

## Hebrews 6:18

### Refuge

We who are found in Christ have taken God at His word and fled for refuge to Christ, our only hope and the true need of our wretched souls. To stand outside of Christ is to call God a liar either to your need for a savior or to call Him a liar as to His willingness to forgive you your sin on the ground of His own promise and condition... To fly for refuge is to be justified, it is to hide in the perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus and to have your soul settled and satisfied in Him and him alone.

Dr. Doddridge said on his dying bed - ***"I have no hope in what I have been or done, yet I am full of confidence; and this is my confidence: there is a hope set before me. I have fled, I still fly, for refuge to that hope. In Him I trust, in Him I have strong consolation, and shall assuredly be accepted in this beloved of my soul."***

It is the only ground of peace and the only place where we can ever be safe, for we are truly flying from the wrath to come.

# I. FLYING FROM

A. Guilt - We are guilty of crimes deserving death

## **Romans 3.23, 6.23**

1. This includes every man, woman and child ever born, or that will ever will be born.
2. There are no exceptions, none are righteous, NONE are innocent.
3. There is no and never have been any immaculate conceptions... we are ALL born with the taint of original sin, and with a mind predisposed toward sin and rebellion. Every single one of us has rebelled and continues to rebel against the authority of our God.

B. Wrath - The punishment that we deserve is the wrath of God, which is spiritual death. It is dying forever with no end to the dying.

1. - think about this for a moment. Death itself is a fearsome thing, but we all at some level know that even if it is slow there WILL be an end to it. Even for the most painful and

drawn-out processes there will come a point where it must cease, for we will have died.

2. Not so with the wrath of God. For those who find themselves under the eternal judgment of God there will never be any end to the agony. They will be suffer the righteous judgement of God with no end, no temporary cessation, no reprieve, no hope and no help for all eternity. Paul describes them as "vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" (Romans 9.22)

3. This means that they will also have been given resurrection bodies of some sort that have been prepared to endure the unending wrath of God without being consumed or destroyed. They will be forever under the eye of God fully punished for their sin.

C. Terror - This reality **MUST** be understood and dealt with if we are to have any hope of escape. Denying the crime did not protect the guilty from the avenger of death. The act must be declared and refuge must be sought. No murderer went

to the cities of refuge as a sightseer, wandering about outside the city walls to inspect the ramparts while the avenger of blood sought their destruction. They flew to the city center and cried "Mercy! Refuge! Sanctuary! Hide me from the avenger who seeks my life, hide me from the coming wrath!"

### **Isaiah 9.13-21**

D. Righteous Judgment - we must understand that there is no other escape. We DESERVE the judgment of God, we DESERVE DEATH... this judgment IS coming and it is coming FOR US. We have reduced this truth to "accepting Jesus", as if He were some sort of applicant to our elite club and we have to decide if He is cool enough to hang out with... what a travesty! We are not called to accept Him, we beg Him to accept us! To have mercy on us for the crimes that we have committed which have placed us under the righteous judgment of God. We deserve to be destroyed, but have taken Him at His holy word and have sought refuge and mercy in Him.

## II. FLYING UNTO

### A. Christ Jesus as a refuge

1. The allusion is to the cities of refuge established in the OT for those guilty of manslaughter.
2. Thomas Manton points out that there is both a driving and a drawing force. Something drives us on with a whip at our backs, and that something is the law, but equally true is that something also draws us ever on with urgent gentleness; and that something is the gospel.
  - a) The law drives us out of ourselves
  - b) The gospel draws us home to God

### B. The nature of our flight

1. There is earnestness, it is a case of life and death. The presence of a trifling spirit shows that we are not truly touched at heart.
2. There is determined singularity. There is no delay to dally at the byways or the optional accessories... there is nothing else that will

satisfy, nothing else that could ever be enough...

3. There is unwearied diligence. We run on until we are safe, the man running for the city of refuge was literally running for his life. So too are we, and there can be no tarrying until we have closed with Christ
4. There is a focused target. A singular destination. Jesus **alone** is the haven for our souls. He **alone** can make us safe.

### III. REFUGE

- A. There were 6 cities of refuge in ancient Israel.
  1. Set in prescribed locations according to the command of God. They were interspersed across the nation so that one of them could always be reached.
  2. Without doubt, there were more than enough of them to hold any and all that might need them. They would not ever run out of room or fail to be able to take someone in.

3. There were spacious, well maintained roads to these cities of refuge, just as the plain offer of the gospel is clearly proclaimed to all. Come and fly to Christ. Turn from your sin and fly to Christ. Beg for mercy from the hand of your God and find that mercy in the blood of the lamb!

B. These cities were named by God

1. “Kadesh,” which means “Holy.” - Jesus is the Holy One of God. He redeems and saves men to holiness.

*Ephesians 4:24 (NKJV)*

*<sup>24</sup> and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

*1 Thessalonians 4:7 (NKJV)*

*<sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.*

2. “Shechem,” which signifies “Shoulder,” this represents Christ as bearing the sins and burdens of the sinner.

3. “Hebron,” meaning “Fellowship.” - Christ is the medium and ground of fellowship between God and men, and between the whole body of believers. In Christ we become the sons of God and members one of another.

*Romans 12:5 (NKJV)*

*<sup>5</sup> so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.*

*1 Corinthians 12:25 (NKJV)*

*<sup>25</sup> that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.*

### **1Peter 3.8-12**

4. “Bezer,” - “Stronghold.” Christ is often described in this manner. He is our refuge, our fortress, and a stronghold in the day of trouble. In Him we are more secure than if surrounded by a castle of rocks.

*Psalm 142:5 (NKJV)*

*<sup>5</sup> I cried out to You, O Lord: I said, “You are my refuge,  
My portion in the land of the living.*

*Psalm 18:2 (NKJV)*

*<sup>2</sup> The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;  
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield  
and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

*Proverbs 18:10 (NKJV)*

*<sup>10</sup> The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The  
righteous run to it and are safe.*

*Psalm 61:3 (NKJV)*

*<sup>3</sup> For You have been a shelter for me, A strong tower  
from the enemy.*

5. “Ramoth,” which means “Exaltation.” Jesus is the exalted Son of God. The Prince of life. The Lord of glory.

**Philippians 2.5-11**

**2Samuel 22.47-50**

6. “Golan,” which means “Exultation,” or “Joy.” Christ is the joy and rejoicing of His people. His gospel is the message of joy. His kingdom is not only righteousness and peace, but joy in the Holy Ghost.

*Psalm 5:11 (NKJV)*

*<sup>11</sup> But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You;  
Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them;  
Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You.*

*Psalm 30:5 (NKJV)*

*<sup>5</sup> For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life;  
Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the  
morning.*

**Psalm 51.7-13**

*Romans 15:13 (NKJV)*

*<sup>13</sup> Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and  
peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the  
power of the Holy Spirit.*

## IV. FLY

- A. The urgency is unavoidable - the careless sinner is under the judgment of God already, and the axe is ready to fall... we must deal with this reality
- B. Our repentance must be immediate and ongoing. We must be constantly seeking hard after Christ. That we might be very confident, not with our arrogance which presumes that we are just too good to go to hell, but with faith that God will keep His word and that we are called FOR holiness...
- C. Joy is the promise and life is the reward, let nothing hold you back!
- D. This reality is a great comfort to we who are found in Christ, and a great terror and aggravation to those without... but let us all consider the words of John Flavel in closing:

***“Can you be safe too soon? Can you be happy too soon? Certainly, you cannot be out of danger of hell too soon; and therefore why should not your closing with Christ upon His own terms be your very next work? If the main business of every man’s life be to flee from the wrath to come... and to flee for refuge to Jesus Christ..., then all delays are highly dangerous. The manslayer, when fleeing to the city of refuge before the avenger of blood, did not think he could reach the city too soon. Set your reason to work upon this matter; put the case as it really is: I am fleeing from wrath to come; the justice of God and the curses of the law are closely pursuing me; is it reasonable that I should sit down in the way to gather flowers, or play with trifles? for such are all other concerns in this world, compared with our soul’s salvation.”***

***~ John Flavel***