

## The Hero of the Story

Joshua 20:1-9

August 29, 2021

*Justice: to set things right; to vindicate; to give someone what is due to them— what they have earned and deserve.*

Joshua 20:1-9

Then the Lord said to Joshua, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, that the manslayer who strikes any person without intent or unknowingly may flee there. They shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood. He shall flee to one of these cities and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and explain his case to the elders of that city. Then they shall take him into the city and give him a place, and he shall remain with them. And if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not give up the manslayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unknowingly, and did not hate him in the past. And he shall remain in that city until he has stood before the congregation for judgment, until the death of him who is high priest at the time. Then the manslayer may return to his own town and his own home, to the town from which he fled.’” So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, and Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. And beyond the Jordan east of Jericho, they appointed Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland, from the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities designated for all the people of Israel and for the stranger sojourning among them, that anyone who killed a person without intent could flee there, so that he might not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, till he stood before the congregation.

### **I. The price of blood demands justice.**

Genesis 9:5-6

And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning...“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.”

Exodus 21: Justice was to be served: “life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”

Leviticus 4: Unintentional sins still incur guilt and require atonement.

Numbers 35: “avenger of the blood”

- 1) They reserve judgment
- 2) They listen
- 3) They provide refuge
- 4) They mediate with the avenger
- 5) They assure a just hearing

### **HI: God met the demand for justice with a place of mercy.**

Joshua 20:7-9

So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, and Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. And beyond the Jordan east of Jericho, they appointed Bezer in the wilderness on the tableland, from the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities designated for all the people of Israel and for the stranger sojourning among them, that anyone who killed a person without intent could flee there, so that he might not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, till he stood before the congregation.

### **II. The place of mercy delivers safety.**

Psalm 7:1

O LORD my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me...

Psalm 46:1

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Psalm 59:16

But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

1. The manslayer ran up a debt.
2. The avenger demanded payment.
3. The high priest settled the score.

**HI: God met the demand for justice with a place of mercy.**

“While we read the Bible forwards, we can only understand it backwards.” -  
Martin Luther

Hebrews 9:11-12, 15

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption...Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since **a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.**

Hebrews 11:10

We run to refuge in Jesus because we are looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.