

Run for Safety

“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. And when he flees to one of those cities and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city and declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. Then if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not deliver the slayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unintentionally, but did not hate him beforehand. And he shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the slayer may return and come to his own city and his own house, to the city from which he fled.’”

So they appointed Kedesh in Galilee, in the mountains of Naphtali, Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and Kirjath Arba (which is Hebron) in the mountains of Judah. And on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness on the plain, from the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh. 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.”

(Joshua 20:1-9)

What Were the Cities of Refuge?

1. Cities were refuge for those committing involuntary manslaughter.
2. They protected the slayer from avengers, relatives, and vigilantes.
3. They were for Jews as well as strangers.
4. There was protection only when they fled to and remained in the city.
5. The slayer could return home at the death of the high priest.

Our City of Refuge

“That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind

the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 6:18-20)

1. Being in Christ (born again) is our personal city of Refuge.
2. Being in Him is our protection from the avenger of blood.
 - a. **“In Him** we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28).
 - b. **“We are made the righteousness of God in Him”** (2 Corinthians 5:21).
 - c. **“Be found in Him**, not having my own righteousness (Philippians 3:9).
 - d. **“And you are complete in Him”** (Colossians 2:10).
 - e. **“No condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus”** (Romans 8:1).
3. But to be “in Christ” we must **flee to Him.**
 - a. Because the city was provided did not give everyone protection.
 - b. Only those who killed unknowingly fled to the city were protected and could live there.

Universalism

“For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of (for) all men, especially (specifically) of those who believe.” (1 Timothy 4:10)

1. Salvation from the avengers is for those **in here**, not **out there**.
2. Deliverance is for those **in Christ**, not those **out of Christ**.
3. We are not “in Christ” automatically. We must enter.
4. Refuge is provided. We must choose to enter (Psalm 143:9, John 3:18).

The Cities are a Type of Our Salvation in Christ

1. **They were appointed by God Himself.** They were nothing of man’s doing. Salvation has no human intervention.
2. **They were given to provide shelter from the avenger.** There was no other place of protection. Salvation is in no other name.
3. **They were in plain sight.** Built on hills and mountains (Galatians 3:1, Matthew 5:14).
4. **The road was plainly marked.** Priests annually cleaned the road of debris and rocks. They kept signs clearly marked for people to read and follow (Deuteronomy 19:3).
5. **They were easily accessible.** Six cities made them close (Isaiah 51:5, Romans 10:8-10)

6. They were available for Gentiles as well as Jews.

7. The six cities had names:

1. Kadesh – “Holy” Holiness is only found in Christ Jesus.
2. Shechem – “Shoulder, place of strength” Only in Christ do we have security, protected by His strength.
3. Hebron – “Fellowship” Only in Christ do we have true communion with each other, Jesus Christ, and the Father.
4. Bezer – “Fortified place” Protection only comes as we are in Christ.
5. Ramoth – “Exalted” Only in Christ are we elevated above the world, Satan, and his demonic forces.
6. Golan – “Joy” The kingdom of God is...joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

New Testament Application

1. We killed Jesus Christ, the Son of God, unaware. It was involuntary manslaughter (1 Corinthians 2:7-8).
2. When we are saved, we flee for refuge and are safe from the avenger, Satan (Hebrews 6:18).
3. The high priest, Jesus, died, then rose from the dead. We are free from this time, no matter where we are.