

Joshua – Lesson 41: Success – Success in God’s eyes
Joshua 20

Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, **Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.**

Did we learn our lesson? Study Questions from lesson 40 (Succeeding where others fail)

1. According to James 3:13, what two attributes accompany envy and strife?

Answer: 1. Confusion, and 2. Every evil work.

2. According to Exodus 20:17, what words summarize the commandment ‘Thou shalt not covet’?

Answer: Thou shalt not covet . . . any thing that is thy neighbor’s..

3. According to Mark 15:10, why did the high priests deliver Jesus Christ to Pilate?

Answer: For envy.

4. According to 1 Corinthians 13:6, in what should a believer rejoice?

Answer: The truth.

5. Complete the following scripture:

1 Corinthians 13:7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

True / False

False The believer should seek to conform to the world. (ROM 12:2)

True Wisdom and understanding brings happiness. (PROV 3:13)

True Pilate attempted to release Jesus. (MARK 15:9)

True Pride has no place in love. (1 COR 13:4)

Note: Joshua 15-19 provide the description of how the inheritance was divided up among the 12 tribes.

Lesson 41: Success in God’s eyes

"Nobody knows the real me." — Jillian Pierce

- Often the feeling of those suffering from depression, it is a very real side of our personality.
- Do others see us the way we see ourselves? If not – Who is responsible? (I show what I want to show).
- The believer can pretend to others, but there is no deceiving God – God knows your heart.
- God will judge the magnitude of your success . . . to His requirements.

The children of Israel receive instruction from God for addressing the act of manslaughter – God distinguishes as we look at the direction with regard to availability, responsibility and accountability.

Joshua 20:1-3 – God makes the distinction

(1) The LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying,

(2) Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses:

(3) That the slayer that killeth *any* person unawares *and* unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

Exodus 21:12-13 – The guidance provided to Moses

(12) He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.

(13) And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver *him* into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.

The penalty for killing a fellow human being is death.

- In the time of Joshua, if someone was killed (regardless of the cause), the closest family member (known as the 'Avenger of Blood', had to hold the murderer accountable by killing them.

However, if the act is not intentional, God will provide for you (if you do not accept God's provision, you will be killed regardless of the nature of the killing, whether intentional/premeditated or accidental).

Deuteronomy 19:4-6 – The example of accidental death

(4) And this *is* the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past;

- There is no anger, no knowledge that your actions would end someone's life

(5) As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live:

- An example of an axe head is used, but the idea is that the action was not intended to be hostile

(6) Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.

- The cause of accidental death is 'not worthy of death': The avenger of blood will not examine the account, he will simply execute his duty to carry out the law and slay the murderer, so action must be taken promptly to seek God's protection in a city of refuge

We see in Joshua 20:3, God declares there is a provision to ensure the person who accidentally causes the death of another has the promise noted in Exodus 20.

For this world we live in now, all are condemned (**ROM 3:23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God), but if the offer of the Christ is accepted, the believer is saved from eternal punishment (**John 3:16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life).

Joshua 20:4 – Seeking asylum in a city of refuge

(4) And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

Romans 2:11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

- Not even with God's chosen people, the children of Israel, is preferential treatment offered (all are to the same standard).
- **Matthew 5:45** That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

- God gives all humanity the same opportunity, regardless of position, race, sex, etc.
Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- The cities of refuge were not only for the children of Israel, but for anyone that committed an act 'not worthy of death.
Just as salvation through Jesus Christ is not just for the Jewish, but for all humanity, that scripture would be fulfilled:
Genesis 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

However, there is a process for obtaining protection from the avenger of blood – A request must be made to the elders of the city:

- Stand at the gate (the main entrance): Not sneaking into the city from some uncontrolled point
- Declare your cause: State your case as the one who had accidentally caused the death of another
 - The elders will then determine if your testimony merited them accepting you into their town, to the measure of actually providing shelter and a means to survive

Joshua 20:5 – Protection in a city of refuge

(5) And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

Leviticus 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD. (see MATT 22:39-40)

- The elders of the city had an obligation, that if the death is considered an accident, they will protect the person from the avenger of blood.
- As noted in the commandment, the avenger of blood will also respect the decision of the elders and not seek to avenge the death of his family member .

Joshua 20:6 – Dwelling in a city of refuge

(6) And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, *and* until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

The right to stay in the city of refuge is conditional:

- The person must submit themselves to the congregation for 'judgement': Character will be examined, motives and submission will be considered.
- The person must stay within the city until the death of the current high priest:
 - This establishes the statute of limitations (the avenger of blood will no longer have the authority to exercise revenge)
 - If the person leaves the city before the death of the high priest, the avenger of blood is authorized to carry out his revenge
 - Once the high priest is dead, the person **shall** return to their home

As we noted in **MATT 5:45**, **ROM 10:13** and **GEN 12:3**, the opportunity to escape punishment is available to all, and is part of the promise of blessing to all mankind. The believer is not better or worse than anyone else, it is the Spirit of God within the believer that makes the difference – This is what God will see of you.

Next Lesson: Joshua – Success in God's eyes (availability)

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Study Questions

1. According to Joshua 20:2, what two conditions of murder will support fleeing to a city of refuge?

1. _____ 2. _____

2. According to Exodus 21:12, what is the penalty for killing another person?

3. What example of accidental death is used in Deuteronomy 19:5?

4. According to Joshua 20:6, when can one return home in safety?

5. Complete the following scripture:

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall _____ upon the name of the _____ shall be

_____.

True / False

T F God distinguishes between accidental and intentional murder.

T F God considers a person’s position.

T F The elders of a refuge city may deny asylum.

T F The refuge city will provide for the person seeking refuge.