



תִּכְיֹן לְךָ הַדֶּרֶךְ וְשַׁלְּשֵׁת אֶת-גְּבוּל  
אֶרְצֶךָ אֲשֶׁר יִנְחִילֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ;  
וְהָיָה לְנוֹס שָׁמָּה כָּל-רֹצֵחַ.



You shall prepare  
roads for yourself,  
and divide into  
three parts the  
territory of your  
land which the  
**LORD** your **God**  
is giving you to  
inherit, that any  
**MANSLAYER**  
may flee there.



Deuteronomy 19:3

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20 June 2021

## Deuteronomy 19:1-13

### You Shall Prepare to You the Way

June 20, 2021

“When the LORD your God has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, <sup>2</sup>you shall separate three cities for yourself in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess. <sup>3</sup>You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, that any manslayer may flee there.

<sup>4</sup>“And this *is* the case of the manslayer who flees there, that he may live: Whoever kills his neighbor [a]unintentionally, not having hated him in time past— <sup>5</sup>as when *a man* goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—he shall flee to one of these cities and live; <sup>6</sup>lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he *was* not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past. <sup>7</sup>Therefore I command you, saying, ‘You shall separate three cities for yourself.’

<sup>8</sup>“Now if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as He swore to your fathers, and gives you the land which He promised to give to your fathers, <sup>9</sup>and if you keep all these commandments and do them, which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways, then you shall add three more cities for yourself besides these three, <sup>10</sup>lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance, and *thus* guilt of bloodshed be upon you.

<sup>11</sup>“But if anyone hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes him mortally, so that he dies, and he flees to one of these cities, <sup>12</sup>then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. <sup>13</sup>Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall [b]put away *the guilt of* innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with you.

With the completion of the previous chapters which have dealt greatly with the unity of worship within the land, Chapters 19-21 will put forth legislations that are predominantly intended to reveal the sanctity of human life, and how it is to be protected.

For the passage today, what we have here is a supplemental thought to what was especially presented in Numbers 35 concerning the Cities of Refuge.

However, this is much less of a repetition of those verses than it is a call to carry out what was mandated there concerning those cities – both in their establishment and in what was to occur in them regarding manslayers.

If we were to look for a close parallel in our society in relation to what they were intended to do in Israel, I would suggest the Witness Protection Program provided by the US Marshalls. Obviously, the parallel doesn't go very far, and there is certainly nothing Christological in nature about the US Marshalls, but they do protect people from harm in a unique way.

The problem with the Witness Protection Program is that it doesn't just protect the innocent who have gotten caught up in something beyond their control, but they also protect really greasy people who are willing to roll over and give up information in order to save their own skin.

As far as the innocent of Israel who accidentally kills someone, and who thus became a target for the avenger, there is protection for them behind the walls of the City of Refuge.

For the innocent in modern America who is inadvertently caught up in some type of crime to which they could be hunted down for, they are hidden behind the walls of a new identity in a new place by the US Marshalls.

For sure, we don't want to stretch that analogy too far, but you get the point. Someone has had time and circumstance negatively affect his life, and a provision is made to bring about safety for that person. In the end, I'd much rather be hidden in Christ than hidden by the bungling US Government.

**Text Verse:** *"Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, <sup>18</sup> 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." Hebrews 6:17, 18*

The Christological significance of the City of Refuge has already been seen in Numbers 35. The words today are intended to build upon that passage, but it doesn't introduce a great deal of typology. Rather, as I said, it is given as a call to action by Moses for that which was already presented by the Lord.

It is hoped that the words will bless you, be instructional to you, and build you up in your knowledge of the word. One of the key verses to consider when we get there contains the words of admonition to Israel to "love the Lord your God and to walk always in His ways."

The law has been given; Christ fulfilled that for us. But the precept remains true for us today. The highest precept for us to consider in our daily life is that of loving the Lord God. Consider this. What good is it to cross every t and dot every i if we don't have a deep and yearning love for the Lord?

As Christ is the fulfillment and embodiment of this body of law, let us remember to love Him with all of our hearts and souls. With this, we will always remain in the sweet spot. Great truths such as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. You Shall Separate Three Cities for Yourself (verses 1-3)**

**"When the LORD your God has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses,**

There are a couple of points concerning these words that immediately take prominence. The first is, once again, the surety of them. The verse begins with *ki yakhrit* – “For has cut off.” Translating it as “when” is fine, but it is to be taken as an absolute surety, and already accomplished in the mind of the Lord.

The second concerns the words *asher Yehovah elohekha noten lekha*, or “which Yehovah your God is giving to you.” It is the fulfillment of the ancient promise, and it is from the Lord to the people. There is nothing deserving in this generation. They are simply the ones alive when the promise comes into effect.

The third point is one also seen many times. Moses says, *virishtam*, “and you dispossess them.” The Lord is giving Israel the land. They could not otherwise possess it, and yet, Israel has a synchronistic part in acquiring the land. They must actually get up and act, working together with the Lord to possess the inheritance.

And finally, it says they will “dwell in their cities and in their houses.” This goes back to Moses’ words of Chapter 6 –

“So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, <sup>11</sup> houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full— <sup>12</sup> then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” Deuteronomy 6:10-12

Israel will benefit from the labor of others. The Lord has made every accommodation for them prior to, and during, their taking of the land. When this is accomplished...

## **<sup>2</sup>you shall separate three cities for yourself**

Moses’ words now are reminding the people of the command of the Lord from Numbers 35. At that time, it said –

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>10</sup> ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, <sup>11</sup> then you shall appoint cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person accidentally may flee there.’” Numbers 35:9-11

Further, Moses has already designated the first three cities of refuge by name in Deuteronomy 4 –

“Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, <sup>42</sup> that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: <sup>43</sup> Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.” Deuteronomy 4:41-43

Those cities named in Chapter 4 are the cities of refuge east of the Jordan in the land already taken by Israel. Moses is now giving further instruction for the land west of the Jordan. The actual naming of them will occur in Joshua 20. These cities are to be...

<sup>2 (con't)</sup> **in the midst of your land**

The prominence of the words is given to ensure that, due to the highly important nature of their designation, the cities are to be chosen specifically for their accessibility from all directions. And again, Moses notes that it is a land...

<sup>2 (con't)</sup> **which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.**

The constant repetition of these words may seem mentally tedious to read as one goes through Deuteronomy, but when the law was given, it was referred to in bite-sized nuggets as a tool of instruction for the people.

They would have a matter to deal with, and they would proceed to whatever section dealt with that matter. In doing so, the words would be a constant reminder that the land was given to them. Thus, it is also a warning: The land can be taken from them. Hence, the law in all its detail was to be strictly tended to...

<sup>3</sup> **You shall prepare roads for yourself,**

The words are singular for a strong effect: *takin lekha ha'derek* – “You shall prepare to you the way.” Israel is the subject. The way is the means of travel, and the city is the intended destination. It is to be readily available for the one who needs to reach it.

Herxheimer says, “According to tradition, the way must be level, thirty-two cubits broad, and marked by fingerposts, bearing the words Refuge, Refuge.” Other traditions say that the roads were inspected annually in the month of Adar, that any obstructions were removed, and any bridges would be repaired for quick access over rivers and brooks.

If these precepts of the Torah were adhered to by Israel as unfaithfully as the rest of them, it is doubtful if this tradition was, for most of their history, anything but on paper. There is nothing in Scripture to support any such traditions.

As far as the words of this clause, however, they are reminiscent of Jesus' words, "I am the way." There is a place of safety, and there is the Way prepared to reach that place. For Israel in Canaan, Moses next says...

<sup>3 (con't)</sup> **and divide into three parts the territory of your land**

The cities were to be strategically situated so that they were prominent, easily accessible, and placed as much as possible at equal distances from one another and from the exterior borders of the land.

In this, no matter what direction one would travel to such a city, it would be at the closest possible point from even the furthest distance. The precept is to be exactly adhered to because it is in the land...

<sup>3 (con't)</sup> **which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit,**

The word *nakhal*, or inherit, is used. One inherits an inheritance. In this, the inheritance is being equally divided for the benefit of all. As this is land given by "the Lord your God," one can see the same fairness as in concepts such as the *shemittah* (remission) or of the Hebrew slave.

The Lord, through Moses and through the law, has made provisions for all in order to bring all to a state of equality. This is no different now. There is an overarching fairness in all that is presented so that when time and circumstance work against a person, restoration is always made available. In this case, it is so...

<sup>3 (con't)</sup> **that any manslayer may flee there.**

*v'hayah lanus shamah kal rotseakh* – "And shall be to flee there all manslayer." The word *ratsakh* needs to be reexplained. It signifies unsanctioned killing. It does not cover capital punishment, sanctioned killing in battle, and so on. Rather, it covers any killing – accidental or purposeful – that is unsanctioned.

From there, and only from that standpoint, is there a difference made between accidental killing and murder. But both are on the same level until the determination is made. This then, is the purpose of the *are miqlat*, or cities of refuge.

Though the term *miqlat*, or asylum, is not used in Deuteronomy, this is the precept that is being conveyed here. The cities to be appointed are for exactly that reason. As Moses will next say, in what is a parenthetical thought...

Where can I go to save my life?  
How can I get free from what I have done?  
I killed a man, but not by strife  
In innocence have I slain this one

But the avenger of blood waits for me  
To take my life for what I have done  
Is there a place to where I can flee?  
Is there a place to where I can run?

Who will save me from what has come about?  
Who can rescue me from what I have done?  
Is there a chance for me? How will it come about?  
Lord, my only hope is that to You I run

## **II. Since He has Not Hated the Victim (verses 4-7)**

**<sup>4</sup>“And this *is* the case of the manslayer**

*v'zeh debar ha'rotseakh* – “And this word the manslayer.” It is the specific instruction, the word, to be issued concerning someone who kills another in an unsanctioned manner – regardless as to the circumstances. His life is in jeopardy, and he must take action...

**<sup>4 (con't)</sup> who flees there, that he may live:**

The word here is very clearly explained in verse 11. The city of refuge was for “the manslayer” to run to. Any manslayer could do so, but there are different provisions for how the killing occurred which will be reexplained by Moses following after what has already been spoken forth in Numbers 35. As Moses next says...

**<sup>4 (con't)</sup> Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally,**

*asher yakeh eth reehu bivli daath* – “Which strikes his neighbor lacking knowledge.” In Numbers 35, it used a different term, “in his inadvertence.” Here, the meaning is the same even if the terminology is different.

The person accidentally, or without knowledge, has killed another person. There was nothing premeditated about it. As it says...

**<sup>4 (con't)</sup> not having hated him in time past—**

Despite the English translation, it is an exact repeat of Deuteronomy 4:42, which said, “without having hated him in time past.” The two phrases are identical with but two unusual exceptions.

In verse 4:42, the Hebrew words *mitemol shilshom* are spelled differently than they are here. In both, the letter *vav* is included in 4:42, but it is missing now. It could be as simple as us spelling the word worshiped with one or two *p*'s. Or there may be a reason that the Lord purposefully dropped the additional letter out now.

If the latter, I can only provide a speculative suggestion. *Vav* is the sixth letter. Six is the number of man, especially fallen man. It is five plus one, or grace plus man's addition to it. It is seven minus one, or coming short of spiritual perfection.

The cities are given as a haven for such. They are a place of grace for those who fall short but who seek refuge. The cities themselves do not save; they only protect. And they only do so by the voluntary act of the man staying in them.

At the time of Deuteronomy 4, only three cities were mentioned, thus the addition of the *vav*, the sixth letter of the aleph-bet, was included to show the fallen state of this otherwise innocent man.

In this passage, there is no need for that because the cities now total six, implying that there is a need for them for all in Israel because all fall short of perfection.

That is a highly speculative analysis, but it is the only logical thing I could think up. I would suggest you not add a permanent squiggle to your brain over this.

**<sup>5</sup>as when *a man* goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber,**

Moses gives a common example of something that could occur that would make a person a manslayer, but not guilty of murder. The example is that of two people, friendly with one another (not having hated in the past), and going out to do what neighbors do in a place where it is expected that they would go.

In this clause is a new word to Scripture, *khatav*, meaning to cut down, hew, or polish. It can even mean gather, as in Ezekiel 39:10. The men are simply going out to cut timber...

**<sup>5 (con't)</sup>and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree,**



Again, Moses is simply giving out thoughts as they would occur on any given day and between any friends as they are out working together. It is during the daily affairs of life that suddenly something unexpected happens...

<sup>5</sup>(con't) **and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—**

The verb is used intransitively, and the Hebrew is more expressive, saying: *v'nashal ha'barzel min ha'ets* – “and slips the iron from the wood.” The intent of hitting with an ax is that you will cut the wood. The iron part slipping off the wood is purely accidental, but the effects of it are catastrophic, killing the neighbor.

What is interesting about this verse is that, like in Numbers 35 and even before entering the land, Moses speaks of the use of iron implements as if it is an everyday thing. Common teaching says that the Egyptians began their iron age about 1200 BC. The same is the case with Canaan, which would have been during the time of the judges.

And yet, Moses speaks of things being this way in the year 1405 BC. Even if iron implements were rare at this time, it is obvious that they were the preferred instruments for cutting wood at this early date. Also, throughout Joshua and the early Judges, iron is explicitly mentioned as being in use.

Despite the matter, it is certain, as it always becomes, that Moses is – indeed – the one who penned these words. Deuteronomy was written at the time indicated, as will be seen once again in a few verses.

In the comparable verses to this clause in Numbers 35, the Lord gave different examples of what might cause unintentional, but unsanctioned death, saying –

“However, if he pushes him suddenly without enmity, or throws anything at him without lying in wait, <sup>23</sup> or uses a stone, by which a man could die, throwing it at him without seeing him, so that he dies, while he was not his enemy or seeking his harm.”  
Numbers 35:22, 23

It is of note that Moses chose a different example, showing that the judges were to carefully heed the details of whatever matter was brought forth. It is a way of saying, “The Lord has given you several examples, I have given you another. Be wise and discerning and judge the matters according to their circumstances.”

In the meantime, and until a judgment is rendered...

<sup>5</sup>(con't) **he shall flee to one of these cities and live;**

This is the purpose of the city – refuge. But without knowing the details of Numbers 35, it doesn't really make sense to us now. Instead, what Moses says is simply taken as an axiom that the man needs to flee to one of the designated cities. This is because of a particular relationship that existed in the society ...

**<sup>6</sup>lest the avenger of blood,**

The parenthetical thought is ended, and the narrative picks up here. One can see this by putting verse 3 before verse 6 –

“You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, that any manslayer may flee there. ... lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he was not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past.”

The *goel ha'dam*, or “avenger the blood,” is a near or nearest kinsman. The same word is used to speak of a redeemer, an avenger, and a kinsman. In this case, it refers to a kinsman who is the redeemer of blood through avenging the death of his close relative.

If this *goel* was to catch the slayer and kill him, no guilt of blood could be imputed to him, even if the slaying was by accident. He possessed the full right to avenge the blood that was shed without sanction. This is the entire purpose of having these sanctuary cities. It is a means of protection for the slayer until he could get a fair trial. As it next says, and speaking of the *goel*...

**<sup>6 (con't)</sup> while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him,**

The law understands the passion of such matters. A person has a right to take the life of the slayer, and he has a right to do so at any time or place except as forbidden by the law. His anger may subside, and he may (though not necessarily) forego his right as a *goel*, but when his anger is up, it is not likely.

Even if presented with a convincing argument, the chances are he will still take vengeance. As this is so, the cities of refuge have been provided, with a special note of their centrality within the land. Otherwise...

**<sup>6 (con't)</sup> because the way is long, and kill him,**

*ki yirbeh ha'derek v'hikahu naphesh* – “For great the way and strike him – soul.” It is a descriptive way of saying that he has avenged the blood. As the blood is the soul (Deuteronomy 12:23), the avenger has struck the person and his soul is poured out.

If the only place of refuge was where the tabernacle/temple was located, it might be a long and tiring journey. The longer the distance, the more likely the avenger could catch up to the slayer. In such a case, his life could legally be taken...

<sup>6 (con't)</sup> **though he *was* not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past.**

The matter of avenging blood is one that covers any shedding of blood of a near kinsman. This is a right that will not be denied apart from the exception of being in a city of refuge, or at anytime and anywhere after the death of the high priest. Other than those two instances, the right exists.

However, there is the truth that the killing was unintentional. There was no enmity, and it was unavoidable. In this, the Hebrew essentially reads, “though he is without a judgment of death.” There is nothing in him that calls out for capital punishment.

It is for this reason that the cities of refuge were given. It is a merciful exception provided for the manslayer. As Moses says...

<sup>7</sup> **Therefore I command you, saying,**

The Hebrew reads, “Upon thus I command you.” It is the same phrase that was used in Deuteronomy 15:11. There is a state that exists, whether it is right or not. It is simply something that is a part of the human condition. It is upon such a matter that an act of mercy is to be extended.

In Deuteronomy 15, it referred to attending to the needy, meaning the poor in the land. Here, it refers to taking care of the needy, meaning those desperate of life itself. Because this condition exists, and because it can be remedied through an act of mercy...

<sup>7 (con't)</sup> **‘You shall separate three cities for yourself.’**

Moses repeats the original precept from verse 2. It is for the sake of those who are under the culturally accepted sentence of the avenger’s hand, despite having no judgment of death hanging over them, that Moses instructs them to accomplish the words of this command.

Do not defile the land in which you live  
For among the midst of you, there I dwell  
To you the blessings of heaven, I will give  
Or, from Me will come the tortures of eternal hell

For I dwell among you; even I, the Lord  
Therefore, be holy as I am holy – this you must be  
In this, you will receive my promised reward  
And there shall be peace between you and Me

Do not profane the land, but keep it pure and undefiled  
And between us there will be a state of harmony  
In this, upon you I shall have smiled  
And together we shall dwell for all eternity

### **III. Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed (Verses 8-13)**

**<sup>8</sup>“Now if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as He swore to your fathers, and gives you the land which He promised to give to your fathers,**

The words here now refer to neither Canaan, nor to the land already possessed east of the Jordan. Rather, they refer to the extension of land promised before to Abraham –

“To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— <sup>19</sup>the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup>the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, <sup>21</sup>the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.” Genesis 15:18-20

It was a command repeated to the people before leaving Sinai (Exodus 23:31) and also repeated to them when they left Egypt –

“Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring places in the plain, in the mountains and in the lowland, in the South and on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates. <sup>8</sup>See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to give to them and their descendants after them.” Deuteronomy 1:7-8

Of these words, the Bible Commentary (via John Lange) states –

“It is obvious that such a passage as this could not have been penned in the times to which rationalist critics assign Deut. No one living in those times would think of treating as a future contingency (“If the Lord thy God enlarge, sq.) an extension of territory which at the date in question had in fact taken place long ago, and been subsequently forfeited.”

The analysis is correct. As has been seen numerous times, those who argue for various reasons that Deuteronomy must have been penned many, many centuries later fail to consider how ridiculous their claims actually are.

For now, the word “if” is a conditional one. The promise was made to the fathers, but it is conditional towards the people. This conditional aspect is again seen in the next verse...

**<sup>9</sup> and if you keep all these commandments and do them, which I command you today,**

Following hard after the errors of the KJV, the words here are incorrectly translated. The previous verse began with, “And if.” Here, it begins with “For,” or “When.” Secondly, the word “commandment” is singular. The clause should read, “When you keep all the commandment and do it.” It is time conditional. Until that day, the event will not come about. And that is...

**<sup>9 (con’t)</sup> to love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways,**

The clause is close in thought to 10:12 and 11:22. Moses ties in the love of the Lord and walking in His ways as being obedient to the commandment. These words define what it means to be obedient. It goes beyond rote observance to the very heart of the man.

David loved the Lord and strove to walk in His ways, even if – at times – he failed in observing a statute or precept of the law. The Pharisees meticulously kept every explicit precept of the law, but they failed in the greater and more important precepts implicitly laid down here. David found joy in the presence of the Lord; the Pharisees will find eternal condemnation.

It is only if Israel is united to the Lord in heartfelt love, and in obedience to the command, that the next words would take effect...

**<sup>9 (con’t)</sup> then you shall add three more cities for yourself besides these three,**

Scholars err when they say this was fulfilled in Joshua 21 when the six cities of refuge are named. This is not referring to those east of the Jordan that were already assigned, and which are repeated in Joshua.

Rather, this is a reference to three additional cities in borders extending to the Euphrates. It is a hopeful and conditional event that was never realized in Israel's history. However, if it was needed due to expansion of the borders, the reason is obvious...

**<sup>10</sup> lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and thus guilt of bloodshed be upon you.**

The words here have to be considered with care. It has already been seen in Numbers 35:27 that the *goel* had the right (and, indeed, the responsibility) to kill the manslayer if he left the city of refuge. As this is so, it cannot be that he would be guilty of bloodshed for taking the life of the manslayer in this passage.

Further, in that verse, it speaks in the singular: *en lo dam* – “without to him blood,” meaning the guilt of blood. However, it says here while speaking to Israel the people *v'hayah alekha damim* – “and it shall be upon you bloods.”

The blood guilt is not because the avenger avenged his kin, but because Israel failed to build a city to protect the manslayer who killed unintentionally. The failure is one that incurs collective guilt upon the people.

It is their responsibility to protect innocent blood, even if it is the individual avenger's responsibility to avenge the blood of his kin. This is why the plural “bloods” is used. It goes beyond a single incident to any and every incident that would arise.

This is why Joshua 11 ends with the note that the land rested from war. After that, an accounting of the kings conquered in battle is noted in Chapter 12 and then a short note of what still needed to be conquered is seen in the opening of Chapter 13.

From there, the land is divided among the tribes, comprising all of the next passages until Joshua 20 where the very first thing recorded is the designation of the cities of refuge. In other words, the designation of these cities is of paramount importance to the overall narrative.

However, this bloodguilt only applies to those who are innocent...

**<sup>11</sup> “But if anyone hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes him mortally, so that he dies,**

The words here correspond to Numbers 35:16-21. This person's *ratsakh*, or unsanctioned killing, is intentional. The obvious verdict then is that he is a murderer. The tenor of these words anticipates the words of John, “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.”

The hatred leads to the act, but it is actually the hatred that God sees and judges. The act is simply an outgrowth of what is already in the heart. If such a person followed through with his hatred and committed the act...

**11 (con't) and he flees to one of these cities,**

The city of refuge is to protect the innocent manslayer. If the manslayer is deemed to be a murderer, then it is a completely different situation, and it calls for a completely different outcome...

**12 then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.**

The words here further refine what is said about such a person in Numbers 35. There, it simply notes that the person shall be put to death when the avenger meets him.

Here, it is assumed that the person made it to a city of refuge, made a false claim, and is now being returned for his trip to the afterlife which is to be at the hand of the avenger. Not only is this the right of the avenger, but it is also the responsibility of the people. No murderer was to be allowed to live. Rather...

**13 Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall put away *the guilt of innocent blood from Israel,***

There was to be no leniency. Rather, the word translated as “put away” comes from a root meaning “to kindle.” It is as if he is to be purged away in fire. And there is a reason for this...

**\*13 (fin) that it may go well with you.**

The implication is that if this is not done, it will not go well with them. The innocent is to be protected, and the guilty is to be purged from the land. Otherwise, guilt would be imputed to the nation for failing to uphold the precepts of the law.

The passage that has been looked at today actually has incredible Christological significance which is explained, in detail, in the three sermons from Numbers 35. The words are amazing to consider and moving, even to the stirring of the soul.

If you haven't seen or heard those sermons, it is well worth your time to go back and take them in. Everything about what is stated there is reflective of the work of Christ, all of which is summed up in the third sermon where it discusses the role of the high priest in relation to those who remain within the city of refuge.

In short, Christ is our place of refuge. In Him is found protection from the guilt we bear. And, in His death, we have been set free from that guilt. It can never be recalled to us again, if we simply reach out to Him in faith, believing that He is God's offer of pardon and peace for the things we have done wrong.

It is this wonderful offer of peace, meaning our Lord Jesus Christ –the gift of God for those who will believe – who ushers in that state of pardon. And that, in turn, results in the peace – even the peace of God which surpasses all understanding.

I would pray that you would be wise, call out to God through Christ the Lord, and be cleansed of your life of sin. In this, you will move from a state of enmity with God, to one of eternal felicity. The place of refuge is offered, and the sentence is – if you will receive it – not guilty. Christ has paid the price for you to be set free. Enter into the City of Refuge. Christ awaits.

**Closing Verse:** *“The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, A refuge in times of trouble. <sup>10</sup>And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.” Psalm 9:9, 10*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 19:14-21 *This guy really is a mess...* (The False Witness) (58<sup>th</sup> Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **You Shall Prepare to You the Way**

“When the LORD your God has cut off  
The nations whose land the LORD your God is  
giving you  
And you dispossess them and dwell in their cities  
And in their houses, as you will do

You shall separate three cities for yourself  
In the midst of your land, as to you I now address  
Which the LORD your God  
Is giving you to possess

You shall prepare roads for yourself  
And divide into three parts the territory of your  
land  
Which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit  
That any manslayer may flee there, from the  
avenger's hand

“And this is the case of the manslayer who flees  
there  
That he may live and not be harassed  
Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally  
Not having hated him in time past

As when a man goes to the woods  
With his neighbor to cut timber, not just to  
sightsee  
And his hand swings a stroke with the ax  
To cut down the tree

And the head slips from the handle  
And strikes his neighbor so that he dies  
He shall flee to one of these cities and live  
As to you I apprise

Lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot



Pursue the manslayer and overtake him as he is  
tasked  
Because the way is long, and kill him  
Though he was not deserving of death, since he  
had not hated  
-----the victim in time past

Therefore I command you, saying for these cities  
'You shall separate for yourself three cities

"Now if the LORD your God enlarges your territory  
As to your fathers He swore  
And gives you the land which He promised  
To give to your fathers, this and more

And if you keep all these commandments and do  
them  
Which I command you today  
To love the LORD your God and to walk always in  
His ways  
Then you shall add three more cities for yourself  
-----besides these three, as to you I now say

Lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your  
land  
Which the LORD your God, just as He said  
Is giving you as an inheritance  
And thus upon you be guilt of bloodshed

"But if anyone hates his neighbor  
Lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes  
him mortally  
So that he dies  
And he flees to one of these cities, if such should  
be...  
Then the elders of his city shall send and bring him  
from there  
And deliver him over to the hand  
Of the avenger of blood, that he may die  
That guy shall be purged from the land  
  
Your eye shall not pity him  
But you shall put away the guilt  
Of innocent blood from Israel  
That it may go well with you – because of the blood  
that was spilt

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your  
word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...