

Numbers 35; Joshua 20

# The Cities of Refuge

Numbers 35

# The Establishment of the Cities of Refuge

# Part of the City Allotment Given the Levites

- The Levites were not given land for crops, but received freewill offerings and cities from the people – Num. 18:20-21; 35:1-5
- Levite cities were scattered throughout Israel...
  - According to prophecy – Gen. 49:5-7
  - For instruction of the people – Deut. 33:10
- Of the 48 cities God appointed them, six were to be cities of refuge – Num. 35:6-8; Deut. 19:1-3

# Purposes and Rules of the Cities of Refuge

- Provided refuge for one who accidentally killed another – Num. 35:9-15; Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12-14
- Murderers, which included those who used weapons to kill whether in premeditation or anger, were not to receive refuge – Num. 35:16-21
- God gave the rules for determining who had killed accidentally as well as who was to judge these matters – Num. 35:22-28
- Trial rules for testimony and the rejection of ransom were commanded – Num. 35:29-32
- God explained how these rules kept the land from being polluted and defiled by blood, which is sin against God – Num. 35:33-34

Joshua 20:1-9

# The Cities of Refuge Chosen by God

# Cities of Refuge

- These cities were to be designated as Israel entered the Land – Josh. 20:1-9
- **Kadesh** (sanctuary, holy place) in Galilee of Naphtali
- **Shechem** (strong shoulder) in Ephraim
  - Abraham and Jacob built altars there – Gen. 12:6-7; 33:18-20; Jn. 4:5-14
  - God made Levi, who had brought much suffering upon Shechem, a symbol of His grace there – Gen. 34; 49:6-7
  - Joshua made a covenant with the people to keep God's Law – Josh. 24:1-25

# Cities of Refuge

- **Hebron** (fellowship, community) in Judah
  - Favorite home of Abraham, who buried Sarah there – Gen. 23:17-20
  - David's royal residence for 7 1/2 years and crowned king over Israel there – 2 Sam. 5:5; 2:1-4
  - Joab murdered Abner at the gate for killing Asahel in battle – 2 Sam. 3:27
- **Bezer** (ore of gold, strong hiding place) in Reuben

# Cities of Refuge

- **Ramoth** (heights, high place) in Gilead of Gad
  - One of twelve places where Solomon set governors to oversee providing food for his household – 1 Kgs. 4:7, 13
  - Ahab was mortally wounded here – 1 Kgs. 22:1-35
  - Jehu was anointed king here – 2 Kgs. 9:1, 4
- **Golan** (enclosure for captives, exile, passage) in Bashan of Manasseh



▾ What we learn from the cities of refuge



# God Wants His People To...

- Know that His mercy and refuge are available to **everyone** – Num. 35:15; Josh. 20:9
- **Respect the sanctity of life**, seeing all people are made in His image – Gen. 1:26-27
- Live by **rule of law**, not according to vengeance leading to sin – Rom. 13:1-7
- Know that all sin is ultimately **against Him** – Num. 35:33-34; Psa. 51:4; 1 Cor. 8:12