

Joshua 20

v2

“cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses”

- Just as The Lord had promised and set out so He did. He will always do just as He said.
- Cities of deliverance. Cities of shelter and covering. Consider the use of the word “refuge” as opposed to “safety”. All cities would hopefully be safe but not all cities would be places of refuge.
- We see in these cities a type of Christ. A place of refuge, a place to run too. A place away from “the accuser of the brethren” (Revelation 12:10)

v3

“That the slayer who kills anyone accidentally and unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.”

- The purpose is stated clearly and is a wonderful provision for such accidents.
- Emotions in the affected family would initially be high and perhaps vengeance or rather revenge would be wanted/sought immediately or on impulse.

v4

“He who flees to one of those cities shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and explain his case to the elders of that city”

- He is to confess his circumstance. He is to plead his cause and give his testimony of events before the elders of the city. This plea was taken very seriously and not done in a rush. These words were heard and witnessed and would be noted/remembered.
- A record was to be taken at the gate before refuge was offered/enjoyed.
- To run to these cities at all is a confession of guilt but also a willingness to stand trial. Systems can always be played and tampered with but this allows the man, who is innocent of murder, safety and a fair trial.

“they shall receive him to [the protection of] that city and give him a place to dwell among them.”

- It does not state that these elders were to make any judgement at this time. They were simply to record a statement and receive Him in.
- The slayer was then given safety and covering within the city. They would have provided shelter, clothing, food. They would have sustained him and kept him for the duration of his stay.
- Consider that ANYONE could come and claim this. The person could be hateful, spiteful and guilty and lying. But judgement was reserved!
- There is a place of refuge in Christ. A place free for anyone to run too. A place where they can enter upon confession of their guilt and sin. For the soul willing to flee from the world and acknowledge His sin there is a place in the refuge of Christ.

v5

“they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.”

- The slayer was safe physically and legally. He was to be protected against murder.
- However, consider how this also protected the avenger of blood from committing an unjust murder. This offered protection and time for all parties to consult the law and The Lord and submit to righteous judgement.
- Also consider the trust here. They trust His testimony and confession. They believe him. This is a powerful thing to contemplate. To the elders of this city this slayer is innocent until proven guilty and they will allow him (the slayer) to live among them and believe in his self-professed innocence.

v6

“And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment,”

- It is not merely a city of sanctuary where the slayer can run and hide. Otherwise it would become a haven or murderous men.
- The initial confession will be recounted; the new evidence and testimonies from the avenger of blood will be examined.
- There will be a judgement. There will be a reckoning. There will be righteous judgement and justice.
- He was to remain/abide in that city. If he was to leave Then he would void his safety, protection and refuge. He would be back on the run with nowhere for safety; nowhere to return to; a guilty verdict on his head; and constant fear of death from the avenger of blood. We are to abide in Christ! Abide in His word. Abide in His ways.

“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.”

- If the slayer is deemed not guilty of murder then he will remain in the city.
- This is interestingly a dual purpose. Initially it is a continuation of safety and provision for the slayer from the avenger of blood, if they are not willing to accept the judgement. However, it is also like a prison sentence to be served for... perhaps negligence. This length of stay could have been for a long time!

v9

“that whoever killed a person unintentionally might flee there and not be slain by the avenger of blood until he had been tried”

- No Israelite was to be killed rashly or in haste/hate.
- This is such a precious provision to set in law. Something we may take for granted these days. It is wise to note that Western Law has a biblical foundation and many of our laws came from this/God's wisdom. This is not just a “good way of doing things” – This is God's provision!

- These cities are a type of Jesus and provide us with a shadow of His provision. Jesus is that city of refuge where all who are guilty may run too. Entry into that city is acknowledgement of guilt, a confession of sin and a cry for Salvation. All are welcomed in, all are invited.
- Upon the death of the High Priest freedom was gained. But we have a Great High Priest who ever lives!! It is only in the death and resurrection of Jesus that we have our freedom.
- The accuser of the brethren will come to make a claim upon our lives. There will be a judgement day. There will be a reckoning and the records will be examined... But upon the records of those who come to Christ will be the account settled in His precious blood; the price paid in full; the judgement, guilty verdict and consequence passed over to Him who is faithful and just to forgive all (confessed) unrighteousness. Hallelujah!!
- Those who now walk in Christ now walk in His righteousness, in His provision. Free from accusation, free from sin!