

# God Thy Refuge

Deuteronomy 33:27

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**FOCAL Read Together Deuteronomy 33:27** The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

My wife was making a purchase at a local store when she remembered our local Church had given her a fifty dollar gift card for her birthday. Sherry handed the card to the clerk who, on scanning it, exclaimed “What in the world?” When we looked at the receipt we saw at the bottom this notation:

**Payment by gift certificate: \$6.42**  
**Remaining value (of certificate): \$4993.58**

Suddenly my wife's fifty dollar gift certificate became a *five thousand dollar* gift certificate. How did that happen? Well, when the fifty dollar certificate was sold to the Church the salesperson forgot to put in the decimal, or else put the decimal in the wrong place. A misplaced decimal point caused that little card to be in error. It claimed we had value where there was none. A misplaced decimal, just like a misplaced period, can ruin a sentence and make it into nonsense. Small things matter in life, and small things matter in eternity. God spoke to a man named Zerubbabel that blessing would come “**not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit ... despise not the small things**” (Zechariah 4:6, 10). Small sins and indiscretions destroy a life, just as wild animals destroy a vineyard. People say “it is but a little sin” - and then discover to their horror that the little sin – **like a little fox, has spoiled the vines** (Song of Solomon 2:15). A little unbelief and a little

procrastination will cause a person to leave this life unprepared to meet his Maker. A little failure to surrender your life to Christ while it is today will lead to an eternal stay in a Lake of Fire that cannot be quenched (**Mark 9:44, 46, 48**).

What is your life for? What is your foundation for living? Is your life built on faith in Christ, or is it built on things that rot and rust and fade away? Each and every one of you have been invited by the Lord to be saved. God wants to be your foundation. He wants to be your Refuge. He wants to save your soul. He wants to protect you and guide you, yet He will not impose Himself on you. He calls unto you crying **“if any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink” (John 7:37)**. Are you tired, worn out by life? Jesus says **“come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28)**. Are you young, but a small child? Jesus whispers **“come unto Me little children, for the Kingdom of Heaven was made for you” (Matthew 19:14)**. Christ will make a big difference in your life, but you must **“come unto God by Him” (Hebrews 7:25)**. If you will come to Him believing in Him you will find salvation by Him. We are saved by going to the Refuge that is God, not by trying to save ourselves.

You might be saying “but my faith is so small”. God doesn't ask that you have a large faith. He asks that you have faith in the Large God that He is. Small faith in God – faith as small as a grain of mustard seed – will save you. Jesus promised:

**Matthew 17:20 ... If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.**

How large is a “**mustard seed**”? It's about the size of the period at the end of a sentence. It's no larger than the decimal point I mentioned at the beginning of this article. If you have that much faith in God you can move mountains, and you can overcome any obstacle. Your faith must be in God, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Put your mustard seed faith, that tiny period-like faith, in the right place. Put your faith in God.

### **1. A Refuge Is A Place You Hide In**

**FOCAL** Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge<sup>1</sup> ...

The word “**refuge**” could also be translated “**a den, a dwelling place, a hiding place**”. A refuge is a place you go to in times of trial, of attack, and of storm. We have had some exceptional storms in West Tennessee in the last few years. I remember when we first came here a number of tornadoes and large hail storms had destroyed parts of our city. One lady told me that she sat in her house and heard the nails pulling out of the ceiling boards just before she took refuge in her basement.

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<sup>1</sup> H4585, מְעוֹנָה מְעוֹנָה, *m<sup>c</sup>ōnâh m<sup>c</sup>ōnâh, meh-o-naw', meh-o-naw'*, Feminine of H4583, and meaning the same: - den, habitation, (dwelling) place, refuge.

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A refuge is a place you have to go to. It is not a place that comes to you.

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Some of you have storm shelters, some basements. These are places of refuge. In early American history the settlers built forts out of logs that they took refuge in when the natives became hostile. When I was in England our family visited a number of castles that were built for the purpose of giving the kings and rulers of the land refuge. In ancient Israel God had His people build “**cities of refuge**” (**Numbers 35:25-32**) where those who were accused of capital crime could plea their innocence before the judges of the land. A refuge is a place you run to – not a place that runs to you. When we are promised:

**FOCAL** Deuteronomy 33:27 **The eternal God is thy refuge ...**

This precious promise is certain, but *only if we go to God*. This promise is not available to the unbeliever, for the unbeliever puts his trust in anything *but God*. He is like the rich man of Jesus' parable:

**Luke 12:16-21 ... The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: {17} And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? {18} And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. {19} And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. {20} But God**

**said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? {21} So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.**

How foolish to make the treasures and pleasures of this life the refuge that you hide in. A poor man who is rich toward God is rich indeed. The greatest possession you have is not your house, your land, your family, your money, or even your body.

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Your greatest possession is **your soul**. Your greatest possession is you!

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Your body will one day cease its function, but your soul – that essence which is you – it will never cease. What did God tell the fool who put his trust in his treasures? God said:

**“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”**

Every soul – every person in this room and in the world beyond – will one day stand before the Lord of All Creation. The Lord has made a promise. He has said:

**Romans 14:11-12 ... As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. {12} So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.**

Judgment day is coming, and you and I both will bend

the knee to God. On that great day when we **give an account** of ourselves, what shall we say? What is the shield that will protect me from the fiery darts of Divine judgment? What will keep me out of hellfire? What will protect me from what the Apostle called:

**Hebrews 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.**

Nothing but faith in Jesus Christ! Like the song says:

**What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the Blood of Jesus.  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the Blood of Jesus!  
O, Precious is the flow,  
That makes me white as snow,  
No other fount I know.  
Nothing but the Blood of Jesus!**

It is to God the Son that we run for Refuge. Christ is set forth before us, a refuge for our souls. It is Jesus Whom God set forth to be our satisfactory payment for sin. What says the Apostle?

**Romans 3:25 {Jesus} Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;**

When I stand before my Maker one day and that Mighty Voice asks, “Why do you belong in My Heaven?”, I will

not – as the unbeliever does – begin to list my “good deeds” before Him. No dear friend, no!

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When I stand in glory I want to stand as John the Baptist stood. “I must decrease, while He must increase”.

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I do not want God looking at David alone as I stand before Him, but my plea, my only plea, will be “because I have believed on Jesus! I stand on the law of faith, justified and clean because of my dear Savior's Blood.” Dear friend, can you boast – as I boast – that your confidence is in Jesus? Can you declare with all the saints of glory that **you have run into the waiting arms of Jesus Christ, and now dwell in Him – your Refuge – forever!** If you cannot claim Jesus to be yours, if you are trying to get into God's Heaven on your own power, will you not answer the call unto salvation. Believe on Him Who died for you and rose again. Believe on Jesus!

## **2. Life Will Test You – You Had Best Be Resting In God**

**FOCAL Deuteronomy 33:27 .. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms**

If the **Eternal God is your Refuge** then it is certain that **underneath are the everlasting arms**. If God has saved you by faith in Jesus, then God stands by you no matter what might come. If you found God to be your Refuge at the point of salvation, then you who are *truly saved* will find God – **the Eternal God** – to be your daily refuge as

well. Where is this Refuge to be found? Look at the text:

### **Underneath are the everlasting arms.**

Why “**underneath**”? Because this is where we need the arms. The devil attacks from underneath, from the pit,

and it is his evil intention to draw you down to the place of darkness and despair. Satan was at work in the Pharisees of Jesus' day *nitpicking everything the Savior did*. When His disciples ate with unwashed hands these devils tried to drag down the work of God. Here the great Physician was going about doing good, seeking to save men's souls, and here these religious fools – like quack doctors – were prescribing sugar pills to alleviate the disease of damnation. This is Satan's way and, sadly, we often fall into that same trap. We forget what is the most important thing – the salvation of the soul – and become more concerned with lesser temporal things. Jesus said:

**Mark 7:20-23** And he said, **That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. {21} For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, {22} Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: {23} All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.**

What defiles a man? The stuff that is underneath. The stuff that comes from within. The darkness that – unrestrained – comes from within to without. Satan stokes all the weaknesses of man. He knows our hearts,

knows how we can be deceived. He entices us, as he enticed Jesus in the wilderness (**Matthew 4**). He puts the shiny hook out to see if the fish will bite it. When Satan rises to drag us down and destroy us we have the precious promise that **underneath are the everlasting arms**. The Arms of God are where they need to be – underneath – ready to catch us when we fall.

We do not need to save ourselves when Satan attacks, but we need to run into the arms of our Refuge once more. Rely on the Lord when evil comes.

Say with King David:

**2 Samuel 22:33-34** **God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect. {34} He maketh my feet like hinds' feet: and setteth me upon my high places.**

**Illustrate** Three pits were set before Joseph. When he showed his brother's his *coat of many colors* (**Genesis 37:23**) his brothers stripped him of his prize and cast him into a pit. They held him in that pit until slave traders passed by, and then they sold him for a few pieces of silver, and lied to their father as to where Joseph was. The second pit that yawned before Joseph was **Potiphar's wife**. This woman thought that she would have her way with her husband's newest slave, but Joseph would have none of it (**Genesis 39:7**). He ran away, and rested in the Refuge that is God. Though he was thrown into prison Joseph trusted the Lord and rested in Him until God – always there – led him to

greatness. The third pit is the pit of **vengeance**, one that has trapped many believers. If the devil can get us to crawl into this pit though we will feel justified, we will lose our effectiveness for Jesus. When Joseph met his brothers and was reunited with them they feared that he would take vengeance for what they did years before. Joseph said:

**Genesis 50:19-20 ... Fear not: for am I in the place of God? {20} But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.**

Here is the man that Satan cannot pull down, for **he ever rests in the everlasting arms of God**. If you can rest assured in the Biblical truth that God loves you, that He is our **“Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in times of trouble” (Psalm 46:1)**, then there is nothing that Satan can do to destroy your life.

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When **David fled from King Saul and hid in a cave** his mind was not on avenging himself – his mind was on resting in the Lord.

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He prayed:

**Psalms 57:1 .. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.**

Satan goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he

**may devour (1 Peter 5:8)**. He cannot devour you if you are resting in the Everlasting Arms of God.

**Illustrate** Life itself brings trials. We are daily tried by the world and by the thorns that sin brought into the world. When Israel went to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem evil men stood back and mocked. **Sanballat** said **“What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?”** **Tobiah** the Ammonite mocked **“Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.” (Nehemiah 4:1-3)**. Life is filled with trials and trying people, joy suckers who do their best to dishearten us. Every day life is hard. The Israelite had to walk daily while *underneath* were the burning sands of the desert.

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We must look at every trial through the lens of God's Promise. When trial comes remind yourselves **“underneath are the everlasting arms”**.

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Yes, you may fall. In fact, there are times when you *will fall*. On the way to Heaven there are many difficult hills and many deep valleys – yet **“underneath are the everlasting arms”**. As **C.H. Spurgeon** said:

**“You cannot go so low but that God’s arms of love are lower still. You get poorer and poorer; but “underneath are the everlasting arms. You get older and feebler; your ears are failing, your eyes are growing dim; but “underneath are the everlasting**

arms.” By-and-by, unless the Lord speedily returns, you will have to die, and you will come down very low then; but still it will be true “underneath are the everlasting arms.”

God is always there for His children. Trust in Him. If you fall, *trust in Him more*. No child learns to walk without falling many times. Will it be any different for the Christian child of God? How many times did Peter fall, how many times did the original twelve fail the Lord? Of the twelve, eleven went on to greatness, for their salvation was true. Only one, the *son of perdition*, *Judas* could not be saved, for he refused to take refuge in God. The Bible tells us that

**Psalms 37:23-24 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. {24} Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.**

If you have been saved by faith in Jesus **the Lord upholds you by His hand**. Do not struggle against Him. When tried, rest in Him. If you are resting in the Lord you are resting in the same power that upholds all the universe. You are resting in the hand that made the Sun and the moon and the stars. You are resting in the Power that holds the atom together. You are resting in the **everlasting arms of eternal God**.

I am asked why I believe in the Eternal Security of the believer. My reply is that I am resting in the **everlasting arms of eternal God**. What other answer could be

given?

### **3. If The Arms Are There, God Is There**

**FOCAL Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.**

There are times that we *feel* that God is not there. When frightened, when tried, when death comes to us, our emotions stir within us and we begin to think that the Lord is not there. This is quite human. But He promises that **underneath are the everlasting arms**, thus we *know God is there whether we feel His presence or not*. Where the arms are, God is. When that great preacher and founder of Methodism **John Wesley** was dying he recounted the wonderful things that God had done for him in his life. He finished up by saying:

**“The best of all is, God is with us.”**

This is the best of all. God is with you, dear believer, in death just as He was in life. He has promised:

**Hebrews 13:5 ... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**

Others may leave, but God is there. **The eternal God is your Refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms**. He is eternal, unchanging, what the theologians call *immutable*. He says:

**Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not ...**

God never changes in power or majesty. **He is not able to lie.** If God is eternal, and His arms are under you, then His arms are *eternally under you.*

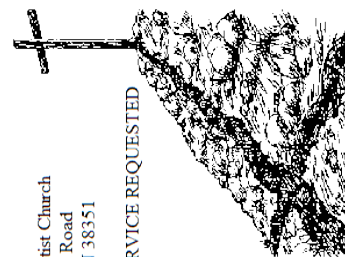
**“Best of all, God is here”.** God's arms are beneath you, dear Christian, holding you up. God's arms are there twenty four hours a day and seven days a week. He never sleeps. And He is always working for you. He is always patiently forming you. The Scripture says:

**Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**

God is at work for you. God has a plan for you. God has a purpose for you. You are His workmanship, and His arms are ever there whether you understand or not.

If you have fled to Jesus, then know that He – as a faithful and true High Priest – will never leave you nor forsake you. Rest in Him. Rest in His Word. Rest in prayer. Rest in the arms of the everlasting God.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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