

5/28/95

Christ Is Our Refuge City
Deut. 19:1-13

History records for us various cultures that have provided an asylum or protective place for individuals who were guilty of a crime, if they could reach a particular sacred site.

The church of Ephesus had such a place which had risen up next to the temple of Diana or Artemis. Those individuals who could reach the site before being apprehended were safe and protected from the law.

More recent in our modern day history, early in this century, the main island of Hawaii had a city for criminals to flee to and once in it they were protected.

The problem with many of these cities throughout history is that often this type of refuge for criminals did not in affect execute true justice for the person or party that had been wronged.

On the other hand, the Bible provides such cities while at the same time assuring true justice, these were called "refuge cities".

We want to look at these refuge cities from three perspectives.
Deut. 19:1-13

- I.** The proclamation of the refuge cities. vs. 1-4, 7-9
- II.** The administration of the refuge cities. vs. 5-6, 11-13
- III.** The application of the refuge cities.

I. The proclamation of the refuge cities.. vs. 1-4, 7-9

- A.** The point and time would be when they entered the land, dispossessed the people and dwelt in their cities and houses. vs. 1
 - 1.** The Lord would be the One to cut off the nations.
 - 2.** The people would be the one's to receive the benefit.

- B.** The instructions were to separate three cities in the midst of the land. vs. 2, 7-9
 - 1.** The three cities mentioned were to be in the land of promise, Canaan. vs. 2, 7
 - 2.** The cities were to be in the midst of the land. vs. 2
 - a.** The proclamation was not of Moses but God's for He said that He would appoint such a place for a person to flee to. Ex. 21:13b
 - b.** The successor of Moses, Joshua commanded the children of Israel to appoint these cities after they subdued the land. Josh 20:2
 - 3.** The provisions for three other ones were in the event that God enlarged their borders. vs. 8-9
 - a.** The six cities covered Canaan and on the east side of Jordan. Num. 35:13-14
 - b.** These six cities were not only for the children of Israel but for the stranger, the sojourner and anyone who killed a person accidentally. Num. 35:15a-c
 - c.** The name of the six were Kedesh in Galilee, Shechem in Ephraim, KirjathArba which is Hebron in Judah, Bezer in the wilderness on the plain, Ramah in Gilead and Golan in Bashan. Josh. 20:7-8
* The last three were on the trans-Jordan side.

- C. The purpose of the cities was to insure justice. vs. 3-4
1. The person that was a man slayer was to flee there. vs. 3c
 2. The roads were to be well marked out and equally distant so as to have no person at a disadvantage. vs. 3a-b
 3. The manslayer was one who had killed a person unintentional without hating him in the past and was fleeing from the avenger of blood. vs. 4, Ex.21:13a, Num. 35:11, Josh. 20:3
 - a. The avenger of blood was the one who was duty bound to avenge the murder of the relative, called the kinsman Goel.
 - b. The manslayer was to flee to the city of refuge that he may not die at the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation in judgment. Num. 35:12

These comprise the proclamation of the refuge cities!

II. The administration of the refuge cities. vs. 5-6, 10-13

- A. The protection of the innocent. vs. 5
1. The case used as an example is that of a man going out to cut down a tree. vs. 5
 - a. He swings the ax and the head slips off and strikes a man and he dies. vs. 5a-b
 - b. He is to flee to the refuge city and live. vs. 5c
 2. The other examples are found in the book of Numbers.
 - a. If he pushes him suddenly without enmity or throws anything at him without lying in wait for him homicide of passion. Num. 35:22

- b. If he 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, negligent homicide. Num. 35:23
- B. The punishment of the guilty. vs. 11-12
1. The case in point is if a man 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 the cities, this is premeditated murder. vs. 11
 2. The various examples are found in the book of Numbers.
 - a. If he strikes him with an iron implement, so that he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. Num. 35:16
 - b. If he strikes him with a stone in his hand and he dies, he shall surely be put to death. Num. 35:17
 - c. If he strike him with a wooden hand weapon and he dies, he shall surely be put to death. Num. 35:18
 - d. If he pushes him out of hatred or while lying in wait and hurls something at him so that he dies or in enmity strikes him with his hand so he dies, he shall surely be put to death. Num. 35:20-21, Gen. 9:6, Rom. 13:1-7, 1Pet. 2:13-25. 4:19
 3. The elders of his city would send and bring him from the refuge city and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may put the manslayer to death. vs. 12, Num. 35:19
- C. The proper procedure for justice. vs. 6
1. The manslayer was to flee lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue him and

- overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he was not worthy of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past.
2. The manslayer was to stand at the gate of the city and declare his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, then they were to take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place that he may dwell among them. Josh. 20:4
 - a. Then if the avenger of blood pursues him, they were not to deliver the slayer into his hand because he struck his neighbor unintentionally and did not hate him beforehand. Josh. 20:5
 - b. Then the congregation would judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood according to the judgments of innocent or guilty. Num. 35:24
 - 1) Two witnesses were needed for any case involving murder. Num. 35:30
 - 2) If found to be a false witness, the penalty of death was pronounced on them. Deut. 17:6, 19:15
 3. The verdict of guilty would pronounce death over the manslayer and hand him over to the avenger of blood to kill him, as we have already stated. vs. 12
 4. The verdict of innocent would pronounce safety and protection to the manslayer.
 - a. The congregation would deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood and return him to the city of refuge where he had fled to and he had to remain there till the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. Num. 35:25
* But if the manslayer at any time went outside the boundaries of the refuge city and

- the avenger of blood found him and kills him, the avenger would be innocent because the manslayer was suppose to remain within the city walls. Num. 35:26-28a
- b. The death of the high priest was the only thing that would release him to return to his city and home. Num. 35:28b, Josh. 20:6
- D. The purity of the land was to be maintained. vs. 10, 13
 1. The cities and the procedures were necessary so that innocent blood would not be shed on the land the Lord had given to them as an inheritance. vs. 10a
 2. The people would be guiltless of blood. vs. 10b
 3. The people were not to pity the guilty person but put away the guilt of innocent blood that it might go well with them. vs. 13
 - E. The perpetual principles were not to be violated.
 1. These statutes and judgments would be throughout their generations in all their dwellings. Num. 35:29
 2. The people were to take no ransom for the life of a murderer who was guilty of death but put him to death, no plead bargaining. Num. 35:31
 3. The people were not to take any ransom for the person who fled to the city of refuge, so he could return to his house before the death of the high priest, no bail. Num. 35:32
 4. The people were not to pollute or defile the land for no atonement could be made for the blood shed, except by shedding the blood of the guilty party. Num. 35:33
* in the event of a murder that was unknown the provisions of a heifer and the confession of the

elders of the nearest city that they did not know would atone for the blood she, as they washed their hands over the heifer. Deut. 21:1-9

5. The people were not to defile the land because e God dwelt in it and among the children of Israel. Num. 35:34

This is the administration of the refuge cities!

III. The application of the refuge cities.

- A The cities of refuge prefigure and are a type of Christ.
 1. The six cities were a provision for all, the children of Israel, the stranger, the sojourner and anyone who killed a person accidentally. Num. 35:15a-c
 - * Three on each side prefigure Jew and gentile!
 - a. Jesus said, "He that comes to Me, I in no way will cast out.
 - b. The repeated word "whosoever" is an invitation to all of mankind.
 - c. Jesus is not willing that any perish but that all come to repentance. 2Pet. 3:9
 2. The refuge cities were the only place of refuge, no other would do.
 - a. Jesus said, " I am the way, the truth and the life and no man comes to the Father but by Me. Jn. 14:6
 - b. Jesus said, " There is no other name under heaven and earth whereby men must be saved". Acts 4:12
 - c. Paul said, "There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus". 1Tim. 2:5

B. The roads also are a type of Christ.

1. There were to be three roads in Canaan and three in trans-Jordan well prepared, equally distant and marked out so that no one would be handicapped, hindered or confused as to the way of refuge.
 - a. The work of salvation has been prepared by Jesus and no one is at any disadvantage, for all are saved by grace through faith. Eph. 2:8-9
 - b. The way and road had to be chosen and acted on based on the revelation that God had given, so with Christ being the substitute for man's salvation. 2Cor. 5:21
 2. The three roads represent the three person of the Godhead that is involved in the salvation of man yet one God.
 - a. The Father predestined and chose us from the foundation of the earth. Eph. 1:4
 - b. The Son died for us as a gift of the Father. Jn. 3:16
 - c. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and illuminated the word that faith may be birthed for salvation. Rom. 10:9-10, 17
- C. The requirement to abide till the death of the high priest before he could be free is also a type of Christ.
1. Jesus is our refuge and since He won't die again we must abide in Him to be protected and our dying to self causes us to experience the greatest freedom. Jn. 15:1-8
 2. The peace in our lives as we abide in Christ is not based on the fact that we are perfect or innocent of terrible sins but that all our past sins

have been blotted out and forgiven, justified, having made peace with God. Rom. 5:1-2

- D.** The blood avenger or kinsman goel is also a type of Christ.
1. The law provided for a next of kin to redeem a relative from bondage as a slave. Lev. 25:25
 2. The law also provided a avenger of blood. Deut. 19:6
 3. The right of blood avenger is rightfully that of Jesus, all of mankind is guilty before God, there is none righteous. Rom. 3:10-12
 - a. But instead He pays the price Himself that we might be the propitiation for our sins. 1Jn. 2:2
 - b. The result being that we are accounted righteous because He has become our kinsman goel, redeeming us from the bondage of sin. Rom. 6:15-18
* The token was the precious blood of Jesus Christ. 1Pet. 1:19
- E.** The prohibition of having no pity on the guilty party is a type of attempting to be more merciful and gracious than God.
- a. We dare not allow any other way to God apart from Christ.
 - b. We dare not lightly esteem sin but it must be dealt with at the cross.
 - c. We dare not cheapen the grace of God, so as to fulfill Dietrich Bonhoeffer's phrase "cheap Grace".
 - 1) There must be true genuine repentance for salvation which is evident by being a new creation, all things have passed away and all things have become new. 2Cor. 5:17

2) There must be consequences for there to be authority!

This are the applications of the refuge cities!

Conclusion

We have looked at the refuge cities from these three perspectives.

- I.** The proclamation of the refuge cities.
- II.** The administration of the refuge cities.
- III.** The application of the refuge city.

God has made such an incredible provision for each of us in Christ, won't you flee to Christ, your city of refuge, He is waiting for you!

If you know Him, then abide in Him!