned about certain teachings that takes place outside the church world, for, the majority of the believers know that these are empty of power). But, we are concerned with the erroneous teachings that go on in the midst of the Lord's people, even in the midst of spirit – filled believers, which creates false hopes and hold them under deception. We trust that the Lord, by His spirit, will awaken us all up, so that we might focus our hearts and attentions on the Lord Jesus Christ and know the deliverance He brings at this last hour.

Now, you will recall that the starting passage we used when we began to discuss God's pattern church was Revelation 3. There, we will now go, trusting that we will be able to see how the word of God submitted to, makes God the refuge of His people, not in oral testimonies only, but by events of life experiences. So, come with me to Revelation 3, beginning from verse 7. We will read through to the promise of deliverance unto the Lord's people, from the hour of great tribulation that shall come upon the world of mankind. God's people should not go about blind. We cannot manifest what has not been worked into us. When we talk about safety, it is Christ in us, becoming clothing round about us. Make no mistake about it. When the proper appreciation of the provisions God has made for the deliverance of His people is clear to us, we will not be playing church, we will not be giving our time and attention to any of the trivialities and frivolities we see in today's visible church systems. May the Lord help our understanding. Revelation 3:7

"...AND to the angel of the church in Philadelphia..."

Philadelphia is a type of the church growing up in the image and likeness of Christ. Whereas, the letters to the seven churches reveal that most of the church types are not living in line with God's will, in Philadelphia we find the type of the congregation of God's people living and operating according to God's mind. It is in this sense that we said that while the Lord Jesus Christ is the pattern church from the divine standpoint, from the human standpoint, the church in Philadelphia is God's pattern church, patterning herself according to what we see in the Lord Jesus Christ. Revelation 3:7–10;

"...AND to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth. I know thy works, behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are no but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before my feet... "

In spiritual parlance, what a person says may be set forth as what the person does. These people say they are Jews, but Christ says they are the synagogues of Satan. The evil indicated here is of trying to imitate the old covenant church order. We have dealt with that sufficiently in previous editions. These ones who say they are Jews are actually an opposition group. The word “*Satan*” here means adversary. They are of the synagogue or congregation of the adversary or opposer. That is, even though they claim to be Jews, they oppose God’s work much in the same sense Satan opposes God’s work. Jesus said to the people “*he that is not with me is against me, he that does not gather with me scattereth abroad*” (Matthew 12:30). The reference is to the fact that when those who publicly give witness that they are the Lord’s people stand contrary to the provisions of God’s word, they are antichristal; they are opposing Christ. May the Lord help us in Jesus name. Verse 10 is to be noted carefully. It says;

“...Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (the hour of trialsome events) which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth...”

There are grievous, momentous events that are coming, times of great distress, but a people shall be kept from it. Verse 10 says, “*because thou hast kept the word of my patience*”. In verse 8, he says, “*thou hast kept my word*”. We have previously shown that the Greek word translated word here is “*Logos*” rather than “*Rhema*”. It is the full range of the Lord’s thoughts, plans and purposes, revealed for the building up of the church. *Rhema* is the principle of truth contained in the *Logos* quickened to our understanding for a specific blessing. But the *Logos* is about the full range of God’s word. In the visible church systems of today, men just concentrate on a few things, and they go on moving round and round in circles. But the full range of God’s word is in view in God’s saving purpose. “*In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God and the Logos was God*”. It is God made visible, God’s mind made visible in the pages of the written word quickened to our understanding by the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. So, he says “*because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will keep thee also from the hour of temptation, the trialsome events that shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth*”.

The word “*Logos*” as we examined previously contains three principal elements: faith, hope and love, which are the three inheritances of the Lord’s, people both now and in future. 1 Thessalonians 1:3 brings these three elements in its full definitive form. We are told of the works of faith, the patience of hope and the labours of love. Of these three elements of our inheritances, the patience of hope is associated with the blessed hope, the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being changed into the same glory with him (Titus 2:13; Philippians 3:20, 21). When we see him, we shall be like him, the Bible says. And, here in Revelation 3:10, we read of “*the word of his patience*”. In the next edition, we will be talking about this thing the Lord calls “*the word of my patience*”.

For the remaining part, we want to go to the scriptures that show the close connection between hope and refuge. We will simply do the reading, trusting that in the next edition, we will be able to look at them expositively. Let’s take Hebrews 6; with this we will close our meditation. Hebrews 6:17–20;

“...Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before we have as an anchor of the soul.... ”

When this true biblical hope enters into man’s spirit, it anchors him. It does not make him waver to and fro like men without vision. So Paul says,

“...Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Wither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. ...”

Jesus the forerunner, the one that went ahead of us into that glory, the captain of our salvation, who is also bringing and leading his people into the same glory.

The refuge, the hope and the deliverance from the trialsome events that are to come, are not things that we merely wish for. They are things that we must look unto God steadfastly for, believing that He will teach us, and lead us into those aspects of the work of faith by means of which we will fully overcome and be accounted worthy of these things. The Lord bless you and cause His face to shine upon you. Amen.

Once again, Beloved Brethren, it is at this stage we will draw the curtain on this series. I do believe God must have touched you – release yourself to Him that He might break, melt, mould and fill (or re-fill) you with His Holy Spirit at this time. The LORD bless you richly.