

Guest Preacher Rev. Kenneth Ferguson

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[0 : 00] Now as God enables us, let us turn back to this portion of scripture we've read, Deuteronomy chapter 33.!

The children of Israel at this particular time have now reached the borders of Canaan. After 40 long and arduous years in the wilderness, they are close to realizing the promise that God gave to Abraham around 450 years before that, when he promised that his seed would have the land of Canaan as their inheritance.

And now before Moses finishes his life's work, he is drawn and enabled to bless the tribes of Israel as they are mentioned for us in this chapter here.

It's interesting when you think of the experiences Moses had as under the Lord he led these people through the wilderness.

[1 : 59] They were not uneasy people to deal with. They were a moaning and a complaining people. And if they were not getting their own way all the time, Moses felt sometimes that they were ready to stone him.

Nevertheless, Moses, by God's grace, led them to the borders of the promised land.

And rather than give a list of their faults, as he parts from them, he is led to bless the tribes individually.

Each one of the tribes, he mentions them here. But I'm not going to focus on any of the tribes as such.

But on the words of verses 26 and 27. There is none like God, O Jeshurun. And so on. I'd like to say a few words, first of all, about Jeshurun.

[3 : 13] It appears in another two or three places. And it's another name for the people of God, for Israel. And the meaning of the word Jeshurun in the original is upright or righteous.

Now, if you were to investigate the experiences and the lifestyle of each one of these tribes and everyone within these tribes mentioned in this chapter, in themselves they were not upright people. They were not righteous people. They were not straight. Only in as much as they stood justified in the righteousness of Christ were any of them really Jeshurun righteous.

None of us is righteous of ourselves. Each one of us has sinned. We come short of the glory of God.

None of us is able to fulfill every aspect of God's law as we are by ourselves. But those who believe in Jesus Christ, those united to him in their effectual calling, they are justified through faith in Jesus.

[4 : 44] And that's really where we have to start here. These people, Jeshurun, they are the people of God.

And he's not focusing on them particularly in these verses. He's focusing on their God particularly. And he says, there is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens to your help, through the skies in his majesty.

The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms. And I'd like to say a few words under three headings regarding the God of Jeshurun, the God of God's people.

We have three thoughts here I'd like to highlight. First of all, he is the helper of his people.

[5 : 52] He rides through the heavens to your help. That's the first thing. He is the helper.

Secondly, in verse 27 at the beginning, we find that the same God, the eternal God, is the dwelling place of his people.

He is their dwelling place. And thirdly, and finally, he is their protector. The second part of verse 27 says, underneath, are the everlasting arms.

So he is the helper of the people of God. He is their dwelling place. And he is their protector. Little wonder the chapter here climaxes with these marvelous words of verse 29.

Happy are you, O Israel, who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of your help, the sword of your triumph. Your enemies shall come falling to you, and you shall tread upon their backs.

What a climax to this chapter. Well, as the Lord enables us, I'd like to say a few words under these three headings that I've mentioned.

[7 : 20] First of all, the Lord is the helper of his people. He rides through the heavens to your help.

Well, when you think of the history of the people of God down through the Old Testament, you find repeated examples of the Lord's miraculous intervention in their experiences.

many of these mentioned in the morning the way he intervened on their behalf during their time in Egypt, long before this, 40 years before this.

He came in such a magnificent display of almighty power. And then, if you follow the experience of the people of God down through the history of the Old Testament, you find again and again the Lord intervening.

I'm going to mention a couple of things. You remember the Philistines were very bothersome to the people of God during the days of Samuel.

[8 : 33] And they threatened Israel on this particular occasion. And you read of this in 1 Samuel chapter 7. And then it says at verse 10 of that chapter, the Lord thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion and they were defeated before Israel.

The Lord's direct intervention. There is none like God, O Jeshurun, who rides through the heavens in your help.

and there's another example, 2 Samuel 22, that the Lord thundered from heaven and the Most High uttered His voice and He sent out arrows and scattered the enemy lightning and He routed them.

whatever actually these words mean in physical terms, it's the Lord's intervention in a supernatural way that secured the success of His people against their enemies.

enemies. One more example before I go on. During the days of the prophet Elisha, remember that the armies of the enemy had surrounded the city of Dothan and when Elisha and his servant awoke in the morning, they saw all the armies of the enemy surrounding the city and Elisha's servant was very much afraid but Elisha was not.

[10 : 30] Why? It says in 2 Kings chapter 6 verse 17 Elisha prayed and said, O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.

And when the servant opened his eyes, he saw and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

The angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasseth all those about that do him fear and them delivereth. There is none like the God of Jeshurun who rides through the heavens to your help.

Can I take this into the New Testament for a moment? A voice from heaven was heard when John the Baptist baptized, baptized our Lord Jesus at the Jordan.

And what was the voice from heaven? This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

[11 : 53] A voice from heaven. The Father speaking. and this beloved son came to be the utmost helper of his people in life.

He came to fulfill all the tasks that we could not fulfill. To fulfill every detail of God's law and suffer in the room instead of all those who were electing him from all eternity.

Do you remember the other account we have of the voice of the Father from heaven on the Mount of Transfiguration? And Peter, he said, let us here make three tabernacles, one for you, Lord, one for Moses, one for Elias, not knowing what he said.

But then the voice from heaven came, this is my beloved son, hear ye him. He must be your focus. Elijah, he did his own business under the hand of God. Moses also fulfilled every duty that God called him to, but they were only, as it were, coming towards the fulfilling of the promises regarding the coming Messiah.

[13 : 22] And now he had come, and the Father declared him on the Mount of Beatitude, on the Mount of Transfiguration, I should say. This is he. Listen to him.

And when he came into his public ministry himself, his voice, although it was a human voice, it was the voice of the God man.

It was the voice of the one who had ridden through the heavens for the help of his people, sinful people, lost people. And when he rose from the dead, a miraculous rising from the dead, no one had ever risen from the dead by their own power before.

This was a public demonstration of God's direct intervention in man's sinful plight. So that those who believe in this Jesus, who came riding through the heavens for our help, he is able to raise us also from spiritual death and at last from the grave into which our bodies will be laid.

He is the great help of his people. God's And I mention this verse again. The helper says, look unto me and be saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else.

[15 : 29] And the New Testament says there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Have you come to the helper who calls you to himself?

Secondly, we find here, besides being a helper, a helper, he is also a dwelling place. The eternal God is your dwelling place.

it's as if he comes so close to us. I mean, he doesn't deal with us, as it were, from a great distance and leave us the way we were.

He comes and he unites his people to himself. He is our dwelling place. one or two points I want to highlight in relation to this.

In the prophecy of Isaiah 32, it says, a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and as a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

[17 : 05] You see the way the picture is brought before us? This man, Christ Jesus, the Savior, God with us, and he is the one who calls us into fellowship with himself.

and if you were to ask him, what are you offering me? I offer you a hiding place. From what? What about this answer?

The hiding place from the wind of sin that started blowing in the experience of mankind in the garden of Eden, the wind of sin from the depths of hell.

Satan came to tempt Adam and Eve, and that wind destroyed them. in the olden days, when people had thatched cottages, if a strong enough gale would blow, the thatch very often would peel right off.

That's what the wind of sin has done. And the wind is still blowing. in my heart and in your heart.

That wind is a powerful wind, but the one who dealt with it in his life and death and resurrection, he calls you unto himself, that you might have shelter in him.

[18 : 54] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Isn't it amazing that Jesus says this?

He is your dwelling place. He is the city of refuge. church. And when you read in the New Testament, you find this in 1 Thessalonians, the first chapter I think.

When the apostle Paul talks to these people, Christian people in Thessalonica, he says, they are in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

They're in God. they have come to him. They have been received by him. What security. The almighty God is my refuge.

None can challenge him. He is the almighty one. And to be trusting in him is the safest thing to do.

[20 : 16] in the Old Testament, there were cities of refuge appointed for people who may have accidentally slain somebody.

If somebody had accidentally killed another person, the city of refuge was available for him or her to run to. And there they were safe.

safe from anybody who would want to deal with them for killing somebody maybe who are their relatives or whatever.

Jesus is the ultimate city of refuge. He is the one and his door is open right now. And he calls people whom he sees out there in the wilderness of the world, tempted by Satan in so many different ways.

He says, come to me. the door is open. Don't wait until the door is shut like the foolish virgins in the gospel waited.

[21 : 30] Do you remember the parable of the ten virgins? Five were foolish and five were wise. Five wise took their lamps and oil with them, but the five foolish took no oil.

When the bridegroom came, the shout went forth, the bridegroom has come, and they started trimming their lamps. The ones that had the oil, they went in with the bridegroom.

The others, they asked for extra oil from the ones who had the extra, but said, no, you go and buy some for yourselves. By the time they came back, the door was shut.

Don't dally until the gospel offer is shut on you. The eternal God is your dwelling place.

He's our helper and our dwelling place. Thirdly, it says here he's our protector.

[22 : 43] Well, that's what I summarize these words to mean. Underneath are the everlasting arms. arms. The everlasting arms of God.

What can we make of that? I mean, God is a spirit. He has no arms. He has, apart from the humanity of Jesus, God has no arms.

He is infinitely great. Can't be confined to our space. As somebody said, God has its center everywhere and the circumference cannot be found.

But here the language is so marvelous. Underneath are the everlasting arms. I mean, these people, they are helped by the almighty God.

Their dwelling place is the same God. And now their protector, is the one who has everlasting arms.

[23 : 57] I'm going to suggest two or three things regarding the everlasting arms. What about the everlasting covenant of grace?

God is the Lord's last verse. When you read David's last words in 2 Samuel 23, depending on how you read that chapter, I always read it thinking of the authorized version, although my house be not so with God, the Lord has given him a picture of the way a king should live and so on.

And he says, although my house is not so with God yet, this is where he stopped. He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and shew.

He's the God of promise. He is the God who does not go back on his word. He is the God whose arms of covenant commitment remain under his people, despite the fact that they fail so often, like all of these people in these particular tribes, often failed and came short.

Nevertheless, the Lord who was a covenant God to them would not let them down. Underneath them are the everlasting arms.

[25 : 30] And you say, well, I've come very low sometimes. but be thankful for this, that however low you come in your circumstances, maybe in your mental condition, maybe in your physical condition, maybe in your spiritual situation, the Lord says that underneath you are his arms of covenant commitment, saying, I will never leave you, I will never forsake you.

everlasting arms in the plural, the covenant.

What are both the arms of his everlasting love? When you read in Jeremiah chapter 31, the Lord speaks so encouragingly through the prophet, and he says, I have loved you with an everlasting love.

It has no beginning. It has no ending. That's what the meaning of that word in the original is. Everlasting.

Actually, literally, the vanishing point. If you extend, as it were, your sight, as far as you can possibly see, these arms are there.

[27 : 08] However far you may go away from him, his arms hold you. What about his arms of power?

His everlasting power? power that raised Jesus from the dead. The apostle says, that's the power that works in you.

Enabling you, first of all, to repent of your sins. Then, enabling you to exercise faith upon Jesus. Exercising faith in such a way that you stand and say, I am for him.

just like the followers of David said, we are with you, David, and for you, son of Jesse. Everlasting power of God.

God. I mentioned, I think, already this evening, the prayer of Paul when he struggled with the problem he had in his flesh, whatever it was.

[28 : 22] Some people say it was blindness. We don't know. He prayed three times, besought the Lord. And he said, my grace is sufficient for you.

My strength is made perfect in your weakness. because the covenantal arms of God were underneath him. The love of God surrounded him.

And the power of God was imparted to him by the grace of God. One more thought.

What about the arms of Providence? people sometimes feel, well, everything is against me.

Do you remember what the catechism answer is to what are God's works of Providence? God's works of Providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving, and governing all his creatures and all their actions.

[29 : 39] The whole of the universe is in his hand and you and I as a minute, relatively speaking, part of that universe is cared for by him.

The Providence that he sends, the circumstances that he sends, they're not just haphazard chance happenings. No, he foreordains for his own glory whatsoever comes to pass.

These arms are under you, his covenant, his love, his power, his Providence. God, he be God. What a favored people. There is none like God, O Jeshurun. You who are righteous, you who are in Christ, there is none to be compared with your God.

He rides through the heavens to your help, maybe in the practical aspects of your life, in the spiritual plight you sometimes experience, he comes and he speaks a word in season.

[31 : 09] And then he says, the eternal God is your refuge. What a refuge to have. What a glorious refuge to have.

God is like a strong tower. Those who are God fearing, they flee to him and they don't want to be anywhere else apart from him.

These three things then. Is he your helper? Is he your dwelling place? And is he your protector? I pray that he is all of that to myself and yourselves.

Let us pray. Help us Lord, as we have been thinking about your commitment to your own people, we ask that we might be found among them, rejoicing in the goodness of our God to us.

We don't deserve any good thing from your hand. That's the amazing thing. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price to secure the salvation of his people.

[32 : 37] God make that increasingly more precious to us, we pray. Bless the congregation here. Bless the meeting that they anticipate having after the service.

Bless Mr. Maxwell for presenting the Slavid Gospel Association. We pray that you would bless all aspects of his work and the work of his organisation.

Go before us now, Lord, and cleanse our sins. In Jesus' name. and for his sake. Amen. Psalm 121 from the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 121 I to the hills will lift mine eyes. From whence doth come my need? My safety cometh from the Lord who heaven and earth hath made.

Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will he slumber that he keeps. Behold, he that keeps Israel, he slumbers not, nor sleeps. To the end of the psalm, Psalm 121, to the praise of God, I to the hills will lift mine eyes.

[33 : 56] I to the hills will lift mine eyes.

From whence doth come my need? My safety cometh from the Lord, who heaven and earth hath made.

Thy foot he'll not let slide nor will his slumber that he keeps.

his lips behold thee that keeps Israel, he slumbers not, nor sleeps.

The Lord thee keeps, the Lord thy shape, all thy right hand doth stay.

[35 : 26] The world by night fish of God's might, nor yet the sun by day.

name. The Lord shall keep thy soul, he shall preserve thee from all who will.

As thy going out and dead, God be forever will.

forever. Now may our Christ, love of Father, fellowship Holy Spirit, rest upon and abide with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen.