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COR-Christ Our Refuge: The Safest Spot in the Universe (MP3 CD)



Is Christ your city of Refuge? Is He easy to reach for you? Are His arms open to you? Do you see that there is no other hope but Him? Then He is YOUR city of refuge. Jesus offers to be our refuge when we are unclean, our refuge when we are weary, our refuge when we are homeless, our refuge when we are helpless, our refuge when we are hopeless, and our refuge when we are tempted. Have you fled to the safest spot in the universe? If not do so today. If you have, Christ is your moment by moment perfect refuge!

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Christ: Our Life-Long Refuge



Part 4 (050626PM)

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The safest spot in the universe is in the embrace of Jesus. Once into the arms of Jesus, what do you get? Turn back for a moment to Joshua 20 and note somewhere these six truths for those who flee to the safest spot in the universe. When you get there, to Him, you find the perfect refuge has so much to offer us. Jesus can be for any and all of us this morning the perfect refuge.

Jesus offers to each of us to be a refuge when we are unclean, a refuge when we are weary, a refuge when we are homeless, a refuge when we are helpless, a refuge when we are hopeless, and a refuge when we are tempted.

The Wonderful Benefits of Staying in the Safest Spot in the Universe

Now can I read Joshua 20 again and give you the meaning of each city that God names? Here we go: *"And they [assigned] **Kedesh** in Galilee in Mount Naphtali, and **Shechem** in Mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which is **Hebron**, in the mountain of Judah. And on the other side [of the] Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned **Bezer** in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and **Ramoth** in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and **Golan** in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities assigned for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger who sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person without intent might flee the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation."* (Joshua 20: 7-9)

- KEDESH is not only a city name it also means a "holy place" or "righteousness".
- SHECHEM is not only a city name it also means "shoulder".
- HEBRON is not only a city name it also means "fellowship".
- BEZER is not only a city name it also means a "stronghold" or "fortress"
- RAMOTH is not only a city name it also means "exalted" or "heights"
- GOLAN is not only a city name it also means "separated."

Now listen to how each of those city names portray details of the refuge offered for us to lay hold of every day, every hour, and every moment of our lives.

Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the unclean; Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the weary; Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the homeless; Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the helpless; Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the hopeless; and Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the tempted.

Have you fled to the safest spot in the universe? If not do so today. If you have, look around—Christ wants to be your moment by moment perfect refuge!

Open with me to something the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: *"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come"* (1 Cor. 10: 11).

"Examples" is the Greek word **typos** or what we call in Bible study, **types**. The cities of refuge are a type of Christ. Millions of things could have been recorded, but God chose to record only these things because they enable us to grow in our understanding of Him and our relationship to Him.

Turn with me again to Hebrews 6 as we look again at these precious words of security, comfort and hope—because there is so much MORE from God's Word for us!

Part: 13	Just As I Am
Part: 12	A Refuge for the Abandoned
Part: 11	A Refuge for the Overwhelmed
Part: 10	A Refuge for the Unexpected Changes of Life
Part: 9	Refuge for the Loneliness of Life—Job Loss
Part: 8	Refuge for the Loneliness of Life—Family Conflict
Part: 7	Refuge for the Loneliness of Youth
Part: 6	Christ: Refuge for the Weary
Part: 5	Christ: Refuge for the Unclean
Part: 4	Christ: Our Life-Long Refuge
Part: 3	The Safest Place on Earth
Part: 2	Christ: Our City of Refuge
Part: 1	Anchored to Christ

Hebrews 6: 17-20 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The safest spot in the Universe that is even safer than Cheyenne Mountain is also the closest. Jesus Christ our hope, our refuge, and our salvation—is one thought away, one prayer away. He is as close as a cry, as close as an out stretched hand, or an upturned heart. Anyone, anywhere can instantly arrive in that safest of all places—from any location.

Christ Was Portrayed by the Cities of Refuge

So Christ is easy to reach, His arms are open to all, His entrance is never locked, He is a completely sufficient refuge, and He is the only hope. How wonderful. But there is so much more as we examine the differences between the cities of refuge and Christ our refuge. Christ is portrayed by the cities of refuge but He is so much better!

But--Christ is Better Than Any City of Refuge

There are three reasons why Jesus is better than any earthly city of refuge. They are because: He died only for the guilty which means for all of us—those cities were for only the innocent; He offers only permanent refuge—those cities were for temporary refuge; and finally He is closer than any city of refuge—it was a hard and dangerous journey for anyone trying to get to those cities.

Now, can I show you something of the depths and heights of Christ's richness toward us? Look again with me at that ancient list of city names in Joshua 20.

Do you remember from the Old Testament that often Hebrew names are also words that have a distinct meaning? And do you remember that God often points out that a name also means something in addition to being a name—to make a point?

Take for instance David's encounter with Abigail's husband Nabal. His name means in Hebrew 'fool', and God shows that is just what he was. God points out Jacob's name means deceiver as he was, and so on many times through the Old Testament this dual usage of a word is seen.

Now can I read Joshua 20 again and give you the meaning of each city that God names? Here we go: *"And they [assigned] Kedesh in Galilee in Mount Naphtali, and Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah. And on the other side [of the] Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities assigned for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger who sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person without intent might flee the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation."* (Joshua 20: 7-9)

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- RAMOTH is not only a city name it also means "exalted" or "heights"
- GOLAN is not only a city name it also means "separated."

Now listen to how each of those city names portray Christ's refuge offered for us to lay hold of every day, every hour, and every moment of our lives. Jesus offers to each of us this evening to be for us a refuge when we are unclean, weary, homeless, helpless, hopeless, and tempted.

Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the unclean; Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the weary; Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the homeless; Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the helpless; Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the hopeless; and Christ is the closest, safest, and only Refuge for the tempted.

Christ is Also Portrayed As Our Lifelong Refuge

In looking over the meaning of the names of these cities of refuge, we are struck with the distinctive characteristic of each. They are individually showing forth some particular feature of the character of Christ; and when taken as a whole, they illustrate the sufficiency of Christ as a Refuge to meet all of our need, and the need of all. To see the adequacy of Jesus Christ to meet our every need, consider the names of the cities. These six cities of refuge all point to Him, and enable us to sing with a restful, joyful heart, "God is our refuge and our strength." [1]

1. KEDESH means a "holy place" or "righteousness," and this is our first need. When we come to Christ, He gives us His righteousness and forgives all our sins (2 Cor 5: 21, Col. 2: 13). Here was the **refuge for the unclean**. The holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only hope of the sinful. Only that which is clean can cleanse. The unrighteous can only find refuge in the righteousness of God. The finished work on the accursed tree affords a holy hiding-place, for only there are the unclean made holy. To that blest fountain of Thy blood, Incarnate God, I fly. There let me wash my spotted soul, From crimes of deepest dye. In wonder lost, with trembling joy We take the pardon of our God; Pardon for crimes of deepest dye, A pardon bought with Jesus' blood: Who is a pardoning God like thee? Or who has grace so rich and free?

So Jesus is the **refuge for the unclean**. There is no sin He can't forgive; there is no

stain He can't remove; there is no failure He can't forget. Remember this week these words from Christ's lips:

Mark 1:40-41 Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." 41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."

2. SHECHEM means "shoulder," and suggests that we find in Christ a resting place, a friend on whom we can lay our burdens. "Can I hold out?" is always the question a new believer asks. The answer is, "He will hold you!" Here was the **refuge for the weary**. (*Matt. 11:28; Luke 15:5*) The Lord Jesus is the strong Savior. Most believers have found that they can find no rest in ruling themselves. But when faith comes, we lean not only on His merit, but also on His almightiness. A tired child finds refuge on the shoulder of its loving father. And the Lord Jesus has borne our burden upon His shoulder, even as the lost sheep found both safety and rest upon the shepherd's shoulders.

So Jesus is the **refuge for the weary**. There is no sheep of His pasture that He doesn't invite to find rest in Him. He seeks us, finds us, and offers to us His perfect rest. Remember this week these words from Christ's lips:

Matthew 11:28-30 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

3. HEBRON means "fellowship," suggesting our fellowship with God in Christ, and also our fellowship with other believers. You can have a house and not a home. But if you have a home you can be at home anywhere even if you have no house. Home is where you relax in the company of those you love and trust. So the Lord Jesus is the **refuge for those who are alone and feel homeless**. Like Noah's dove, man is spiritually a homeless wanderer. There was no rest, no safety, and no fellowship outside of that ark. The repentant homeless prodigal found a refuge in his father's house and in his father's fellowship. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only real Hebron for the soul. There is no fellowship with the Father except through Him, "...truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3)

So Jesus is the **refuge for the homeless**. Jesus promised to always be with us. He leads us through life, meets us at death, carries us to our eternal home, and is with us (Emmanuel) forever. Remember this week these words from Christ's lips:

- *Matthew 28:20b* "... and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."

4. BEZER means "stronghold" or "fortress," suggesting the protection and victory we have in Christ. The safest place in the world is in the will of God. Jesus Christ is the **refuge for the helpless**. We are not only sinners, but we are also helplessly sinful. In the case of the one guilty of second-degree murder, there was to be no such thing as self-protection. And so it is with us sinners. We are "without strength." "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Prov. 18:10) When we flee from the justice of God into the mercy of God, we will find a stronghold that can never give way. No matter how helpless, here you are eternally safe. The Lord Jesus is the only Bezer. Any other hiding places will fail us, and fall like the walls of Jericho.

So Jesus is the **refuge for the helpless**. When we are weak He is strong; when we reach the end of all we are—He has just begun. Remember this week these words from Christ's lips:

- *Matthew 14:27-33* But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." 29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" 31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

5. RAMOTH means "exalted" or "heights" and reminds us that believers are seated "together in heavenly places in Christ" (*Eph. 2:4-10*). Sin always leads a person down, but Christ lifts us up; and one day we shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air! And so our Lord is the **refuge for the hopeless**. By nature we are not only without strength, but also without hope in the world. (*Eph. 2:12*) Those who hope in this world system of politics and religion have no hope. The Lord Jesus is our hope, exalted at the Father's right hand, with a name which is above every name, high and lifted up. He is our Ramoth. When you are downcast, and feeling yourself hopeless in this world, look up. During Noah's flood, there was no mountain that could save. Only those who were lifted up by the ark were saved. Jesus Christ is the Ark of our hope and eternal security.

So Jesus is the **refuge for the hopeless**. When life is dark, no hope is in sight, and we don't know where to turn Jesus reminds us—when there is no answer to all our problems, there is still Jesus. Remember this week these words from Christ's lips:

- *Mark 2:3-5* Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. 4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

6. GOLAN means "separated." God has appointed His Son to be the **refuge for those who are tempted**. We are usually tempted much by the world when we tamper much with the world. We have not fled to the Lord Jesus as our city of separation. He separated Himself for our sakes—for He was separate from sinners—that He might aid those who are tempted. Golan is the last of the six cities which are mentioned. Most

of us would have to confess that separation from worldly ambition, worldly pleasures, and worldly fame is just about the last refuge which we seek. **1 John 2:15-17** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16** For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. **17** And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

So Jesus is the **refuge for those who are tempted**. Jesus knows our frame that we are dust. He is acquainted with all of our struggles and weaknesses. Remember this week these words from Christ's lips:

- **John 8:10-11** When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" **11** She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

(Romans 7; Psalm 32 and David; **James 1:13-14**)

Is Christ your city of Refuge? Is He easy for you to reach to? Are His arms open to you? Do you see His entrance as never locked, and that He is a completely sufficient refuge? Do you see that there is no other hope but Him? Then He is YOUR city of refuge.

Do you see—Christ is better because He is nearer than any city of refuge. Christ is better because He offers only Permanent Refuge. And, Christ is better because He died only for the guilty.

Have you fled for life-long refuge to the One who is the refuge for the unclean, the refuge for the weary; the refuge for the homeless; the refuge for the helpless, the refuge for the hopeless, and the refuge for those who are tempted.

Finding Refuge Through Christ's Word

Now to apply what we have learned about Christ our forerunner (prodromos) who pulls us safely home; and Christ our city of refuge—let me show you how to find refuge each day in the Bible!

Go back and look again at **Hebrews 6:18-19** that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the **hope** set before us. **19** This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,

The third Hebrew word that God gives us is describing **CLINGING HOPE**--the word is **BATACH** (982): **HOPE THAT INSPIRES DEEPER TRUST**.

What does God seek as our response to hard times? Clinging to Him as our refuge--is the resounding answer.

Turn with me to the most well known verse in the Bible using this special word. **Proverbs 3:5**. **Trust** [literally cling to; Hebrew **batach**; LXX **peitho**] the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

Here **batach** is used in the sense of hope that comes from casting one's total future upon God as a little child and trusting Him for everything. This word is most often translated to trust or to have confidence in someone-usually God. But in some contexts it is definitely used to mean hope, as in the great prophetic Twenty-second Psalm. The Messiah's thoughts while suffering on the cross are predicted here[2]:

"But thou [God] art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me HOPE [Hebrew **batach**; LXX elpis] when I was upon my mother's breasts" (**Psalms 22:9** KJV).

- **Psalm 37:3-5** **Trust in** [LXX elpidzo] the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. **4** Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. **5** Commit your way to the Lord, **Trust** also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.
- **Psalm 40:3** He has put a new song in my mouth—Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, **And will trust** [cling to] the Lord.
- **Psalm 56:3-4**, **11** Whenever I am afraid, **I will trust** [cling to] You. **4** In God (I will praise His word), In God I **have put my trust**; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me. **11** In God **I have put my trust**; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?
- **Psalm 112:7** He will not be afraid of evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, **trusting** [clinging to] the Lord.

Old Testament **batach** is in the LXX the New Testament elpis/elpidzo. New Testament usage of **elpidzo**:

- **2 Corinthians 1:10** who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we **trust** that He will still deliver us,
- **Philippians 2:19** But I **trust** in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.
- **1 Timothy 4:10** For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we **trust** in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.
- **1 Timothy 5:5** Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, **trusts** in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.
- **1 Timothy 6:17** Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to **trust** in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.
- **Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the substance of things **hoped** for, the evidence of things not seen.
- **1 Peter 1:13** Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your **hope** fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
- **1 Peter 3:5** For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who **trusted** in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,

New Testament usage of *elpis*:

- [Romans 5:2](#), 4-5 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in **hope** of the glory of God. 4 and perseverance, character; and character, **hope**. 5 Now **hope** does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- [Romans 15:4](#), 13 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have **hope**. 13 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.
- [Colossians 1:5](#) because of the **hope** which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,
- [Titus 2:13](#) looking for the blessed **hope** and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
- [1 Peter 1:3](#) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living **hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- [1 Peter 1:21](#) who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and **hope** are in God.
- [1 Peter 3:15](#) But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the **hope** that is in you, with meekness and fear;
- [1 John 3:3](#) And everyone who has this **hope** in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

[1] Roy Gustafson, *In His Land Seeing Is Believing*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: World Wide Publications, 1980, p. 65-68.

[2] Hal Lindsey, *The Terminal Generation*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company: 1976, p. 95.

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