

The Cities of Refuge

TEXT: Joshua 20:1-9

INTRODUCTION:

- A. CITIES OF REFUGE SET APART TO INSURE JUSTICE FOR THOSE WHO KILLED ACCIDENTALLY.
1. Perhaps alluded to in **Heb. 6:18**. Similar characteristics to the church.
 2. In the church we find refuge from guilt and punishment of sin.
- B. WE WANT TO SEE IN THIS LESSON THE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE CITIES OF REFUGE AND THE CHURCH.

I. THE NAMES OF THE CITIES REMIND US OF CERTAIN FEATURES OF THE CHURCH.

- A. **KEDESH** - MEANS "HOLY."
1. The church is a holy institution(**1 Pet. 2:9**).
 2. "*ekklesia*" called out. Out of the world, no longer of it(**John 15:19**).
 3. "Holy" means "set apart"(**2 Cor. 6:17-18**).
- B. **SHECHEM** - MEANS "SHOULDER."
1. Lifting weights, shoulder supports and is involved in all exercises.
 2. The church is the support of the Truth(**1 Tim. 3:14-15**).
 3. The church lends support to its members(**Gal. 6:1; Rom. 12:15**).
- C. **HEBRON** - MEANS "ALLIANCE," "LEAGUE OR CONFEDERACY."
1. All of these terms convey the idea of *Fellowship*.
 2. Used in three senses:
 - a. Joint-participation(**Phil. 1:3-5**).
 - b. Association(**Acts 2:42**).
 - c. Unity(**1 Cor. 10:16-17**).
- D. **BEZER** - MEANS "STRONG" OR "FORTRESS."
1. The church is a kingdom which cannot be shaken(**Heb. 12:28**).
 2. Not even death can destroy this kingdom(**Mat. 16:18**).
 3. We draw strength from the church(**Heb. 3:12; 10:24-25**).
- E. **RAMOTH** - MEANS "HEIGHT" OR "ELEVATION."
1. The church is given a glorious place(**Eph. 3:10-11; 2:4-6**).
 2. It is the "Bride of Christ"(**Eph. 5:22-24**).
 3. It is cleansed from sin(**Eph. 5:25-27**).
 4. It was bought with his blood(**Acts 20:28**).
- F. **GOLAN** - MEANS "CIRCLE."
1. Circles express completeness; we are complete in Jesus(**Col. 2:10**).
 2. The fullness of Jesus is the church(**Eph. 1:22-23**). Therefore, we are made full in the church.
 3. All spiritual blessings are in Christ(**Eph. 1:3**).

II. SOME FACTS ABOUT THESE CITIES OF REFUGE.

- A. THE ROAD WAS SMOOTH & PLAIN, ACCESSIBLE TO ALL (**Matt. 11:28-30; Mark 16:15-16**).
- B. THE WAY WAS CLEARLY MARKED(**Rom. 1:16; James 1:21**).
- C. THESE CITIES WERE LOCATED ALL OVER; LIKEWISE, THE GOSPEL AND THE CHURCH ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL(**Matt. 28:19; Titus 2:11-12; Rev. 22:17**).
- D. THESE CITIES WERE FILLED WITH BLESSINGS FOR THE ONE SEEKING JUSTICE(**Eph. 1:3; 22-23**).
- E. THE GATES WERE ALWAYS OPEN(**John 6:37**).
1. One ought to obey the moment he feels the need(**James 4:13-14**).
 2. It is urgent then to obey when we have the opportunity. Realizing this we remind all of the need by offering the invitation at the close of every service.
But that is not the only time we are available to help.
- F. IF A MAN KILLED ACCIDENTALLY AND THEN WAS MURDERED HIMSELF, IT WAS HIS FAULT. HE HAD THE PROTECTION OF THE LAW.

CONCLUSION:

- A. THE ONE WHO DESIRED THE SAFETY OF THE CITY WOULD NOT BE SAVED UNLESS HE WAS IN THE CITY(**Eph. 5:23**).
- B. HOW DOES ONE GET INTO THE CITY OF REFUGE TODAY(**1 Cor. 12:13**).