

# **Joshua 20**

## **Joshua 20.1-6**

### **V1 – Who had the idea of the cities of refuge? God**

-The nation of Israel was about the size of the state of Maryland, so we can see that nobody would be too far away from a city of refuge

### **V2 – Originally given through whom? Moses**

-See Exodus 21.13, Numbers 35.9-15, Deut. 19.2-10

### **V3 – Who could take advantage of the cities of refuge? – Unintentional manslayer, involuntary homicide (not 1st degree murderer)**

-**Whom would he be fleeing from?** Relatives of the dead person

-At this time in Old Testament, there was no police force to punish evildoers

-Instead, each family would take vengeance on someone who had harmed one of their family members

-**But how would they know if the one who harmed their relative did it on purpose or accidentally?**

-The cities of refuge served the purpose of discovering the motive, etc.

### **V4 – How would he get in? Meet the elders of the city at the gate and state his case (had to prove that he was innocent)**

-Notice the use of elders in the Old Testament (began with Moses)

### **V5 – He would be safe from vengeful relatives**

### **V6 – Two conditions? 1. Had to be judged by the whole congregation, 2. Must live there until the death of the high priest (a statute of limitations)**

-Still basic to our laws today: the motive of the person is taken into account

-Note: from involuntary manslaughter to 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder

**Purpose of the cities of refuge?** God knew the weaknesses of humans: accidents do happen, and people do try to take the law into their own hands

### **How do the cities of refuge apply to us under the New Covenant?**

-Jesus is our refuge – **Read Hebrews 6.18-20**

-There must be a blood atonement for a sin – **Read Gen. 9.5-6 See Numbers 35.33-34**

-Jesus became the ultimate blood atonement for our sins

-But as with the intentional murderer, under the New Covenant there was the unpardonable sin (sin intentionally committed with no plan for repentance)

### **Did the people who crucified Christ kill him intentionally or unintentionally? Read Luke 23.34**

-They did not understand the significance of what they had done at the time

### **When did they realize what they had done? Read Acts 2.36-37**

-Therefore, they could be forgiven on the Day of Pentecost by being baptized and covering themselves with the blood of Christ (a deep concept)

-So the unintentional manslayer under the Law of Moses was similar to those who killed Christ on the cross and to us today

-We seek out Christ as our city of refuge when we become aware of our sins and want to be forgiven without suffering eternal punishment – **See Hebrews 7.24-25, Heb. 10.26-27**

**See Deut. 19.3** – The roads to the cities of refuge were to be "prepared" – in other words, clearly marked

-No-one would get lost trying to find the road to the nearest city of refuge

**Read Acts 17.27 – See Matt. 7.13-14** – Even though the road to salvation is narrow and small, it is still there and can be found by anyone seeking it (eternal salvation)

**How does the New Testament describe people who intentionally set out to commit sin, regardless of the consequences?** On the way to committing the unpardonable sin (*Heb. 6.4-6, 1 John 5.16*)

## **Joshua 20.7-9**

**V 7-8** – The 6 cities - very evenly scattered throughout the land

**V 9** – A review:

-God has always been a God of justice and fairness (like the Court of Appeals, higher courts, Review Boards, Parole Boards today)

Conclusion to *Joshua 20*: **Read Romans 8.1-4**

-Jesus shed his blood for us as our City of Refuge

Revised 2012-09-15