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How to Feel Safety, Not Terror

By Paul Griffitts

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At the present time our nation continues in the war on terror. We recognize, of course, that both 'war' and 'peace' during a time when the world largely rejects the Son of God can be but relative terms. There was much real enmity during the days of so-called 'peace', and, conversely, there may be enjoyed, in the middle of this war, a peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

It would never be my intention to 'meddle' with political ideas of those who are so inclined to have these thoughts (Deut. 2), or the consciences of you the reader, but my work is to pursue truth which when discovered will belong to a realm entirely removed from the things of earth, leaving the reader with the Word as the sole director for his or her actions. Nevertheless it is mostly true that we may learn from the things around us.

The government because of the threat of terrorist attacks has provided, among other things refuges for the protection of the people, this in the form of new laws like the Patriot Act and various other security changes at airports, courthouses and even schools. It is this fact that provides the theme of this study. God also has foreseen and provided refuges, and He has set forth Himself in the Word in this capacity.

I would normally have felt compelled to present you with a structural analysis and other commentary, but as this article is intended to minister to the 'present necessity', I will in this case approach our subject more directly. The refuge is, so to speak, intended for immediate use, not to be examined in pieces.

Deut. 33:27 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].

This takes us to the beginning of all consolation, comfort and protection. Moses must have had a reason for using the adjective 'eternal' here. He could have said, as in Psalms, 'God is our refuge', or 'The God of Jacob is our refuge', but he obviously intends to direct our attention, not only to God, but to some type associated with God's character that is of particular importance when connecting the need

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for a shelter, and providing it. The Word 'eternal' represents at least four different ideas in the Scriptures, and we will acquaint ourselves with these wonderful uses in the Bible.

The Hebrew word Qadam, translated here in Deuteronomy as 'eternal', means 'to precede, to go before', and so at times conveys the thought of 'anticipating' something before it happens, as may be seen in Jonah 4:2, 'Therefore I fled BEFORE (qadam) unto Tarshish', which Gesenius the Hebrew grammar scholar translates: 'Thus I anticipated (the danger which threatens me) by fleeing to Tarshish.'

'Of old' is also a frequent translation, and the words of Habakkuk 1: 12 give a similar thought. '[Art] thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.'

You should not only remember that the 'eternal' God is 'from of old', for this of itself would not necessarily prove that He would be a refuge, but also that the word carries with it the idea of 'being beforehand with anything', 'anticipating the demand' and providing for it.

As with the word 'eternal', so with the word 'refuge', it represents a number of ideas. In Deuteronomy 33:27, the word is meonah, from a root meaning 'to dwell' .

Deut. 33:27 'The eternal (qadam) God [is thy] refuge (meonah), and underneath [are] the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy [them].'

This refuge is, therefore, a dwelling place. The same word is used for the 'dwelling place' of God Himself (Psa. 76:2), and for the 'dens' of wild beasts (Psa. 104:22). In either case, the meaning is the same. It is a place that provides protection, and where one may feel secure.

The refuge provided for the people of God is not to be thought of in terms of concrete or steel, for following the opening statement of Deuteronomy 33:27 we read: 'And underneath are the everlasting arms'. The word 'arms' may have two different meanings, but there is no confusion in Deuteronomy 33:27.

The 'everlasting arms' refer, not to weapons but to the arms of the Lord, once 'stretched out' to deliver Israel (Deut 4:34; 5: 15; 7:19; 9:29; 11:2; 26:8), and now stretched out in loving support, so that the tormented believer, forgetting all terrors and threats, looking not for cold and stark steel or damp and musky concrete, sinks into peaceful and secure rest in the arms of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God Who is beforehand is thy refuge.

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The Politics of Freedom

By Kathy Simcox

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The war on terror should not be a political war. It should not be a war pitting Republican against Democrat or Christian against Muslim. The war on terror is a war on evil. There have been countless wars in our world that to some extent have protected against some level of evil. But this evil we fight today is an evil more bitter, more deadly, than anything you or I have ever lived to see. It is an evil so deeply rooted in hatred that it will take a very long time, if ever, to defeat. I am against war not because I am a Democrat or a peace-loving hippie, but because my Christian values tell me killing is wrong; because my Christian values tell me to love my Muslim brothers and sisters even though they worship God differently than I do; and because my Christian values tell me that its wrong to kill millions of innocent people, on both sides, because of those differences. I support the war on terror not because I am a Republican or a conservative bigot, but because I am an American who holds the value of freedom very near my heart; because I am an American who wants to live within the protective walls of that freedom for as long as I can, the very same protective walls so many young people have sacrificed their lives to keep standing; and because I want so very much for the rest of the world to know how wonderful that freedom feels and the peace that freedom brings.

I support our President not because of any hidden agenda or foolish conspiracy, but because he is an American like me who despises the enemy of freedom and the enemy of his faith; because he despises the enemy of ALL faiths, including that of true Islam; and because he despises the enemy of humanity. I am a free American, and I believe in all who fight for that freedom.

About the AuthorKathy Simcox, Columbus, Ohio, United Stateshrdude28@hotmail.com Kathy works as an Administrative Assistant in the College of the Arts at The Ohio State University. She holds a BA in Psychology and is currently working on a second BA in Religious Studies. In addition to writing, her passions include hiking, biking, kayaking, photography, and singing in her church choir. She is also known to read an occasional book.



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