

# Cities of Refuge

Joshua 21

bcc

The LORD also spoke to Joshua, saying,  
"Speak to the children of Israel, saying:

'Appoint for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, that the slayer who kills a person accidentally *or* unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

Call to the Word

Cities of Refuge

introduction



Cities of Refuge

The purpose of the cities of refuge was to protect the slayer who killed someone accidentally or unintentionally.

bcc

Joshua 21:1-3

Cities of Refuge

*“...Therefore, you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. Therefore, do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.”*

*(Num 35:31; 33-34)*

Murder is the unlawful killing of a human being with malice aforethought.

Joshua 21:1-3

Cities of Refuge

*“How long will our nation be polluted by the stain of unpunished murders? Not too many years ago, over one year in Los Angeles County, they averaged more than five murders a day. The blood of the slain cries out before God.” (Guzik)*

Joshua 21:1-3

Cities of Refuge

When someone fleeing from an avenger of blood came to a city of refuge, he stated his case to the elders at the city gates. They, then, were obliged to protect the one who had fled to the city. The avenger of blood had no legal standing to deliver the slayer over to execution.



Joshua 21:5

Cities of Refuge

## Pretty Advanced for a Primitive Society!

- Weighed Motivation & Intent
- Ensured Safety of the Accused until trial
- Ensured Due Process for the Accused
- Ensured an Impartial Jury
- Ensured Justice for the Accused

Joshua 21:5

Cities of Refuge



To be protected against the avenger of blood, the slayer had to stay within the walls of the city of refuge until his case was fully heard by the proper authorities, and until the death of the standing high priest.

If found guilty he would either pay for it with his life or make restitution based upon the individual case.

*These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwelt among them, that whoever killed a person accidentally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation. (Josh 21:9)*



Joshua 21:7-9

Cities of Refuge

*The Cities of Refuge are a Picture of Jesus.*

*Within Easy Reach: Rom 10:8-9*

*Open to All: Rev 22:17*

*A Place to Live: Gal 2:20*

*The Only Alternative: 1Ti 2:5; Act 4:12*

*Protection Within Boundaries: Jn 15:4, 6*

*Freedom: Heb 4:14-16*

*(Guzik)*

*The Cities of Refuge are a Picture of Jesus  
with One Major Distinction*

The cities of refuge only helped the *innocent*, but the *guilty* can come to Jesus and find refuge. (Guzik)

Rom 3:23-26

reflection

Cities of Refuge

*Jesus is available and accessible to every believer who  
cries out, "I need refuge!"*



reflection

Cities of Refuge

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

*Ps 46:1*

*“... we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us.”*

*Heb 6:18 (NLT)*

*“You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word.”*

*Ps 119:114*

*“What great comfort we have. What great confidence we have. What a strong consolation we have when I can just take the Word of God and say, ‘Here, God has said it, and that settles it.’”*

*(Chuck Smith)*

***Flee to the Word!***

***Php 4:19; Heb 13:5; 1Pe 5:10; Mat 5:11-12; Luk 22:32***

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