

Deuteronomy

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Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

- [0 : 00] The 33rd chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, the first part of the 27th verse.
- The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.
- What a blessing it would be if this word were applied to our hearts in such a way as to give us an assurance that it is so indeed.
- That the eternal God is our refuge, and that underneath are the everlasting arms. I can hardly think of any word that would bring more relief, and more comfort, and more strength to our spirit than to feel the application of the truth of this word.
- We know that, of course, it is only the Lord himself who can so speak in the word in our hearts as to convey the truth of it in that way.
- [1 : 27] We can only, as we are helped, set forth the truth of it, and pray the Lord will own and honour it in our hearts with power.
- The context calls for just a recognition. This is the conclusion of the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death.
- For the time had come for Moses to relinquish the responsibility that he had sustained as the ruler and guide and leader of the children of Israel from their Egyptian bondage to the borders of the promised land of their rest.
- And it was with Moses, as it is with us all, the time must come when we must lay down our work, relinquish our responsibilities, and leave everything behind us in this world.
- And the way in which Moses gave up his position and parted from the children of Israel is very beautiful.
- [3 : 07] For one thing, of course, it shows a very tender and loving and gracious spirit in Moses himself.
- Because it hadn't been an easy matter to Moses to lead and guide the children of Israel those 40 years in the wilderness.
- They hadn't been a very amenable people. They had tried Moses exceedingly at times with their ways.
- They had been so apt to complain and murmur and rebel that Moses said before God on one occasion, I'm not able to bear this people.
- They tried his spirit so. They provoked God and they provoked Moses. And yet when it came to it, Moses parted from them in a most affectionate way.
- [4 : 15] His last feelings towards them, and his last words towards them, were to bless them.
- Not that Moses of himself could bless the children of Israel, but I take it that these blessings were expressive partly of the desire of Moses for their good, and partly, of course, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it was prophetic of the things that would befall these different tribes of Israel after his death.

It comes to mind, how that there is in this, the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death, before his parting from them, a foreshadowing of something else, of the blessing wherewith the Lord Jesus Christ blessed the disciples before he parted from them.

For we read that at Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and while he blessed them, he was parted from them and received up into heaven.

The last act of Jesus was to bless his dear people. But to come back to this chapter, it is noticeable that there was a distinct blessing pronounced by Moses upon each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

[6 : 22] About the last part of the chapter, in the last part of the chapter, Moses comprises all of the children of Israel in these few words.

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. This is the blessing that was particularly and exclusively pronounced upon any of these tribes of Israel as such.

There were blessings pronounced upon the tribes personally, and what was pronounced upon one was not pronounced upon another.

but in these words we have a general word for them all. So it is spiritually, my friends. The Lord blesses some in one way and some in another.

But there is a general blessing for all in this, that the eternal God is their refuge. That does apply any more to one than it does to another.

[7 : 47] Nor does it apply in one generation more than in another generation. We must regard this word as primarily spoken to the children of Israel, but ultimately embracing the whole spiritual Israel of God.

For, I think it would need no proof that if the eternal God was the refuge of the nation of Israel, he will be the refuge of the spiritual Israel of God.

And so, as the Lord may help me, leaving the primary application of this word to the children of Israel, I want to set it before you in its ultimate and richer and deeper and fuller application to the Israel Israel of God.

The spiritual Israel of God. And, as I've said, this word applies to all.

The eternal God is the refuge of all his people. It applies personally. The eternal God is a refuge to each one, personally and individually.

[9 : 30] And, to expound its truth, we may consider it along these lines. First, we must solemnly speak a little of the eternal God.

God, the eternal God is thy refuge. And, then I want to speak a little of what it is for the eternal God to be our refuge.

That is, how we come to find refuge, eternal refuge in the eternal God.

God. And, then thirdly, to point out that underneath all who find their refuge in the eternal God are everlasting arms.

The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms. God But, when I said I must speak a little on this solemn word, the eternal God, I feel how really incapable I am or anyone is of really setting forth the nature, the eternity of God.

[11 : 18] God is a spirit, an infinite spirit, an infinite spirit of holiness, purity, truth, power, wisdom, justice, righteousness, love.

God is a spirit, an infinite spirit. And he is eternal.

He hath now beginning before ever the earth was, God was, before the mountains were brought forth, he eternally existed.

and when the earth will be no more as we know it now, when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the earth and all the works that are in it shall be burnt up and dissolved, there will still be unchangeably the same eternal God.

for God is essentially eternal, without beginning, without end, without change, immutably the same.

[12 : 53] As God said to Moses, when Moses was directed to the children of Israel from the desert to bring them out of Egypt, Moses said, well, who shall I tell them that there are?

What name shall I give them? And God said to Moses, say, I am that I am.

The most expressive word. it implies something that just cannot be explained. I am that I am, what I am, that I am.

But it's inexplicable to us. There's no language that can adequately express really what God is.

He is what he is. And when God said to Moses, I am that I am, it implied also his unchangeability.

[14 : 08] Not what I was, not what I will be, but what I am I always was, and what I am I always will be.

I am the same infinite, eternal, unchangeable God. It is wonderful, if we reflect upon it, that creatures of the earth as we are, should ever find in such an eternal God as he is, a refuge for our souls.

worms of the earth, creatures of a day, of the utmost insignificance compared to his immensity and his divine nature, should yet have such a God as he is, the eternal God for our refuge.

Consider it just a little further. the eternal God. Well, as he is eternal in his being and nature, so he is eternal in every perfection of his being and nature.

He is eternal in his power. It can never, never be less than it is. It is as great as ever it was.

[15 : 45] His power manifests itself in different ways, in creation, in providence, and blessedly in grace.

Behind all that God has ever done, or ever will do, there is the eternity of his power. God. He is the ever-living God where all the nations stay.

He is eternal in his wisdom, the only wise God.

He never has, he never can make any mistake. He is, as we've been singing, he is too wise to err, he is too good to be unkind.

He is eternal in the holiness of his being. He is infinitely holy, holy, holy, holy, Lord, God, almighty, that expresses, as far as anything can express, so sublime a truth.

[17 : 07] He is holy in his power, he is powerful, in his holiness, he is wise in all his purposes, and all his purposes manifest his infinite wisdom, he is the eternal God.

The eternal God is thy refuge. refuge. Let us consider this further.

The eternal God is thy refuge. Now, there are several things about a refuge that are very necessary to be a refuge at all, and they are really only to be found in the eternal God.

for instance, a refuge must of necessity be safe and sure. For the prophet Isaiah writes of refuges of nigh, false, unsafe, and those who trust to them, rest in them, will find to their dismay that they have trusted in a false refuge.

Now, there is no real, safe, sure refuge but in the eternal God. There is no refuge in a creature, there is no refuge in anything that we can do, we cannot be a refuge one for another, but the eternal God is a sure and a safe a refuge as his being is eternal and his power almighty and his wisdom profound.

[19 : 18] And a refuge must of necessity be available. a refuge that was not available to us, to which we could not turn, in which we could not hide, would be useless.

However safe and sure the refuge might be in that case, it would have been of no benefit to us unless it were available to us.

I want to come and I feel I must come this morning anyway to show you how we must find refuge in the eternal God.

But I just observe for the moment that God is available to us as a refuge. He is a God near at hand and not afar off.

In him we live and move and have our being. He is a strong power to which we may continually resort.

[20 : 29] Although there is an infinite distance of nature between the eternal God in his infinite divinity and our nature especially in the sinful condition of it there is a great distance between the two natures but there is not a great distance between the two beings.

God is here. God is now. God is in this chapel. If it is in your heart to turn to God you have to say where is he?

He is here. God is wherever your hearts turn to him. God is wherever you find it in your spirit to pray.

God is wherever you feel to say hide me. Oh thou great Jehovah he is there to hide you.

We have no distance to go to find God. He is not far from every one of others. For as Paul said in him we live and move and have our being.

[21 : 49] Oh he is accessible brethren with regard to that. I know that he is in heaven in one sense in his manifested glory he fills heaven but he is everywhere in his omnipresence.

there is nowhere where God is not to the ends of the earth is God available to men as they are brought to turn to him and seek refuge in the eternal God.

Here and now the eternal God is available to us to be our refuge. God has said it himself.

He has said am I a God afar off and not near at hand? He would have us to know that he is not a God afar off from us.

He is near at hand. But the point I want to come to this morning and I must come to it now because it is so essential to my subject is the set before you how the eternal God is our refuge and how we must find refuge in him.

[23 : 18] Of course there must be first of all some real concern with regard to this matter.

Where there's no concern for a refuge of these words as far as I can see have no message about where there is a concern perhaps where the soul is awakened by the quickening power of God and brought to realize its state condition how it needeth a refuge a refuge from its sinful and fearful condition a refuge a refuge of salvation and deliverance or it may be where one is brought into trouble in different ways and oh how they feel to desire one in whom their spirit can find a refuge a rest relief or as this word refuge also means a home a dwelling place agreeable to that word of Moses in the 90th

Psalm Lord thou hast been our dwelling place it means the same there was been our refuge in all generations before the mountains were brought forth wherever thou hast formed the earth or the sea even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God but where there is a concern and a desire for this God to be our refuge a refuge through sin and guilt and fear and distress then this is the way now there must of course first be some knowledge of God given to us before he can ever be a refuge to us it seems impossible that any can find a refuge in a God of whom they know nothing and especially they couldn't find a refuge in a God in whom they do not really in their hearts believe that's impossible there must be a knowledge of the eternal

God who he is and what he is before ever we can find a refuge in him it is a great thing to rightly know God a very great thing the knowledge of God is the foundation of all knowledge of a spiritual and saving nature whoever doesn't know God doesn't know anything spiritually really and if you would say well what is it to know God now the knowledge of God that knowledge which is eternal life and that knowledge of God wherein men come to find in him their refuge consists chiefly in two things first a spiritual understanding of his name and nature without that men have all sorts of ideas about

God that are as wide of a mark as they can possibly be it always has been and it still is this they thoughtest that I was altogether such and one as thyself but they are mistaken who think God is such and one as themselves that is to say they think of God as they think of themselves now to know God means to have a spiritual discerning and understanding of who he really is of his name and nature of his truth and power of his holiness and righteousness of his compassion and his love of his glory and his grace it is to have a spiritual discernment of who and what the eternal

[28 : 58] God really is and if any will say well now how can we come to have that spiritual discernment whereby we know the eternal God my friends there's two ways the first way is through the scriptures now nothing can be known of God savingly as a refuge apart from the teachings of the scriptures the scriptures are given to us under an express inspiration of the Holy Ghost to give us the knowledge of God outside of the bible there's no possible way of coming to know who

God really is that there is a God may be known apart from the scriptures it may be known from creation the invisible things of him from the foundation of the world are clearly seen even his eternal power and God head but that knowledge of God that way is not sufficient at all to guide us to him as our refuge

Spirit enlighten the understandings of our minds to discern the teaching of the scripture with regard to the nature and being of the eternal God now the Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding of our hearts to know that God who has revealed his name and nature in the scriptures and of course in the person and teaching and doctrine of Jesus Christ his only begotten son but then that doctrine and teaching of course is in the scriptures apart from the Bible we could know nothing of what Jesus Christ taught about the eternal God then secondly the knowledge of God consists in impressions that are given to us to feel of the eternal

God in our own hearts this knowledge is not mere theoretical it's experimental it is a knowledge of feelings like as we might say naturally the knowledge we have of the sun is because it shines upon us we know that the sun is light because it's light to us we know that in the sun there is warmth because we feel the warmth of its beams when they shine on us and so it is with the knowledge of God we know that God is powerful if we feel his power we know that God is truth if we feel the effect of his truth upon our souls we know that God is infinitely just blessed if we feel of God of God's nature shine into our conscience and we know that God is love if his love attracts softens and influences our affection we know that God is infinitely blessed if we feel something of the blessedness of his name in our souls now that's to know

God my brethren be clear about it to know God is first to have a spiritual understanding of his name and his nature and secondly to have impressions of it feelingly upon our souls and you see the one always confirms the other impressions upon our hearts confirm the truth of the Bible the truth of the Bible is confirmed to us by the impressions we feel upon our hearts that it's true now this is really very wonderful to know God like this because he is invisible we cannot see him we cannot hear his voice he speaks not audibly to us and there is so very much of ignorance and confusion in our minds that render us naturally so incapable of rightly knowing God that it's wonderful to know

[35 : 28] God it's wonderful to know such a God as this and it's wonderful that seeing there is such a God that we should know him canst there by searching find out God well no but God can find out us canst there by searching come to comprehend the infinite nature of God no he's incomprehensible but the truth of his name can come home to our hearts with power and blessing I wish we all knew God I wish we all knew God for this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true

God and Jesus Christ whom thou sent he can never be a refuge to us if we live and die ignorant of his name his nature and his word oh seek to know God brethren seek to know God it's possible to know him believe me it is it's possible to know God and to believe in him and to be reconciled to him and to find in him the eternal God an eternal refuge for our poor souls God God God is thy refuge well now if he is a refuge and if we have any knowledge of the eternal

God in our hearts and if we really feel that we need such a God as this to be a refuge for our souls how then do we come to find refuge in God well there must be a state of reconciliation with him we must be at peace with God before he can ever be a refuge to us for if we are not at peace with God then we stand exposed to his just and sin provoked and entirely righteous roar and we could never find a refuge in a God of roar and sin in the nature of it provokes divine roar and we need a refuge from that but we could never find a refuge from roar until first we are reconciled to God as well might stubble find a refuge in the furnace as a soul find refuge in God in its sinful condition and still unreconciled to him he stands exposed to God just roar now if the eternal

God is our refuge refuge we must be at peace with him we must be and the way to be at peace with God is plain and simple in the scriptures first of all there can be no peace with God except through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ now people speak about making their peace with God brethren no man ever did no man ever can no man ever will make his peace with God it's impossible it does not devolve upon man to do it nor would God accept it there simply is no ground on which any man can make his peace with God neither is there any need why he should to make peace with God is the sole work of the

Lord Jesus Christ he is the mediator between God and men it is Jesus who makes peace with God and he has made it he has made peace by the blood of his cross this is the faith of the gospel that Jesus Christ by his precious blood atoned for sin by his sacrifice he put it away and through the merit thereof there is peace made with God Jesus has made peace with God by the blood of his cross if peace is made with God then the eternal God becomes our refuge for we can truly believingly trust our souls to

[41 : 46] God if he is at peace with us and we with him acquaint now thyself with God and be at peace with him through Jesus Christ but there is still something I must say this morning before I leave it if the eternal God is our refuge if we are at peace with him through Jesus Christ how do we really come into this that he is our refuge for ourselves brethren first of all by true repentance the way into this refuge is through repentance through real genuine confession of our sin penitently for if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness the eternal

God is a refuge for all penitent sinners all however black their sinfulness may have been either in itself or in their feeling about it so baseless David with his murder or treacherous or faithless then as Peter with his denial and the like still repentance brings us into the refuge every penitent soul finds a refuge in the eternal God for it is repentance towards God then again the eternal God is thy refuge through faith in Jesus Christ it will be true of course for me to say that it is God in and by his son who is our refuge now to believe in

Jesus to believe in Jesus with all the heart to look to him plead to him venture on him trust in him is to enter into this safe and sure refuge for God the eternal God is a refuge for all who believe in Jesus Christ who truly repents of sin who shelters them protects them keeps them be they're my strong habitation he is to them a strong habitation he has given commandment to save them which is a very suitable word to close with this morning they are at my strong habitation thou hast given commandment to save me whether his true repentance with his attending confession and sorrow for sin whether his faith in Jesus in the merit of his person redeeming blood saving grace and justifying righteousness then

God giveth commandment to save and he becomes their eternal refuge the eternal God is thy refuge if you repent of sin if you believe in Jesus if you come to God through him he has given commandment to save you and then underneath are the everlasting arms now that I must leave for thee the eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms will your ones their