

## Joshua 20

Verses 1 - 6

**Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘Designate the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, <sup>3</sup> so that one who commits manslaughter *by* killing a person unintentionally, without premeditation, may flee there, and they shall become your refuge from the avenger of blood. <sup>4</sup> Then he shall flee to one of these cities, and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city, and state his case in the presence of the elders of that city; and they shall receive him into the city to them and give him a place, so that he may remain among them. <sup>5</sup> Now if the avenger of blood pursues him, then they are not to hand the one who committed manslaughter over to him, since he struck his neighbor without premeditation and did not hate him previously. <sup>6</sup> And he shall remain in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then he shall return to his own city and to his own house, to the city from which he fled.”**

**Designate the cities of refuge so that one who commits manslaughter *by* killing a person unintentionally, without premeditation, may flee there**

The purpose of these cities was the protection of innocent men, someone who had inadvertently, or accidentally, killed someone.

**He shall remain in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment, until the death of the one who is high priest in those days**

The judgment took place when the manslayer was accused by the avenger of blood

1. If the manslayer was acquitted

Then he had to live in the city of refuge until the death of the High Priest

2. If he was found guilty

He was handed over to the avenger of blood who had the right to execute him.

Joab was dragged from the horns of the altar in Jerusalem and executed for his murder of Abner. See 1 Kings 2:28-31

Verses 7 - 9

<sup>7</sup> So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, and Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. <sup>8</sup> And beyond the Jordan east of Jericho, they designated Bezer in the wilderness on the plain from the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead from the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan from the tribe of Manasseh. <sup>9</sup> These were the designated cities for all the sons of Israel and for the stranger who resides among them, so that whoever kills a person unintentionally may flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stands before the congregation.

The cities of Refuge were spread out evenly among the tribes.

See Pic 2005



The cities west of the Jordan were situated in the hill country:

Kedesh 1600 feet

Shechem 1700 feet

Hebron 3100 feet

The cities on the east side, Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan, were all around 2,300 to 2,400 feet above Sea Level.