

Yehovah Is Our Refuge

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Greetings everyone! Here we are on the last day of Unleavened Bread in the year 2020—who would have thought? Tradition has it that Israel crossed the Red Sea on this day thanks to Almighty God performing a mighty miracle. Then after this day Israel headed into a desert unknown. Terry Swagerty touched on that subject on the Sabbath. Let's go to Exodus 15 and verse 22 and just see that. The context is Israel heading into the desert after the miracle of the Red Sea crossing.

Exodus 15:22 *So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness [the Hebrew word for wilderness can also be translated “desert”, and in fact it was both a wilderness and a desert] of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. (KJV)*

Within seventy-two hours they encountered difficulty in uncertain times. As Terry pointed out, they repeatedly wanted to go back to Egypt. They would have rather gone back to where they came from than face uncertainty. There is an axiom of human behavior that says that the fear of the known, no matter how bad it is, is less than the fear of the unknown. That is why battered wives will go back to abusive husbands rather than face the unknown. The same was true with Ancient Israel.

They were looking out into the desert; they had no water, and that would be repeated again and again—whether they were hungry or thirsty, or whether there were armies threatening them—or whatever the crisis might be, they continually wanted to go back from where they came. The familiar, no matter how bad, was better than the unknown. In those uncertain times Yehovah their God repeatedly tested them to see who they would trust and to whom they would turn for refuge. As they faced the unknown and faced difficulty, God watched to see what they would do, and to whom they would turn to save them.

The fact is that the times we face today are equally unknown and equally uncertain. This is new territory—the fight against COVID-19 and the economic challenges that come with it are new territory. Our future (and that of the world) is unknown economically and is yet to be determined by the course of this virus.

Look what has happened just in the last few weeks. One month ago today we were in Spokane visiting with the brethren. Yes, there were some rumors about the virus, but all was basically good. Here we are a month later and look what has happened since then. The world has substantially changed! Man's institutions, which people trusted in, are being shaken as never before. The result is that people are becoming increasingly insecure about the future. On top of that it has been apparent to all of us that the Most High has allowed Satan to increase the pressure on God's people—God has allowed it.

What comes to mind is Daniel 7, the wearing out of the saints. God has allowed that because trials teach us lessons we otherwise would not be able to learn. These end-time trials are God's tests for His people and He, as He did with Ancient Israel, is watching to see who we go to, look to, trust, and in whom we find refuge.

The question is—given the circumstances we face, and looking forward into this uncertainty—do you feel you need a place of refuge right now from the ever-increasing evil of this world and the ever-increasing uncertainty? Do you feel as if you need a place of refuge, from the pressures bombarding you and me, and all of God's people? Webster's definition of the word "refuge" is "shelter or protection from danger or distress", and it comes from the Latin word *refugium*, which means to escape or to flee. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a place to escape to or to flee to, where we could all go and be sheltered? That would be nice, but it is not God's plan for this age. Let's go to John 15 and read verse 17. Christ is speaking on the night He was betrayed, His last time with the disciples. He's trying to impart critical information to them. John 17:15; I'll read this out of the New International Version. Christ says,

John 17:15 *My prayer is not that you take them out of the world [He's praying to His Father] but that you protect them from the evil one [while they remain in the world]. (NIV)*

Christ said, I have work for you disciples to do; you have to remain in the world, but I am praying that My Father will protect you from the evil one.

Now let's go to 1 Corinthians 5:9. I'll read this out of the New King James. Paul is speaking and he is referring to a previous letter to the Corinthians that has not been canonized. Paul says,

1 Corinthians 5:9 *I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.
10) Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. (NKJV)*

What we're being told here is that communes are not part of God's plan for His people at this time. Despite this our Father has provided a place of refuge for each one of us here and now, this very day. What we're going to see today as we explore the scriptures, is that Yehovah our Father is our refuge. We will find that He is instantly available right here, right now. Thus the title of this sermon is "Yehovah Is Our Refuge".

The first point I'd like to make today:

1. Yehovah has a history of providing a place of refuge for His people.

The Almighty God has a history, a recorded history in scripture, of providing a place of refuge, a place of safety and security, for His people. God provided such a place in the

Old Testament. We won't turn there, but let me summarize chapter 35 of the book of Numbers. The Levites were given cities throughout Israel (Levitical cities) because they had no inheritance in the land. Among those cities were six cities of refuge.

A city of refuge was a place for a perpetrator to flee to after an accidental killing. A present-day example of an accidental killing would be if a roofer tripped, lost his footing, and dropped a heavy box of shingles off the roof, which then landed on the head of a workman two stories below, breaking his neck and killing him. Transfer that to Ancient Israel; the perpetrator could flee to a city of refuge where he would be saved from the relative seeking vengeance for the dead man. The residents of that city were to make a judgment between the perpetrator and the one seeking revenge. If the killing was judged intentional, then the perpetrator had no refuge in that city, and the avenger (generally a family member) could take his vengeance—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. If it was judged an accidental killing, the perpetrator had refuge in that city, as long as he remained there. We see here that our loving God provided a place of refuge in the Old Testament for those who honestly needed it. That's the first point. The second point is:

2. Our Father will, in the future, provide a place of refuge for His children.

When I came into the church in the mid-1960s there was a great emphasis on the place of safety. It was talked about incessantly. God's people would have a place of refuge, a place of safety—and there were all kinds of speculation about where that would be and how we would get there. Let's go to Revelation 12:7, and, by way of review, look at what God promises us as far as a future, physical place of safety.

Revelation 12:7 *And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
8) And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.
9) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.
10) And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ [His Anointed]: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.
11) And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony [meaning the Father and the Son]; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

Those who overcame discerned the body and blood of Christ, as we are admonished to do. Those who overcame understood the word of God, increasingly so, as time went on and became closer to the end. Verse 12:

12) *Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

13) *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.*

14) *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.*

In February of 1969 the Boeing 747 airliner first flew. At that time it was two and a half times as big as the previous generation of airliners. It would hold six hundred seats. There was great speculation, at least where I was in the church, that God made it available to fly God's people to a place of safety. Much talk about that, as I remember. There was a great fixation on the place of safety.

Let me give you two examples for those of you who weren't around at that time. These go back more than thirty years. There was one group who believed they were the only ones who were going to the place of safety. They understood the phrase "on eagle's wings" to mean that they would escape via an airplane, most likely the 747. The people in this group—including the children, the elderly, and the infirm—were under great pressure to acquire passports. The idea was to have passports so that one could get on the plane and go to the place of safety. We look back on that and shake our heads, but that was real, it happened.

Another example is one Sunday morning—I still remember it—I got a phone call. We were living here in Washington state at the time; the people who called, a husband and wife, were in another part of the country. They said, we've got a proposition for you; this is what we'd like to do and we want to know if it's okay; we want to cash out all of our savings and exchange it for gold. One of us would take a trip to Jerusalem and then on to Petra [in Jordan]. What we want to do is bury the gold in the sand, where we would know where it would be, so that when we flee to Petra we will have money in order to sustain ourselves there.

After I picked my jaw up off the floor they asked me for my opinion. I gently and kindly said that it was probably not a good idea, and we talked about it for awhile. My point is that there was a fixation on the place of safety in those days, and for some it seemed as if it was more important than eternal life and salvation. The thought was if we can just get to the place of safety then everything is going to be okay, everything is going to be all right. The big problem with that is that the focus was on something physical. Their sights were set on physical places, and more often than not their sights were set on a human being who was going to take them there. Therefore, you had better align yourselves with the human being who is going to get you to the place of safety. There are human beings, of course, even today, who promise their people that the leader will take them to the place of safety. Let's go to Matthew 24, verse 40, and look at a principle. We're breaking into the context, and it's a different context, but the principle

still holds. Christ is talking about His return, but as I said, there is a principle here that holds when considering being taken to a place of safety. Christ says,

Matthew 24:40 *Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken [the Greek word for taken can also mean to be received near, the implication being, received near Christ or coming near Christ], and the other left.*

41) *Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.* (KJV)

The point here is that God is the one who chooses on this occasion, prior to Christ's return. God will choose, when the time comes in the future, for His people to fulfill Revelation 12—to go to a place of safety. Passports are not necessary. God will do it miraculously for the people He chooses. It is also interesting to note that one is taken and one is not. The message is that it is not going to be a group thing. It's going to be an individual thing. Why? Because our salvation is an individual matter. Just because we belong to a certain group does not guarantee salvation nor does it guarantee going to the place of safety.

Garrison Keillor is an American author and storyteller who was host of the "Prairie Home Companion" radio program we used to love to listen to late on Saturday night. He said this humorous but true thing: "Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car." Absolutely true! The point being that because God loves us He promises He will provide a place of safety from horrible circumstances and situations into the future—a place of physical refuge—but that is only one step along the way towards spiritual salvation and eternal life. It should not be our ultimate goal; our ultimate goal, obviously, is to have eternal life with our Father and His Son in the Kingdom of God.

The point I am making is that God historically provided a place of refuge. Ending this point number two, He will also, in the future, provide a place of refuge for His people. The question for today is what about now? Is there a place of refuge for us now, where we can go? That leads us to the third point.

3. Let's look at three definitions for the Hebrew word translated *refuge* in the Old Testament.

Definition 1: The Hebrew word for *refuge* is Strong's #2620. It means to have hope in, or to put trust in. We're going to find that in these three Hebrew words, all translated *refuge*, each has a nuanced meaning that expands our understanding of God taking us to a place of refuge. So with Strong's #2620 (to have hope in, to put trust in), let's see how it is used. Go to Psalm 57, verse 1. David is writing. Notice what he says.

Psalm 57:1 *Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul [or my life] trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge [meaning, I will have hope in; I will put my trust in], until these calamities be overpast.* (KJV)

We see here that Yehovah is the one to trust and to have hope in for a place of refuge. Now let's look at a second definition of refuge.

Definition 2: The second definition of *refuge* we'll examine is Strong's #4498, meaning a fleeing or a flight—an escape. Now let's turn to 2 Samuel 22, beginning in verse 2, to see how this is used. David is speaking here, and notice what he says, using this Hebrew word meaning a flight or an escape.

2 Samuel 22:2 *And he said, the LORD [Yehovah] is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;*

3) *The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, [notice this] and my refuge [in other words, the one I escape to, or the one I flee to], my saviour; thou savest me from violence. (KJV)*

God does indeed do that. We see here a second definition of the word refuge and the nuance here in this verse is that God is whom we flee to for refuge. Now let's look at a third definition of the Hebrew word refuge.

Definition 3: This is Strong's #4268 and it means a shelter (literally or figuratively), a place of refuge. Let's see how it is used. Turn to Isaiah 25 and verse 1. Isaiah is enlightening us as to how this applies to refuge.

Isaiah 25:1 *O LORD [Yehovah], thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name [implying that Isaiah knew God's name]; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. [Continuing to verse 4,]*

4) *For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, [notice this] a refuge from the storm [a literal place to go to, to be sheltered from a storm that could be emotional, mental, physical or spiritual], a shadow from the heat ... (KJV)*

We see here that the emphasis is on a place of shelter or a refuge. These three definitions tell us that Yehovah our Father is the ultimate refuge, the one to have trust and hope in, the one to flee to—because He is the place of our shelter and refuge. Being a Spirit Being, with all power, He is instantly available. We don't have to jump on a plane or a train to get to Him—He is instantly available.

For the fourth point, we'll raise a question, then consider several answers to it:

4. Why should we put our trust in our Father and His Son?

We all know we need to do that but have we ever articulated or figured out in our minds why we should do that? We're going to cover six different sub-points (A through F, if you like to outline) as to why we should trust our Father and His Son.

A. Our Father is Yehovah. Why should we trust our Father? Because He is Yehovah. Let's go back to Exodus 15:3. We're breaking into the Song of Moses that he

composed and Israel sang after the miracle at the Red Sea. They were filled with joy and thankfulness. We will talk about that song later. For now we'll read just this verse.

Exodus 15:3 *The LORD [all caps, L-O-R-D, that is Yehovah] is a man of war: the LORD [Yehovah] is his name.* (KJV)

His name implies a great deal, more than the word *Lord* or *God* or some other title. *Yehovah* implies the fact that this Being has always been and has never had a beginning. This Being will always be and will never have an end. This Being is the Living God, here and now. His Son has been with Him from the beginning, and is eternal along with His Father. Of all beings to put our hope in, should we put our hope in something carved out of wood, or cast out of concrete, or poured from molten metal? Or should we put our trust in The Being Who Always Is? Which should it be?

Let's go to Isaiah 51:15. God is speaking and He is bringing to remembrance this day that is traditionally observed as the one in which Israel crossed the Red Sea. We're told:

Isaiah 51:15 *But I am the LORD thy God, [that is Who I Am—your God] that divided the sea, whose waves roared: [Yehovah] The LORD of hosts is his name [the hosts being the angelic hosts, the spiritual realm].* (KJV)

If Yehovah can divide the Red Sea, what can He do for us in our trials? (Most of them pale into insignificance compared to the trials that Israel faced, at least on a physical level.) Our trials are on a spiritual level that can have implications going all the way to our salvation. The One who has always existed—who parted the Red Sea—do you think He might have the power to help us? Do you think we might be able to trust Him and put our faith in Him as a place of refuge? Let's go to Jeremiah 31:35. Jeremiah also equates Yehovah as the One who divided the Red Sea.

Jeremiah 31:35 *Thus saith [Yehovah] the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD [Yehovah] of hosts is his name ...* (KJV)

We see here that Yehovah, our Father in Heaven, the One we worship—the God Who Always Is, the Being Who Always Has Been—brought Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea. He would have been a constant refuge for them if only they had been able to accept Him as such. Given the fact that God did this for Israel, do you think we might be able to look to Him as our refuge? I think so. In summary, our Father is Yehovah, and everything that that name implies.

B. Our Father—Yehovah—is love. Let's go to 1 John 4:8. We'll see that our Father's defining characteristic is love. We'll cover two verses—one is a repeat and one emphasizes the other.

1 John 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God;*

This has a huge implication. If someone has technical knowledge of God—whether it is of Greek, Hebrew, memory of the scriptures, being able to put scriptures together, history, and all of that—but that individual does not have love, we are told here that that individual does not know or understand God. Why?

8 continued) *for God is love.* (KJV)

That is His main characteristic.

If we understand that God is love, and yet in our personal life we show anything but love, what we're being told here is that we don't know God at all.

16) *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* (KJV)

If God is love and we want to be like God, like our Father, then we will grow in love through the power of His Holy Spirit. If we don't grow in love, how can we say, I want to be like my Father? We would be hypocritical—absolutely hypocritical! We can have absolute trust that our Father, because of His love for us, will never do anything for our harm. Romans 8:28 tells us that. God is love, and He loves His children. He will never do anything, long-term, to cause His children's harm. The trials that He brings our way, or allows to come our way, are for our ultimate, long-term benefit, and will lead us to salvation.

Point B is that our Father is love, and that implies a great deal about whether we can trust Him or not.

C. Yehovah promises to shelter and to provide for us, His children. He promises to shelter, protect, be a shield, and provide for our needs—physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional. Let's go to Psalm 91:1. This is a very well-known psalm. I have had many people this week text or email me to say we need to read Psalm 91. I was already working on the sermon, and they were saying we need to read this because it has a whole new meaning, given the circumstances that we're facing today. Notice how the psalm starts.

Psalm 91:1 *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High [one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High] shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* (KJV)

Let's just stop there. What is the reference? Almighty and Most High. There can be only one Almighty and only one Most High. There can't be two Most Highs; there can't be two who are Almighty. There can be only one. These are titles: Most High and Almighty. They refer exclusively to Yehovah, our Father, the God of the Old Testament.

For those new to Pacific we have sermons on our website that specifically address the identity of the Most High and the identity of the Almighty, in great detail, in scripture after scripture. If you want further study please go on the website and peruse the sermon titles and you can find them. We see that the references are to the Most High and the Almighty. Notice verse 2.

2) *I will say of [Yehovah] the LORD [the Almighty and the Most High], He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; [and this is the subject of this fourth point] in him will I trust.*

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

4) *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust:*

The author is painting a picture using an animal, let's say an eagle, which would spread its wings so the chicks could come and seek refuge under the shadow of that eagle's wings. This is an analogy of what God provides for us when we come to Him and get close to Him.

4 continued) *his truth [Yehovah's truth] shall be thy shield and buckler. (KJV)*

(I'm reading out of the King James. The New International Version translates *buckler* as protection. He will be your shield; He will be your protection.)

5) *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;*

6) *Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; (KJV)*

That hits home today—*the pestilence that walks in darkness*. You can't see it; you don't know where it is; you don't know where it is going; you don't know who's infected or not, and sometimes we don't even know if we're infected;

6 continued) *nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.*

7) *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; [how many thousands have fallen and God's people have been spared today?] but it shall not come nigh thee. (KJV)*

These verses take on an entirely new meaning today. Going on to verse 8:

8) *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*

9) *Because thou hast made [Yehovah] the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation [where we go to seek refuge];*

10) *There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. (KJV)*

The implication is, those who go to Yehovah for refuge. If we do that, if we put Him first, if we love Him with all of our heart, if we know who He is, even knowing what His name is;

11) *For he [Yehovah] shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*

12) *They [Yehovah's angels, His hosts] shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

13) *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.*

14) [Yehovah now speaks] *Because he hath set his love upon me [the first commandment], therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, [notice this] because he hath known my name. [What a concept—knowing God's name!]*

15) *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him [if we know His name, if we love Him with all our heart, if we seek Him with all our being]: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.*

16) *With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation. (KJV)*

Psalm 91 is a promise of refuge by the Almighty, to shelter us and to protect us, in time of need and time of trouble. As I said before, given the circumstances that we are living in at this very moment, that psalm takes on an urgent, new meaning, given all that is going on around us. Let's go to Psalm 62 and we'll begin in verse 5. David, who had a lot of trouble in his life, is speaking. He fled from Saul and his son, and was on the run many times, with his life at stake.

Psalm 62:5 *My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.*

6) *He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense; I shall not be moved.*

7) *In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. (KJV)*

To whom did David look to seek refuge? It was to Yehovah, his God—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Moses, and the God of David.

8) *Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.*

Yehovah will shelter and He will provide—two enormous promises for when we are in a difficult situation or we're in a time of need.

Now we'll examine a fourth reason why we should trust God. (If we haven't come to this conclusion already then we've been asleep.)

D. God is our refuge. Not that He provides a place, which He does—in the Old Testament He did, and in the future He will as well—but more importantly, God Himself is our refuge. Let's turn over to 2 Samuel 22. We were there earlier but we're going to read it in context of the first three verses. David is talking to Yehovah and notice what he says about Yehovah being his refuge.

2 Samuel 22:1 *And David spake unto [Yehovah] the LORD the words of this song in the day that [Yehovah] the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:*

2) *And he said [in the song he composed], [Yehovah] The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;*

3) *The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge [as we pointed out earlier, the nuance is of the One I flee to], my saviour; thou savest me from violence [and indeed David's Father did that]. (KJV)*

Now let's go to Psalm 46 and we'll begin in verse 1. This is an interesting psalm. (Wil Berg would appreciate this, being the musician that he is.) It is a *Song for Alamo*. I looked up the word *Alamo* and in the Hebrew it means "girls of a soprano voice". It can also mean women of a soprano voice. This psalm was written for women or girls to sing in the soprano voice. Think of that as we go through, and imagine the soprano voices in your mind.

Psalm 46:1 *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

2) *Therefore will not we fear [we don't have to be afraid; we don't have to stay awake at night, wringing our hands], though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;*

3) *Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. (KJV)*

What is being described here are conditions we have yet to see. My wife and I lived directly downwind from Mount St. Helens and we heard some explosions and noise from its eruption, but nothing like what is being described here.

4) *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High [the Father Yehovah].*

5) *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.*

6) *The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*

7) *The LORD [Yehovah] of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. (KJV)*

Who is Yehovah of Hosts? Who is the God of Jacob? It is very clear:

Acts 3:13 *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus [Christ] ... (KJV)*

Our Father Yehovah is indeed our refuge. There are hundreds of scriptures that say that. We're touching only the tip of the iceberg.

Let's examine the fifth sub-point as to why we should trust our Father and His Son.

E. His Son promises us peace in time of need. Jesus Christ promises us peace in time of need. We first have to understand that apart from God there is no peace. If we distance ourselves from God, if we do not know God, there is no peace in our lives. Let's go to Isaiah 57 and read verse 20, which emphatically states that. Isaiah is describing the wicked, who do not know God. The wicked do what the wicked do, but they don't know God.

Isaiah 57:20 *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, [he draws an analogy here] when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. (KJV)*

My wife and I used to love to go to the Oregon and Washington coasts. We loved it when a storm would occur; we would watch the waves crashing and pounding, and yes, there is dirt, mire and froth, logs, sticks, and gravel, all being cast about due to the power of the surf. We're being told here that the wicked are like that—they're just tossed to and fro.

21) *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. (KJV)*

When the name *Pacific Church of God* was chosen, it was because we sought peace. We did not want the upset, the trouble, the politics, the gossiping and backbiting, the innuendoes, the plotting and all of that, which all of us had seen eleven years ago, just before Pacific was founded. We didn't want any part of that. We're told here the wicked don't have peace. The wicked don't belong in God's church. They just don't.

Now we get to the point: Our elder brother, Jesus Christ, is the source of great peace that is beyond the comprehension of the human mind. Let's go to John 14, verse 18. Christ is speaking on the night He was betrayed. He is trying to get across critical information to the disciples. He told them, you're not going to remember this now, but when the Comforter comes it will bring all in remembrance to you. John wrote this down after that occurred. Jesus said,

John 14:18 *I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. (KJV)*

He is promising to do something. Look at verse 27.

27) *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: [He's promising to give to us the peace that He had on that night, facing what He was going to face] not as the world giveth, give I unto you. [He says, as a result] Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (KJV)*

Our Elder Brother, the Forerunner of our salvation, has promised to give us the very peace He had at the time of His greatest distress. The world can't comprehend how someone facing torture, crucifixion, and death could have peace. That doesn't compute with the human mind, but Christ had that peace.

John 14:13 *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do,*

Christ is telling us, I have a job here, too, with My Father. I do things at My Father's direction. If you ask in My name for this peace, that I will do. Why?

13 continued) *that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* (KJV)

Over the years, I have learned that over and over again. When we began teaching the truth about God and Christ and the record of scripture, two or three years ago, Pacific was attacked and I was personally attacked, viciously, by people I thought were my friends—who used to be my friends. People who used to be happy, content, and thankful to be part of this group resorted to lies, slander, and personal attacks. It shows the power of Satan. It is something all of us need to be very, very careful about.

I lost many a night's sleep, as did my wife. We lay awake at night, wondering what is going on—why is this happening? The turning point for me was when, one night, while lying in bed, I asked my Father, would You have Your Son give me the peace that He had on the night He was betrayed—looking into a very bleak future of torture, and horrible pain and death—would You do that? This was after many sleepless nights. That night a huge weight was lifted. I can remember taking a deep breath, and peace came over me like the oil poured over Aaron when he was anointed. (The oil ran down his beard onto his shoulders, and down to the hem of his tunic, then down onto the ground.) That peace came over me just like that. A huge weight was lifted, because we put our troubles, our problems, and our trust in our Father and in His Son.

Christ promised in Matthew 8 to take on our infirmities, our weaknesses, our shortcomings—that indeed happened. It was a miracle that I can remember as though it happened last night.

Going forward, peace is going to be an increasingly uncommon trait in this world. This world is going to be in turmoil and upset, and we don't know if this is just a bump that will calm down for awhile, or if it will be one bump after another. We just don't know. We do know that as we get closer to the end, peace is going to be in short supply, certainly in the world. It is a characteristic that we are going to need in the times ahead. My point is if we want peace, God assures us it is instantly available—I will make it available if you will ask, and if you ask it in My Son's name, He will give it to you. It is instantly available!

One final reason we should put our trust in our Father and His Son:

F. Our Father and His Son do not change. Think about that. What is promised in the Old Testament, just because it is in the Old Testament, doesn't change. If it is promised in the New Testament, just because it was written two thousand years ago, it doesn't change today, two thousand years later. Let's go to James 1, verse 17. James tells us,

James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above [these are gifts from our Father], and cometh down from the Father of lights ...*

Think about that for a moment. Why is the phrase *Father of lights* used to describe our Father? The Greek word for lights is *phos*, from which we get our English words photo and photon. Photons are the particles that carry light through space. Our Father is the Father of all light—physical light and spiritual light. Going on in verse 17,

17 continued) [the Father of Lights] *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.* (KJV)

The NIV has an excellent translation of this verse that reads, *the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

You can stand still and your shadow will shift as the sun moves. What this tells us is that our Father does not change like a shifting shadow. Let's go to Hebrews 13:8, where we're told this about God's Son:

Hebrews 13:8 *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.* (KJV)

Our Father does not change. His Son does not change. They share the same Spirit. Now let's go back to Hebrews 6 and begin in verse 17. Notice this about God's immutability, a word used here in the King James that means *unchangeable*.

Hebrews 6:17 *Wherein God [referring to the Father], willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability [or unchangeableness] of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:*

18) *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible [impossible!] for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge [we did] to lay hold upon the hope set before us [to give up the world; to give up the trappings and our involvement in the world, to lay hold upon the hope set before us of eternal life]:*

19) *Which hope [hope here is referring to Jesus Christ and what He did to allow our salvation to be possible] we have as an anchor of the soul [of our lives], both sure and stedfast [unmovable], and which entereth into that within the veil;*

20) *Whither the forerunner [the Greek word for forerunner means the one who runs ahead—the scout or the pioneer] is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* (KJV)

We see that in putting these three verses together our Father and His Son do not change. They are incapable of lying, and are incapable of changing Their story or the plan of salvation. It is firm, it is fixed, it is immutable.

Closing out this last point we see that our Father and His Son are an instant refuge for all of us, an instant place of safety, if you want to use that term.

Let's summarize. During the Days of Unleavened Bread, Moses composed a song honoring Yehovah after He delivered Israel from Pharaoh, as tradition says happened on this day. Let's go back to Exodus 15 and look at this song. We were there earlier in part but let's start in verse 1. This is a song Moses composed. Moses and the Israelites, Miriam and Aaron, all sang this song on this day, if tradition serves.

Exodus 15:1 *Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto [Yehovah] the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto [Yehovah] the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*

Notice what they say about our God:

- 2) [Yehovah] *The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God [the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob], and I will exalt him.*
- 3) [Yehovah] *The LORD is a man of war: [Yehovah] the LORD is his name.*
- 4) *Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.*
- 5) *The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.*
- 11) *Who is like unto thee, O LORD [Yehovah], among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*

What wonders Yehovah did this day!

- 12) *Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.*
- 13) *Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: [redeemed from death, redeemed from slavery] thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.*
- 18) [Yehovah] *The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. (KJV)*

At this moment in time, Moses and his family, and all of Israel, were overcome with gratitude and thankfulness after what they just witnessed—this gigantic delivery from their enemies. As we know, that attitude did not last long. After three days in the wilderness without water their attitude turned, as we say, and did a one-eighty. They began to complain to Moses when they were really complaining about God. The record of scripture clearly shows that Israel complained continually during their march to the promised land. They continually were not satisfied with what they had and they continually wanted to go back to Egypt. They did so because as Yehovah said in Deuteronomy 5, they didn't have the heart. They didn't have the Holy Spirit.

Now let's fast forward to a time yet future when this song is going to be sung again by those who do have the Holy Spirit. Let's go to Revelation 15, verse 1. This is our final scripture for today, and a good way to conclude, because this song of Moses is going to be sung again one day, hopefully not too far in the future.

Revelation 15:1 *And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.*

2) *And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: [where is the sea of glass? We know where that is] and them that had gotten the victory over the beast [those who had gotten the victory are near the sea of glass], and [victory] over his image, and [victory] over his mark, and [victory] over the number of his name, [and those who overcame, who had gotten the victory] stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.*

3) [Notice what they do] *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God [that song is going to be repeated under glorious circumstances], and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty [that can only be Yehovah, our Father]; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. [Our Father is the King of the saints. Our Father is our King.]*

4) *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? [How can people not glorify Your name after Your majesty and might are revealed?] for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. (KJV)*

If we overcome and endure, someday we will have the opportunity to sing what Moses sang, but we will sing it in front of the Father with His Son at His right hand, standing on the sea of glass, in front of His throne in heaven. We can do that only if we avoid Israel's refusal to make Yehovah their refuge. We must avoid that at all costs. When times get rough and we turn to something other than our Father for refuge, then we will not be on that sea of glass.

With everything going on in the world today—this vicious disease, the printing of money as fast as they can, and even worse, the severe economic decline and resultant woes that could last for years—no one is really sure what the consequences will be; we will find out. This is new territory. We are being tested as never before, and our Father is watching us individually to see who we are going to trust. Who are we going to for refuge in these troubled times? Men or Yehovah? Our Father or the world of Satan? God is watching us to see.

The point is that we need to remember who is our refuge. The fact that our God, our Father, the Almighty, the Most High, Yehovah, is available instantly. What a blessing that is! It's not a matter of going somewhere, of having to get somewhere in order to have our refuge. We have it now. All we have to do is ask, and He will watch over us and take care of us. In His hands we will be safe and secure. In His hands we will be filled with peace and tranquility, even though the world is falling apart around us.

Let's remember who our refuge is. It is indeed Yehovah, the One Who has always been, the One Who will always be, and the One Who now is.