The Eternal Refuge

Deut 33:26-27

Introduction:

1. This morning let us listen to the stirring words of an old man
   a. God has used him mightily throughout his lifetime
   b. Hear his parting words for the people he has led for 40 yrs
2. These are the last written words of Moses
   a. Uttered shortly before Moses entered into everlasting rest
   b. Moses could say these words after 40 yrs of leading the children of Israel through the wilderness
   c. With these words, Moses closed out his ministry
3. Israel would face many enemies and fight many battles as they conquered the Promised Land, God would give victory
4. Moses' experience proved the truth of these verses
   a. Deliverance at the Red Sea
   b. God supplied water when the children of Israel thirsted
   c. God supplied food when the children of Israel hungered
   d. God conquered enemies to protect His people
5. They would dwell in a safe / productive land, separated from the pagan nations but bearing witness to them about God
7. God would be their helper /shield they had nothing to fear.
8. These verses were favorites of Alexander McClaren, of Manchester, England, Baptist preacher of the 1800s. As a young teenager he worked in Glasgow and their home was 6 miles away. Between work and home lay a dark, foreboding ravine. One night he had to work late and he dreaded that walk home and especially he feared going through that ravine. As he approached the ravine, in the middle of the night, paralyzed with fear, unbidden tears came to his eyes. Then, up ahead, he saw someone's head and then his shoulders and it terrified him. McClaren said that the form and shadow drew closer and it was his father who had come to meet him and escort him safely home." What an illustration of these verses.

I. SUPREMACY OF GOD - "ETERNAL GOD"

A. He is Incomparable – vs 26

26 *There is* none like unto the God of Jeshurun, *who* rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.

1. Jeshurun was a pet name of God for Israel
2. Moses pictures God in sovereign power rushing to the aid of His people
   a) *Here is assurance that God cares for us*
   b) *I don't have to be afraid of the unknown*
   c) *We often tremble for the future, for the unknown*
3. The power of God is available to help His people
4. He is not off in the distance, high in the heavens, out of reach
5. The people of God are not left helpless and hopeless
6. We are not left to handle our problems ourselves

B. He is Eternal – vs 27

27a The eternal God *is thy…*

1. The finite mind cannot grasp fully what it means to be eternal, to have always existed
2. There has never been a time when God did not exist as God
3. We need an eternal God because we are eternal creatures with eternal souls
4. Jehovah was not some new "God" on the scene
5. He was not some "Johnny-come-lately"
6. Being eternal, His arms are everlasting

The Supremacy of God

II. SAFETY IN GOD

27a The eternal God *is thy* refuge…

A. God is the Dwelling-Place of His People

1. "Refuge" - used 9x in the OT
   a) *Translated den – 5x, place – 1x, dwelling place – 1x, refuge – 1x, habitation – 1x*
   b) ***Ps 90:1*** *A Prayer of Moses the man of God. Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.*
   c) ***Ps 91:9*** *Because thou hast made the LORD,* which is *my refuge,* even *the most High, thy habitation;*
   d) *A refuge is a place of escape, a spot of safety, a shelter*
2. It is as though Moses was saying – "The nations around us have their own refuges, but our refuge is God."
3. They were pilgrims traveling towards the promised land
   a) *Marching during the day pitching tents in the evening*
   b) *In the morning, the trumpet blew and they took the tents down and traveled again*
   c) *They had no city – they had no dwelling-place, but God was their dwelling-place*
4. We are also pilgrims
   a) *We are strangers here as we proceed towards our heavenly home*
   b) *The way may grow weary*
   c) *The trials of life may crowd into our lives*
5. The lost flee to many refuges
   a) *The refuge of good works - refuge of religion*
   b) *The refuge of baptism and church membership*

B. God is the Protection of His People

1. Our greatest protection is in God
2. Men ignore God - do not want God around - how foolish
3. Individually, we need him for protection - our nation needs him for protection
4. The greatest protection that God provides is soul salvation
5. That is the protection that we need the most

III. SUPPORT FROM GOD

27 The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms…

A. The Everlasting Arms

1. The arms of God are invisible – no one sees them
2. The arms of God are spiritual – no one feels them
3. Arms of God are careful – no one falls out of them
4. God's arms are omnipotent – no one overcomes them

B. The Everlasting Arms are Underneath

1. The underneath needs to be solid, sound and substantial
   a) *Underneath needs to be firm for if that fails, we fail*
   b) *As children of God we can rest knowing that the "underneath" is well taken care of*
   c) *"Underneath" is of great concern to the architect and builder – if he is wise, he gives it most attention*
2. See that skyscraper reaching up to the clouds, what if something is rotten underneath?

C. The Everlasting Arms Give Protection

1. A father puts his arms around his child if there is danger
2. And God protects His children – Ps 77:15
   15 Thou hast with *thine* arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.
3. Life is full of peril and there are dangers on every hand
4. The enemy lurks in every shadow – strong / swift

D. The Everlasting Arms Provide Affection

1. A father's arms around his child show love
2. The child is held close to the father's bosom, near heart
3. This picture of God embracing His children in His arms tells us of his love for us
4. A love that is close and tender

E. The Everlasting Arms Suggest Strength

1. Love makes a mother's arms strong
2. Her arms around the young child, all the power in the universe could not tear away that child
3. Yet the strongest human arms only faintly picture those divine arms of the Lord
4. His arms can never be broken – Isa 26:4
   4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH *is* everlasting strength:
5. God's arms are underneath so we can never sink
   a) *Sometimes the troubles of life overflow us like great floods*
   b) *But underneath the believer are those everlasting arms to keep us from sinking*
6. "He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee"
   27 The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee...
   a) *No enemy is too great for God*
   b) *We may lack strength in ourselves to drive out the enemy but God is omnipotent and His power is no match for the enemy*

F. The Everlasting Arms Mean Endurance

1. Human arms grow weary even in love's embrace
2. Eventually the arms of mom and dad lie silent in the grave
3. A husband stood quietly beside the coffin of his wife who died after only one year of wedded happiness
   a) *Their love had been sweet, but oh how brief*
   b) *A two week old baby was left motherless*
4. But God's arms are the "everlasting arms"
   a) *Death will not rip us from those arms*
   b) *Death will never take God away from us*

G. If the Everlasting Arms are Underneath Me...

1. Then I may quietly yield myself unto Him
2. Then I man confidently expect divine protection
3. I may be certain that He will lift me above my foes
4. I may feel assured that He will safely convey me home
5. If God's arms are underneath us, let us lean heavily
   a) *It won't be any problem if we lean with all our weight*
   b) *You won't strain God - Your load is no prob. for Him*
   c) *What a fellowship, what a joy divine,*
      Leaning on the everlasting arms;
      What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, leaning...
   d) *When you are sick and weak – you can lean on those everlasting arms*
   e) *When the pink slip comes – lean on the everlasting arm*
   f) *When the doctor says, "I'm sorry, it's terminal" – lean on the everlasting arms*
   g) *When your spouse lies buried in the grave – lean on those everlasting arms*

Supremacy of God – Safety in God – Support from God

IV. STATUTE FROM GOD

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

1. God does not work for us in a way that would make us lazy or irresponsible
2. His miracles do for us what we cannot do for ourselves
3. God thrust out the enemy, but we are commanded to destroy them
4. We are not to be just spectators, but we are servants
   a) *He has work for us to do*
   b) *Many church members need to learn here*
   c) *They come to church to sit and watch others perform*
   d) *They do not come to serve*
5. Lets destroy the pride in our lives, the lust, the covetousness, the unbelief, worldliness, carnality

Conclusion:

1. Deut 32:11 gives us a picture of God's arm underneath his people holding us up

   11 As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:

   a. The eagle builds its nest high on the rocky crag where predators cannot reach the eggs. Mom and dad eagle guard those eggs until they hatch. Then they must hunt to feed those hungry little mouths.

   b. Finally it is time to learn to fly. The eaglets are comfortable in the nest and they don't want to leave. Mother eagle prods one of the little eaglets and with her beak and pushes it out of the nest.

   c. The eaglet starts to fall, and the great eagle flies underneath, puts its wing out, catches the little one on its back and flies a mile into the air and drops the baby.

   d. Meanwhile, the eagle circles around and underneath the eaglet; the eagle catches the eaglet on its wings and carries the eaglet up in the air again.

   e. Again the great eagle catches the little one on its back and they go up another mile. The little eagle is at perfect rest, and little by little it will learn to fly. The eagle knows when the eaglet is tired; it spoons the eaglet into the nest, noses out the next one and starts off again.

2. That is the way God takes care of us. We get used to the nest. It is so cozy and tidy. But we need to learn to fly.

God’s Power

The God that stopped the sun on high,
And sent the manna from the sky,
Laid flat the walls of Jericho,
And put to flight old Israel's foe,
Why can't He answer prayer today,
And drive each stormy cloud away?
He turned the water into wine,
And healed a helpless cripple's spine,
Commanded tempests, "Peace, be still;'
And hungry multitudes did fill,
His power is just the same today,
So why not labor, watch and pray?
He conquered in the lion's den,
Brought Lazarus back to life again,
He heard Elijah's cry for rain,
And freed the sufferers from pain.
If He could do those wonders then,
Let's prove our mighty God again.
Why can't the God who raised the dead,
Gave little David, Goliath's head,
Cast out the demons with a word,
Yet sees the fall of one wee bird,
Do signs and miracles today,
In the same, good, old-fashioned way?
He can! He's just the same today!
-Martin Luther

HBC#155 – Sept 2011