

Joshua

Lesson #15, Chapters 20-21

In Chapter 20 the Lord, in His continual provision for the newly established land, has led Joshua to set up an essential system of regional courts to deal specifically with manslaughter. The cities of refuge removed the case from local jurisdiction, where the miscarriage of justice might possibly occur, to cities assigned to the Levites, where ideally, the laws given by Moses would be known, honored, and applied.

1. After each tribe had received their allotment of land, God reminds Joshua to designate cities of refuge, as He had previously commanded. What is the purpose of the cities of refuge? See 20:3, 9; Num. 35:11-12; Deut. 19:10.
2. What is the difference between killing someone unintentionally and murder? See Num. 35:16-28; Deut. 19:4-6, 11-12.
3. What law codes regarding murder were given to govern the new land? See Ex. 21:23-25; Lev. 24:17-22; Deut. 19:11-13.
4. Based on the Num. 35 and Deut. 19 passages we looked at earlier, as well as the verses cited above, what is the role of the blood avenger?
5. What was the procedure for someone who had fled to a city of refuge (20:4)?

6. How long did the manslayer need to stay in the city of refuge? See 20:6 and Num. 35:26-28.

7. How many cities of refuge were designated? What do you notice about the location of them that is significant? See 20:7-8.

8. If someone did accidentally kill someone, who was allowed to live in the cities of refuge? See 20:9 and Num. 35:15. What does this tell you about God?

9. Just like the manslayer, we can run to the Lord for help when we are in trouble. What do the following verses say about *our* refuge? Ps. 9:9; 32:7; 37:39; 40:17; 46:1; 62:7-8; 91:1-2; 142:5.

10. In what way do the laws concerning the cities of refuge reveal God's holiness and His desire that His people be holy?

11. God made sure there were six cities of refuge, so *all* the nation would have a way of escape, and innocent blood wouldn't be spilled. God has provided, in a sense, a *city of refuge* for us in 1 Cor. 10:13. How does that verse reveal the refuge we may run to in times of temptation?

“How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said—To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?”

“Fear not, I am with thee—O be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will still give thee aid; I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand, upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand.

“When thru the deep waters I call thee to go, the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow; for I will be with thee thy troubles to bless, and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

“When thru fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply; the flame shall not hurt thee—I only design thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to his foes; that soul, tho all hell should endeavor to shake, I’ll never—no, never—no, never forsake.”

12. In Chapter 21 we see that God isn’t finished with establishing His people in the promised land. The heads of households of the tribe of Levi approached Eleazar and Joshua. What was their request? See 21:2 and Num. 35:1-8.

Note: Ex. 6:6-19 lists Levi’s family so that you can see the division of the Levites. Jacob had Levi who had Kohath, Gershon, and Merari. Eventually to Kohath’s family was born Aaron, whose sons were designated to be priests. The other sons of Kohath had no special distinction from that of the other Levite families.

13. Read Deut. 18:1-2; Josh. 13:14, 33; 14:3 and compare them to Num. 35:2-8; Josh. 14:4. Please explain the apparent contradiction between those passages.
14. What function were the Levites to fulfill besides being temple workers? See Deut. 33:8, 10; 2 Chron. 17:8-9; 35:3; Neh. 8:7-9; Mal. 2:4-7.
15. “Someone has estimated that no one in Israel lived more than 10 miles from one of the 48 Levite towns (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*).” Coupled with what you know about the Levites’ duties, what does that statement reveal about God’s purpose for the Levites and for Israel?

16. The tribe of Levi had been cursed in Gen. 49:5-7. What was the curse and its cause? Num. 25:10-13 records that the Levites were blessed. What was the cause for the blessing? How is Josh. 21:41 a fulfillment of the curse, but a blessing for the tribes of Israel?

17. Chapter 21:43-45 summarizes the distribution of the land. What did the Lord give them according to these verses?

18. The focus of 21:43-45 is the Lord and all He had done for Israel. What attributes about God do you see in these verses?

19. We read in this chapter of God's faithfulness. What else do you learn about God as a faithful God from the following verses? See Deut. 7:9; Ps. 91:4; Lam. 3:21-24; Mal. 3:6; II Tim. 2:13; Rev. 19:11. How does focusing on the Lord's faithfulness help you deal with the uncertainties of life?

20. Read 21:45 replacing "the house of Israel" with your name. What are some of the things God has fulfilled in your life? Take a moment right now to thank God for each thing on your list.

21. A. W. Pink in *The Attributes of God* writes, "There are seasons in the lives of all when it is not easy, no not even for Christians, to believe that God is faithful. Our faith is sorely tried, our eyes bedimmed with tears, and we can no longer trace the outworkings of His love. Our ears are distracted with the noises of the world, harassed by the atheistic whisperings of Satan, and we can no longer hear the sweet accents of His still small voice. Cherished plans have been thwarted, friends on whom we relied have failed us, a

professed brother or sister in Christ has betrayed us. We are staggered. We sought to be faithful to God, and now a dark cloud hides Him from us. We find it difficult, yea, impossible, for carnal reason to harmonize His frowning providence with His gracious promises. Ah, faltering soul, severely tried fellow pilgrim, seek grace to heed Is. 50:10, *“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God”*.” If you are in or have been in one of those difficult seasons, how does remembering God’s faithfulness to His promises help you to carry on?