

The Refuge of Lies

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Isaiah 28:14-19 (NKJV) “Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men, who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, ¹⁵ Because you have said, ‘We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we are in agreement. When the overflowing scourge passes through, it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we have hidden ourselves.’ ¹⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily. ¹⁷ Also I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet; the hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place. ¹⁸ Your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol will not stand; when the overflowing scourge passes through, then you will be trampled down by it. ¹⁹ As often as it goes out it will take you; for morning by morning it will pass over, and by day and by night; it will be a terror just to understand the report.”

Deceived people don't know they are deceived. If they did, they wouldn't be deceived! Every one of us is susceptible to believe a lie. Lies come from different sources. Some lies come from the devil. He is the father of lies who deceives the entire world (John 8:44; Revelation 12:9). Other lies come from the people around us. We are often fooled through our natural inclination to trust what others tell us. However, the most dangerous lies are the lies we tell ourselves. These lies become refuges that we trust in and defend. Ultimately, Satan is behind every lie.

In Isaiah 28:14-19 we see that Israel believed a lie, namely: “The judgment of God will not come to us.” They reasoned that they were God's chosen people. God had given them His law to establish His kingdom in their midst. However, rather than living as a holy people to the Lord, Israel became corrupt and hardened to His correction: “*For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them, nor do they seek the Lord of hosts. ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord will cut off head and tail from Israel, Palm branch and bulrush in one day. ¹⁵ The elder and honorable, he is the head; the prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail. ¹⁶ For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and those who are led by them are destroyed. ¹⁷ Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men, nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows; for everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is*

stretched out still.” (Isaiah 9:13-17 NKJV) In Isaiah 28:7-8 (NKJV) the prophet records: “But they also have erred through wine, and through intoxicating drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, they are swallowed up by wine, they are out of the way through intoxicating drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. ⁸ For all tables are full of vomit and filth; no place is clean.”

God warned Israel that the overflowing scourge would pass through and trample them down. Unfortunately, Israel refused to hear God’s word and trusted in a lie. They trusted in the words of false prophets, corrupt eldership, and backslidden priests who assured them that God was on their side and would save them. The people believed that messages from God’s prophets regarding impending doom were false and that they were exempt from God’s judgment: *“When the overflowing scourge passes through, it will not come to us.”*

Self-convinced in their reasoning, Israel unified around this lie. God called their agreement a “covenant with death”. Rather than submit to the truth, they ran into a refuge of lies and falsehood that sealed their doom. Once people become hardened against truth and covenant with a lie, God has no choice but to judge. Israel refused to turn from the lie. Therefore God said that He would not save them: *“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. ³ For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversity.” (Isaiah 59:1-3 NKJV)*

A refuge of lies is a stronghold of reasoning that rejects God’s truth in order to embrace a lie. Consider the following lies people tell themselves today:

- “Having sex and living together is okay as long as people love each other.”
- “I believe God made some people straight and some people gay.”
- “I believe I married the wrong person now that I met...”
- “Pornography doesn’t affect anyone but me.”
- “I don’t need church. Me and God have our own thing going.”
- “I have a right to do what I want with my own life.”
- “It’s my body and I can do what I want to with it.”
- “God knows I am weak when I am tempted. He will understand if I give in.”
- “There is nothing wrong with smoking marijuana. God made it right?”
- “Drinking alcohol is okay. After all, I will never become an alcoholic.”
- “Secular music doesn’t affect me. I just listen to the music.”
- “As long as I don’t get caught then what I am doing is okay.”
- “I make too much money to serve the Lord now.”

- “There is no absolute right or wrong. Everyone is free to believe what they want.”
- “Every religion will get you to heaven as long as you are sincere.”
- “I accepted Jesus when I was a kid so it doesn’t matter how I live now.”
- “I am a good person. I believe God will let me into heaven.”
- “I will give my life to Jesus someday.”
- “As long as I go to church and give, I am doing my duty.”
- “I have sinned too much. God could never forgive me!”
- “God could never use me to do His will.”

Our refuge of lies actually becomes a self-made prison of sin and deception. A refuge of lies is no better than a cardboard box in a hurricane! Isaiah said that God will use two things to destroy the refuge of lies: hail and flood. Hail humbles all that is standing. In the same way, the hail of God’s Word will pound away at the refuge of lies until it is destroyed. A flood fills up and flushes our every hiding place. In the same way, the flood of God’s Word preached will continue to surround those who hide in their bunkers of falsehood until they are flushed out into the light of God’s truth.

Lies trap people in the destructive power of deception. We are called to expose and overthrow these lies. 2 Corinthians 10:4-6 (NKJV) says: *“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵ casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, ⁶ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”* We have a responsibility to take every lie captive to the truth of God’s Word.

Have you taken refuge in a lie? Are you hiding under falsehood? If so, be assured that God will sweep away the lies in which you now trust. Break your agreement with death now and run to Jesus, the only TRUE refuge of salvation!