

Title: Refuge for the Slayer  
Text: Numbers 35: 6  
Date: March 19, 2017  
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

**Numbers 35: 6: And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites *there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither:...***

A refuge is a place where a person can flee for safety and security. God provided six cities for refuge. They were for the manslayer—for one who had unintentionally killed someone without malice or forethought—what we call “manslaughter.” The avenger of blood was the near kinsman of the one killed; he was obligated under God’s law to execute the man who had killed his kinsman. But the slayer could flee into the city of refuge and be safe and secure.

Lately, we hear reports in the news about “Sanctuary Cities.” Recently, I have heard more than one person say sanctuary cities in the United States are like the cities of refuge in the Bible. That is not true. I want you to know why.

Basically, sanctuary cities in the United States are cities that do not enforce immigration laws toward people who have illegally entered this country (or) cities that do not enquire about immigration status at all. To my understanding, some cities put this into law, others simply put it into practice

The purpose of God in giving the Cities of Refuge was not that. The cities of refuge were not provided to disregard God’s law but to uphold God’s justice. They were cities where the law and justice of God was enforced, while at the same time, the mercy of God was given.

**Proposition:** The cities of refuge are a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, where sinners find refuge.

## **GOD GAVE THE CITY OF REFUGE**

**Numbers 35: 9: And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 10: Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; 11: Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you;...15 These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither.**

God giving the cities of refuge for the children of Israel, for Gentile strangers and sojourners typified God giving his only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, for God’s chosen children, the Israel of God.

John 3: 16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God’s elect are those God everlastingly loves, scattered throughout the world—from among Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, male and female. We flee into Christ for Refuge by believing on him with a sure hope.

Hebrews 6:18: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20: Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Deuteronomy 33: 27: The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms

Proverbs 18: 10: The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

## FOR MAN SLAYERS

**Numbers 35: 9...that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares.**

The city of refuge was only for man slayers. God declared that vengeance must be taken on any man who killed a man.

Genesis 9: 6: Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

God declared when one man killed another the land was defiled and could only be cleansed by death of the man who shed blood—**Numbers 35: 33: So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.** The dead man's next of kin had a legal right and obligation to avenge his brother's blood.

Brethren, we are all guilty. *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...their feet are swift to shed blood.”* (Rom 3: 10, 15) That is true of every sinner born of our father Adam! Me and you included!

But there is a difference between the “slayer” and the “murderer.” The “slayer” is one who killed a man “unawares” or unintentionally—he did it ignorantly. Indeed, outside of the refuge, he was guilty of shedding innocent blood. But he did it ignorantly.

On the other hand, the “murderer” was one who killed intentionally, with malice and enmity and forethought, by willful, premeditated murder. There is no city of refuge for him. The avenger of blood shall kill him. (Read Numbers 35: 16-21)

Both were guilty. But, for those who did it ignorantly, God mercifully provided the cities of refuge. But there was no refuge for the man who willingly, knowingly, purposely killed a man in malice. Which one am I? Which one are you? Am I the “slayer” or the “murderer?” Which are you?

Before God sends us the gospel we are “the slayer”—we do not know that we do not know Christ. All our self-righteous works and good thoughts about ourselves is unbelief. It is nothing more than slaying Christ afresh. Yet, we did it ignorantly. The apostle Paul said,

1 Timothy 1: 13: [I] was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. 14: And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Paul blasphemed and persecuted Christ and his people **ignorantly in unbelief**. He thought he believed God but he did not know that he did not believe on Christ. He thought he was honoring God by keeping the law but it was slaying Christ afresh because he did not know that Christ is the end of the law for Righteousness to all who believe. He was trying to make sure his good outweighed his bad for the day of judgment but he was only crucifying Christ afresh because he did not know that Christ settled judgment for all his people. But once the grace of our Lord came to Paul, he heard the gospel of Christ and the Spirit convinced him of what the law never could.

John 16: 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world...9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10: Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11: Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Then Paul fled into Christ the city of Refuge, confessing his sin and found the mercy and grace of our Lord had been exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. Sinner flee to Christ if God has made you behold Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ, [has] *compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.* (Heb 5: 2)

Yet, for those who hear the gospel of Christ in truth but forsake the gospel, refusing to repent and believe on Christ—they are guilty of premediated murder; the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit for...

Hebrews 6:6:...they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Hebrews 10: 6: For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27: But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28: He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Which are you? “The slayer” who did it ignorantly in unbelief but now flee to Christ for refuge? Or “the murderer” who refuse to believe on Christ and crucifies the Son of God afresh?

## **FLEE TO CHRIST NOW!**

Knowing the terror of the LORD let me persuade you.

God must uphold his holy law and justice. There is no refuge for any found outside of Christ—**Numbers 35: 21: [he that] in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him.**

God is the revenger of blood whose holy justice is obligated to execute all who are found outside of Christ the city of refuge.

Hebrews 10: 30: For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31: It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

You cannot pay by your works to make satisfaction for your sins but shall die—**Numbers 35: 31: Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.**

But for the “slayer”, who suddenly sees that you have ignorantly shed Christ’s innocent blood, Christ is the city of refuge near for you to flee into— **Numbers 35: 13: And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge. 14: Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge.**

Christ is near! Flee to him now!

Romans 10: 8: The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11: For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

When the “slayer” enters the city of refuge, he declares his cause, his sin, his need for mercy and he finds his judgement is settled—**Numbers 35: 24 Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments**

Christ showers us with mercy because God judged all his elect in Christ. He has settled judgment for all for whom he died.

In Christ we find deliverance from the curse of the law—**Numbers 35: 25: And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled:**

He delivered us from the law—from the revenger of blood—by bearing the justice of his people on the cross. God restored us in Christ with everything we lost in Adam, but eternally and unchangeably. Christ is our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.

It is because all who God chose in Christ were abiding in Christ when Christ died in our room and stead—**Numbers 35: 25:...and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil**

Remember, the “manslayer” who shed innocent blood has to die, too! The city of refuge was not given so the law of God could be dishonored but upheld. The slayer died in the death of the High Priest. Christ our High Priest satisfied justice for his people by his death on the cross.

2 Corinthians 5: 21: He hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

He declared God just and the Justifier of him that believe in our Lord Jesus. Therefore, God calls each one for whom Christ died into this city of refuge and gives us mercy in perfect harmony with his justice.

He will not take vengeance on any who he has made to abide in Christ, the city of Refuge and none can purchase us out of his hand—**Number 35: 32: And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.**

Knowing this good news, knowing this liberty and good hope we have in Christ, we abide in this city of refuge trusting Christ until the end. At no point do we imagine we can make satisfaction by our works under the law. We do not leave Christ for Sinai. We stay in the city of refuge until the end.

Colossian 1: 21: And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: 23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard,...

But those who only appeared to flee to Christ but later do not abide in Christ, merely prove they were never justified and called—**Numbers 35: 26: But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; 27: And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of**

**the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: 28 Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest:**

Still, all God's people shall be made to effectually abide in Christ till the end, and we shall find that by Christ's death, we are guaranteed our heavenly land. It is our possession by Christ's purchase for us—**Numbers 35: 28:...but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.**

Hebrews 9:15: And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (1Jo 2:28)

Now, listen carefully. Outside this city of refuge you are guilty and under the wrath of God.

You may have begun reading this as the “the slayer” ignorant in unbelief. But you have heard the truth now! Do not be the murderer, guilty of willfully trampling underfoot the blood of Christ. There is no refuge if you forsake Christ! If you meet God outside of Christ, God the shall take vengeance on you.

God has given his Son for the slayer! Is that you? Has God made you see that you have been ignorant in unbelief? Had God made you see you need Christ for All your salvation? Then be assured that Christ delights to show mercy! The gates of the city of refuge are open wide for the slayer!

May God give you grace to flee to him now in faith so that you might sing this song with all the citizens of the city of refuge:

Psalms 62:6: He only is my Rock and my Salvation: He is my Defence; I shall not be moved. 7: In God is my Salvation and my Glory: the Rock of my strength, and my Refuge, is in God. 8: Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a Refuge for us. Selah.

**Amen!**