

# Bethany Bible Study & Discussion



## Deuteronomy Part 21 (chapter 19) KJV

6.06.2023

## Chapter 19

### Cities of Refuge, Boundaries, Witnesses

Why were cities of refuge established? Does it provide protection to the guilty? Who is the avenger of blood? (1-13)

How are the land boundaries respected? (14)

What is the role of witnesses? What is the punishment for false witnesses? (15-20) What is the law of retribution? (21)

What are the four commandments covered in this chapter?

# Cities of Refuge (1-13)

## Cities of Refuge

When the Lord thy God hath cut off the nations, whose land the Lord thy God giveth thee, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses;

<sup>2</sup>Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it. <sup>3</sup>Thou shalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coasts of thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every slayer may flee thither. <sup>4</sup>And this is the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past;

**Example of unintentional murder** <sup>5</sup>As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live:

<sup>6</sup>Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.

<sup>7</sup>Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee.

# Cities of Refuge

(also, Numbers 35)

Innocent  
Murderer

Intentional  
Murderer

# Cities of Refuge: The innocent murderer

## Cities of Refuge?

Protection for innocent murderer from accidental/unintentional murder (5)

Flee from rage of avenger to the city of refuge

Sheltered in city until case is resolved

after favorable resolution, must remain in the city for safety

if leaves the city, can be killed by revenger of blood (Numbers 35:26-28)

## NUMBERS 35: 12, 24-25

<sup>12</sup>And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment.

<sup>24</sup>Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments: <sup>25</sup>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: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil.

# Cities of refuge location

## Location

In the midst (==> easy accessibility) (3)

Includes 6 of 48 cities given to Levites

And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge (Numbers 35:6)

## How many?:

3 east of Jordan, 3 west of Jordan (names, Joshua 20:7-8)

3 more if Israel possessed more territories (8-9, did not happen)

# Names of Cities of Refuge

## JOSHUA 20:7-8

<sup>7</sup> And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.

<sup>8</sup> And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.

## 3 more cities

<sup>9</sup> If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three: <sup>10</sup> That innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee.

The additional three cities of refuge were not established as Israel did not expand and possess the entire land that was promised in Genesis 15:18

In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: (Genesis 15:18)

The full possession of land will happen when Christ returns.



# The intentional murderer

<sup>11</sup> But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities: <sup>12</sup> Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.

<sup>13</sup> Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

## Pre-meditated murder

Murderer lies in wait and kills fatally

Murderer flees to city of refuge

but Elders deliver him to the avenger if blood to be put to **death**

Justice served & land cleansed (Numbers 35:33)

**cities of refuge don't protect the guilty**

## NUMBERS 35:33-34

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. <sup>34</sup> Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.

# New Testament & the Cross: Focus on forgiveness

## **Mathew 5:21-22, 38-39**

- <sup>21</sup> Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: <sup>22</sup> But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:

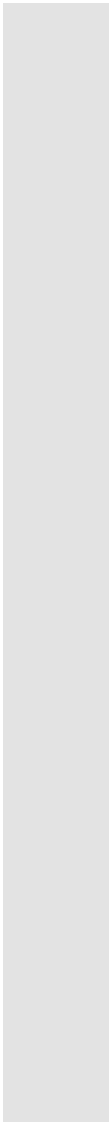
## **ROMANS 12: 17-19**

<sup>17</sup> Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup> If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup> Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.



# Ten commandments

Thou shalt not kill  
(Exodus 20:13)



# Respecting land boundaries (14)

# Respecting land boundaries

Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it (14)

Respect private property rights

Land seen as a basic right and means of sustenance, and should not be snatched.

God's  
judgement on  
those who  
violate land  
rights

**DEUTERONOMY 27:17** Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

**HOSEA 5:10** The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

# Lord Protects the boundaries

## **PROVERBS 15:25**

The Lord will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow.

### NIV

The Lord tears down the house of the proud,  
but he sets the widow's boundary stones in place.

# Boundaries in our life

Using wisdom of God's word, we must set boundaries:

For our Church

For our families

For our personal life

Crossing of boundaries set by God will lead to losses in our life





# Ten commandments

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Thou shalt not steal (Exodus 20:15)

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house (Exodus 20:17)



# Role of Witnesses (15-20)

# Witnesses

<sup>15</sup> One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

<sup>16</sup> If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; <sup>17</sup> Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; <sup>18</sup> And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother;

<sup>19</sup> Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.

<sup>20</sup> And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.

# False witnesses

Minimum number of witnesses: 2

False witnesses subject to same punishment (put to death) after review

Such harsh treatment of false witness will serve as a deterrent

What if there are no witnesses to the crime?

Personal confession

II Samuel 1: <sup>16</sup> And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed.

Circumstantial evidence

### **EXODUS 23:1**

Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

### **Proverbs 14:5**

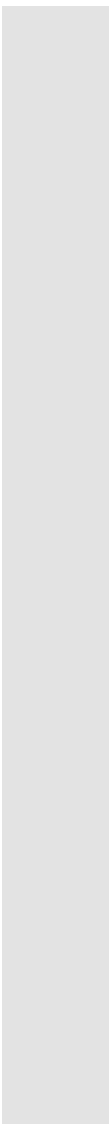
faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.



**Ten  
commandments**

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Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor  
(Exodus 20:16)



## Law of retribution

<sup>21</sup> And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

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## LEVITICUS 24:19

And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; <sup>20</sup> Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again. <sup>21</sup> And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it: and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death.

## GENESIS 9:6

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed:

These laws set the limits of punishment, and

Law exercised within the judicial system of judges and priests (and not used by individuals as a personal vengeance)



# Retribution

## New Testament Perspective

### Retaliation replaced by submission & forgiveness

**MATHEW 5: 38** Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: <sup>39</sup> But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

**Isaiah 53:7** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth

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