

# **A REFUGE OF LIES**

---

**ISAIAH 28:15 • TV-015A**

A television broadcast sermon delivered

**SUNDAY, JUNE 6, 1976**

By

**HENRY T. MAHAN**

---

Transcribed, edited and published

**NOVEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2020**

## **HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY**

Zebulon Grace Church

6088 Zebulon Highway

Pikeville, KY 41501

PH: 606-631-9053

### **Isaiah 28:15**

*“Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.”*

I want to speak to you on the subject: **“A REFUGE OF LIES.”**

Our Scripture reading will be taken from the book of **Isaiah 28:15**. I'd like for you to take your Bibles and open to the **Isaiah 28:15** and listen to this verse of Scripture. I think we're going to learn something today and I want you to learn it along with me.

The Lord says; *“Because you have said, we have made a covenant with death and with hell; we are at agreement. When the overflowing scourge shall pass through it shall not come to us for we have made lies our refuge and under falsehood have we hid ourselves, a refuge of lies.”*

Now there are some things that all people know, that is, to some extent; they know there's a God. Now most everyone will admit, that is, to some extent, that there is a God, that there is what they call, “A supreme being.” They have some unusual ideas about God. They call Him, “Somebody up there,” or “The Almighty.” Men have some unusual ideas about who God is and what God is.

## A REFUGE OF LIES

ISAIAH 28:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

For example; they call their lodge brothers, “Most Worshipful Master.” They call God, “The man upstairs.” They call their leaders, “His Heinous.” You wouldn’t think of referring to the queen of England as Elizabeth or the former king as George. You’d say, “His Heinous, or Her Heinous,” but you call God, “Jesus Christ superstar.”

We call our lodge brothers, “Most high, exalted, Potentate” and we call God almighty “Somebody up there.” Yes, most everybody knows to some extent there is a God. They have some unusual ideas about who God is but they will admit there is a God.

Secondly: I believe all men know; they know to some extent, that sin has entered into this world.

Now, they disagree strongly on the extent of the fall in Eden’s Garden and they disagree strongly on the influence of that fall upon them. But all men know to some extent that, “*All have sinned and come short of God’s glory*” and God’s perfection. They know that sin has come into this world. There is a problem between us and God. Most everyone will admit that.

Thirdly: Most everyone knows that death will come sooner or later to all men and they have an idea there’s some kind of life after death. Now isn’t that true? Most everybody knows that death, sooner or later, is going to come to you, and sooner or later, to me. And most everybody believes that there is something after death, some kind of life.

The poet Longfellow wrote these words:

**“Life is real, life is earnest  
And the grave is not its goal  
Dust thou art to dust returneth  
Was not spoken of the soul.”**

Most men believe that there is a heaven somewhere and most men believe there’s possibly a hell somewhere. And to some extent these things concern our population, God, sin, death, judgment, heaven and hell. They’re concerned about these things and to some extent they realize these things.

And so they find themselves as God says in our text today; they find themselves a refuge, a hiding place.

Now, just as they build bomb shelters against physical loss and just as men take out insurance against financial lost, they build a religious refuge against eternal loss. Everybody has some kind of religious refuge, some kind of hiding place, some kind of fire escape in time of trouble.

## A REFUGE OF LIES

ISAIAH 28:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

Now here's what they say; now listen to the text. Look back at **Isaiah 28:15**; they say; *"We have made a covenant with death. We don't want to die but we're not afraid to die. We know that it's something which shall come to us sooner or later and we have our insurance policies and our cemetery lots and our wills all made out. And when death comes it's going to be all right with us."*

You see, we've prepared all these things and we're really not afraid to die. And we believe that it's going to be all right, it's going to be all right. *"We have made a covenant with death."*

But that's not all; we have an agreement with hell. Some may hear Christ say *"Depart from me, I never knew you,"* but not us.

Some may hear Christ say *"Cast him into outer darkness. Bind him hand and foot,"* but not us. Some may perish forever, but not us. Some may be separated from a holy God to live eternally unto His condemnation and wrath, but not us.

*"We have an agreement with hell."* Now the murderer and the rapist and kidnapper; they may go to hell, but not us nice folks, not us church members, not us religious people. We have a refuge. We're not afraid to die. *"We've made a covenant with death and we're in agreement with hell."*

And listen to this; *"And when the overflowing scourge of God's wrath, when the flood of God's judgment, like the waters of Noah's day, when it sweeps down upon this ungodly world, it won't come unto us. We're not afraid because we have a hiding place, we have a refuge, we have a religious hiding place, and we shall be protected."*

But here's the sad news; now listen to Him, God says, *"You say you have a covenant with death. You say you have an agreement with hell. You say that when the flood of God's judgment comes upon this wicked world it won't come unto you."*

*"But I say your refuge is a refuge of lies and you're hiding under falsehood. Your covenant; (listen to it, read on down two verses 17-18) your covenant with death shall be disannulled and your agreement with hell shall not stand. And when the waters of judgment shall pass through you shall be swept away."*

And then shall occur the strangest prayer meeting ever held, for the Scripture says, *"In that day,"* when they realize that they have had a refuge of lies and they have hidden themselves in falsehood.

When they realize they're the object of God's wrath, *"they're going to pray,"* the Scripture says. *"They're going to call for the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne."*

## A REFUGE OF LIES

ISAIAH 28:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

That'll be the strangest prayer meeting ever held. It won't be Christians praying; it'll be the unbelievers praying. They won't be praying to God; they'll be praying to the rocks and mountains.

They won't be praying for life; they'll be praying for death, extermination, annihilation, anything. And they won't be praying to see God's glory, "Oh that I may behold Him and His glory." They'll be praying, "*That the rocks and mountains will fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.*" What a horrible experience!

Now my friend; what are some of the false refuges? Let's see if we can expose some of them:

If I have a false refuge, I had much rather it be exposed now than at the judgment. I had much rather my refuge of lies be exposed now and be just stripped away from me and laid bare under the searchlight of God's law and of God's commandments and of God's holiness than wait till the judgment and cry; "O Lord, I preached and I built churches and cast out demons. I was baptized and did all these things." To hear the Lord say, "*I never knew you, I never knew you.*"

*"Your covenant with death will be disannulled. And your agreement with hell shall not stand. And when the overflowing scourge of God's wrath comes through, (you, like all the others) will be swept away with it."*

Do you want to hear some of the false refuges in which religious people hide? I'll give you some if you'll listen to me.

First of all: A wrong idea of sin, a wrong idea!

Men do not fear sin, they do not flee sin, and they do not seek the forgiveness of sin, because they do not understand sin. They do not understand "*The exceeding sinfulness of sin.*"

Now listen to me for a few minutes. I'm going to give you three important things:

First of all: You'll never know sin and what it is; Paul said that, "*I had not known sin.*"

Why, he was a man 40 years old and didn't know what sin was. Why, he thought he was blameless. He said, "*I was a Pharisee of Pharisees, concerning the law I was blameless. I had not known sin except the law came and said, thou shalt not covet.*"

## A REFUGE OF LIES

ISAIAH 28:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

Now, you'll never know sin, you'll never understand sin. You can be in the pulpit and not know what sin is. You can be a deacon, a Sunday school teacher, a very religious person. The Pharisees were; Paul was, and not know not what sin is.

And you'll never know what sin is until you quit comparing yourself with other people and begin to compare yourself with the holiness of God. Now I'm telling you the truth. You'll never know what sin is until you quit comparing yourself to others.

Like the Pharisee who stood in the temple and prayed, "*God; I thank you I'm not like other men.*" He didn't understand sin. No, he wasn't like that Publican; he wasn't unjust, he wasn't an extortioner, and he wasn't an adulterer.

He did go to church. He did tithes. He did give alms. He did fast. Those things were true. He wasn't like that man but he wasn't like God either. A man said to me one time; this is the truth, he said, "I use to walk in the church and I'd look around and I'd say I'm as good as these people are, these people who claim to be Christians; I'm as good as they are."

You're probably right. "I'm better than some of them." And he was right on that score too but he wasn't as good as God. Isaiah cried; read the **5 chapter of Isaiah**; five times he said, "*Woe is them, woe is them, woe is them, woe is them, woe is them.*" And then in **Isaiah 6:1** it says, "*I saw the Lord and then I cried woe is me, woe is me.*"

If you ever understand what sin is you're going to have to take your eyes off of other people and turn your eyes toward God and see His spotless and immaculate, pure, holiness, and see yourself compared to Him and you'll see how vile, wretched, and depraved the best of you are.

Job successfully defended his righteousness, successfully against his three accusers. But when he came face to face with God in **Job 39:40-42**; what happened? Aww, he said, "*I hate myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes. Once have I spoken, yea twice, but I'll never open my mouth again.*"

You'll never understand sin till you quit comparing yourself with the people of this world and begin to see yourself in the light of God's holiness.

I'll tell you the second thing now; a wrong idea of sin has given you a false refuge and a false hope and God will show you that at the judgment whatever secret be, that every idol thought, and every idol word, shall be brought into the judgment and into the open.

And God's going to show you your dirty, filthy rags, of self-righteousness and that's when you're going to "*cry for the rocks and the mountains to fall on you.*" You can't stand the glory of His presence.

## A REFUGE OF LIES

ISAIAH 28:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

Secondly: You'll never know sin until you understand that the law of God requires holiness of thought added to motive, imagination, as well as holiness of deed and action.

That's right! Our Lord said, *"It isn't that which goeth into the mouth that defileth a person. It's that which comes out of the heart. Out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, murders, blaspheme, adultery, envy, lust, jealousy and hatred."*

Why He said, *"You've heard it said by them of old times thou shalt not kill; I say unto you, to hate is to be guilty already of murder. You've heard it said by them of old times thou shalt not commit adultery; I say unto you to look and lust is to be guilty already. You've heard it said by them of old times to love your friends and hate your enemies; I say unto you love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them which despitefully use you."*

How long has it been since you've fallen on your face before God and prayed for your worst enemy? You say, "I never have." Then you're a sinner; you've broken the law of God. He commands you to pray for your enemies. He commands you to bless people that curse you.

And you're never going to understand what sin is as long as you're connected only with outward deeds and not realize that it's something, it's a principle in the heart and it's rebellion in the heart. It's sin in the heart. Before a man ever commits an outward deed he plans it and blueprints it in his heart.

I'll tell you something else; you'll never know sin until you realize that sin is not only what you do but what you are. You're a member of Adam's fallen, sinful, wretched, fleshly, race. *"And in the flesh,"* God's Word says, *"Dwelleth no good thing."*

We are a race of people that tried to throw God off His throne. That's right! In our granddaddy Adam we tried to do away with God. We said, "We'll be like God."

We are a race of people that chose Barabbas to Jesus Christ. "Give us Barabbas." Well what shall I do with Jesus which is called the Christ? Just hang Him on a cross. That's the way we feel about Him.

And the issue between you and God, my friend, is not the picture show you went to or the watermelon you stole; the issue between you and God is one of will, my will and not God's will.

A wrong idea of sin has built for this religious world a phony, false, refuge of lies, in which they're hiding and in which they're trusting and in which they're hoping. And they feel secure and they're so good that they're not afraid to die. And they're not afraid of hell.

## A REFUGE OF LIES

ISAIAH 28:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

And there's going to be a judgment, "But I won't be there." Yes you will, yes you will. And I'm afraid at that time you're going to see what sin really is.

I'll tell you another false refuge in which people are hiding and that's a wrong idea of the mercy of God. Now don't leave me here; listen to me carefully. The love and mercy of God has been preached to such extremes that men know nothing of the wrath and judgment of God.

Now I believe the Scripture teaches and you know it and I know it; God is love:

**"Oh love of God  
How rich, how pure  
How measureless, how strong  
It shall forever more endure  
The saint's and angel's song."**

*"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Herein is love, not that we love God; He loved us."* He loved us enough to give His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. God is love.

But I'm telling you; men have preached the love of God and the mercy of God to such extremes that this world today knows nothing of the wrath of God and the judgment of God.

We see these little signs everywhere, "Smile; God loves you." But my friend; they neglect to add, *"God is angry with the wicked."* That's what the Bible says. The same Bible that says *"God is love,"* says also *"God is angry with the wicked every day."*

They say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." That's true; nail it on the wall, preach it, it's so. But they neglect to add, *"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but what, the wrath of God abideth on him."*

God is love but God's righteous too. And Almighty God; He said, *"In no wise will I clear the guilty."* God is merciful but *"He is also just and the soul that sinneth shall surely die."* God is gracious but God will and must punish sin.

Now I'll tell you where you'll find mercy; you'll find it in Christ. That's where you'll find it. And out of Christ, *"God is a consuming fire."* Out of Christ you need not look for mercy; you look for wrath, you look for wrath and condemnation.

## A REFUGE OF LIES

ISAIAH 28:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

*“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.”* That’s what the Bible says. *“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

There is peace. God is peace but it is in Christ, not in the church, not in the baptismal pool, not in the wafer and the wine, and not in Mary; it is in Christ. That is where it is. *“There is therefore, now, no condemnation to them who are in Christ.”*

Paul said, *“Nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ.”* And I’m telling you this, if you think that God almighty’s going to be merciful to you and gracious to you apart from Christ, now you have a wrong idea of the mercy of God and you’re building a hope for eternity on a false foundation, on a false foundation.

*“If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ;”* God’s Word says, *“Let him be accursed when Jesus come. And he that hath not the Son of God hath not life, shall never see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

Salvation is not in the church, not in a preacher’s hand. It’s not in the mourner’s bench. It’s not in the altar. It’s not in the front of the church; salvation is not in ceremonialism, legalism, or laws; salvation is in Christ, a person.

He came down here as my representative and lived for me and died for me and rose for me and is seated now at the right hand of God interceding for all who believe on Him and all who will receive Him.

And our hope is not in ourselves, but in Christ. You’re a sinner and I’m a sinner. You’re worthy of hell and so am I. If we get what we deserve God will separate us from Him forever. But we’re not going to get what we deserve because Christ got what we deserved.

And He took it in His body on the tree and died for our sin. And that’s our hope; He’s our hope.

And a wrong idea of the mercy of God; well somebody says, “God is too good to send a man to hell.” Wait and see! Now, He spared not His own Son but delivered Him up to the death of the cross for us. Do you think He will spare us?

I’ll tell you another false refuge; now you listen to me, I wouldn’t offend you but I’m going to tell you the truth; another false refuge in which people hide is this; it is a profession of religion that does not produce a love for Christ, holiness of life and the fruit of the Spirit.

## A REFUGE OF LIES

ISAIAH 28:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

Now you listen to the Bible: *“If any man be in Christ,”* and that’s where the mercy is, in Christ; that’s where peace, rest, joy, love, and hope; that’s where forgiveness is, in Christ, we’re accepted in Christ, *“If any man be in Christ he is a new creature (he’s a new person).”*

*“If any man have not the spirit of Christ he’s none of His.”* The Scripture says, *“If any man love not our Lord Jesus; let him be accursed. He that loveth not, knoweth not God.”*

Now my friends; you listen carefully, it is a false refuge that gives a man a hope for heaven who lives an unholy and a ungodly life. I don’t care whose church he belongs to or how many professions of faith he’s made or how much doctrine he believes. It’s a false refuge that lets you have a hope for heaven and lets you continue in your dishonesty, wickedness, and your lies, and your evil and your sinful living.

And it’s a false refuge that gives a man forgiveness of sin who will not forgive others. And it’s a false refuge that lets a man love God and hate everybody else. And it’s a false refuge that gives mercy to the unmerciful. It’s a false refuge that gives a man peace with God which he only owns with his lips and not with his heart.

Now works don’t save. You know I don’t preach salvation by works; I preach salvation by Christ. But no man is going to be saved without works. Prayer doesn’t save but a prayerless man is not saved. Love cannot save but the unloving cannot be saved.

I’m saying that if you know Christ your life will be conformed daily to His image and you’ll grow more like Him in attitude, in spirit, conduct, character and in conversation. Now you’ve got a phony refuge if you think that you can be bound for glory while you live with hell in your heart. That’s a false refuge.

And you need not to find your resting place in your baptism, go back and claim your profession and your experience and your church membership. God won’t accept those things; Christ is our hope. And if He lives within He brings His Spirit.

Your church membership will do you no more good than Judas’ did him. And your baptism will evade you no more than Simon Magus’ did him if your heart is not right. And your giving will do you no more good than Ananias and Sapphira’s giving did them. And your family connections won’t help you anymore than it did Lot’s wife. You need a vital union with Christ.

I’ll tell you another false refuge and I’m going to close with this; another false refuge is, “Tomorrow.”

## A REFUGE OF LIES

ISAIAH 28:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

Some people listening to me right now are saying that preacher is dead right and I know he's right. You know it's right because I'm reading it to you from the Scripture; "And I plan to do something about my relationship with God, but not now, tomorrow."

Old Felix listened to Paul preach. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgement. And Felix trembled and he said, "Now Paul; you go your way. Now, when I have a more convenient season I'll come hear you again and I'll send for you. You just go your way."

**"Tomorrow's sun may never rise  
To bless thy long diluted sight."**

This is the time, this is the time. Be wise and receive Christ tonight; tomorrow you may be dead. Tomorrow you'll stand at the judgment. Tomorrow you'll be in hell. Old Felix trembled and sent Paul away but he never came back.

The Scripture says; "*Behold, now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation.*" And there are plenty of you right now who are hiding in that little old refuge, "tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow." And our Lord says over and over again; "*Boast not yourself of tomorrow.*"

There's only one real refuge. God said, "*I lay in Zion a tried stone, a sure foundation, a precious cornerstone, and he that believeth shall not be ashamed.*" Do you know who that is? It is Jesus Christ the Lord!