

There is Refuge!
Joshua 20:1-9
Lesson #18
2/2/25

I. The cities of refuge were appointed by God.

A. There were six towns set aside as a place of refuge.

Exodus 21:12 “Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death. ^[13] However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate.”

Numbers 35:6a “Six of the towns you give the Levites will be cities of refuge, to which a person who has killed someone may flee”

Numbers 35:9 “Then the LORD said to Moses: ^[10] Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, ^[11] Select some towns to be your cities of refuge, to which a person who has killed someone accidentally may flee.’”

Numbers 35:13 “These six towns you give will be your cities of refuge.”

B. These towns were selected on both sides of the Jordan.

Numbers 35:14 “Give three on this side of the Jordan and three in Canaan as cities of refuge.”

****Joshua 20:1** “Then the Lord said to Joshua: ² “Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses.”

II. The cities of refuge were available to the innocent.

A. The cities of refuge were for protection.

1. The fugitive who fled to a refuge city was safe.

****Joshua 20:3** “So that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood.”

Numbers 35:22 “But if without hostility someone suddenly shoves another or throws something at him unintentionally ^[23] or, without seeing him, drops a stone on him that could kill him and he dies, then since he was not his enemy and he did not intend to harm him, ^[24] The assembly must judge between him and the avenger of blood according to these regulations.”

2. The fugitive who fled to a refuge city stated their case.

****Joshua 20:4** “When he flees to one of these cities, he is to stand in the entrance of the city gate and state his case before the elders of that city. Then they are to admit him into their city and give him a place to live with them.”

B. The city of refuge stopped the avenger’s pursuit.

****Joshua 20:5** “If the avenger of blood pursues him, they must NOT surrender the one accused, because he killed their neighbor unintentionally and without malice aforethought.”

C. The city of refuge was home until the passing of the high priest.

Numbers 35:12 “They will be places of refuge from the avenger, so that a person accused of murder may not die before he stands trial before the assembly.”

****Joshua 20:6** “He is to stay in that city until he has stood trial before the assembly and until the death of the high priest who is serving at that time. Then he may go back to his own home in the town from which he fled.”

III. The cities of refuge were accessible to anyone.

A. These cities were strategically selected.

****Joshua 20:7** “So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah.”

****Joshua 20:8** “On the east of the Jordan of Jericho) they designated Bezer in the desert on the plateau in the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead in the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan in the tribe of Manasseh.”

B. The city’s access was structured to assist the person fleeing.

C. These cities were for the innocent who sought refuge.

Numbers 35:15 “These six towns will be a place of refuge for Israelites, aliens and any other people living among them, so that anyone who has killed another accidentally can flee there.”

****Joshua 20:9** “Any of the Israelites or any alien living among them who killed someone accidentally could flee to these designated cities and not be killed by the avenger of blood prior to standing trial before the assembly.”

How can we apply this lesson to our life?

A. God is our refuge so turn to Him!

Psalms 46:1 “God is our refuge and strength and ever-present help in trouble.”

Psalms 50:15 “And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.”

B. God wants to be your refuge so trust in Him!

John 14:6 “Jesus answered “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes to the Father but by Me.”

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

Matthew 11:28 “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”