

The City of Refuge

God's Plan For Salvation



God's Ancient Law

- God gave a law to all mankind.
- Very few people know about, or understand, this law.



Genesis 9:6

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



God's Law for Manslaughter

- God wants man-slayers removed so they cannot kill again and he wants man to think twice before murdering.
- Deuteronomy 19:11-13
- Take no pity on pre-meditated murderers
- “That it may go well for thee” (society)



Murder in America

- In 2009 there were 15,241 murders in America. (far more American deaths than in Iraq or Afghanistan wars)
- Nevada and New Orleans the worst states for murder
- 179 murders in WA State in 2009



Death Penalty

- 15 of the 50 states have abolished the death penalty for murder.
- 3,093 murderers are in prison on “death row” awaiting execution.
- Typically murderers spend over 10 years waiting execution; some wait over 20 years.



Avenging Manslaughter

- God's word required the death penalty for murderers.
- God's plan in Deuteronomy was for the family to avenge the death of their relative, in accordance with specified laws. (There were no police departments in those days).



Avenging Manslaughter

- But what if the killing was an accident. What if you caused a death, but did not mean to.
- God is just and merciful. He gave a plan of salvation so the accidental slayer could be saved.



Numbers 35:9-15

- Who is speaking? (The Lord)
- Cities of refuge
- For someone who slays unaware
- Refuge from the avenger of death
- That the slayer die not until the day of judgment



Six Is The Number of Man

- Numbers 35:
- In Bible numerology, what is the number of man?



Six Is The Number of Man

- God gave man six days.
- Anti-Christ is number 666.
- Goliath, the giant enemy of God's people, had six fingers.
- God set aside 6 cities of refuge where accidental murders could go to be saved.



Joshua 20:1-9

- The Lord spoke unto Joshua
- Appoint cities of refuge



Joshua 20:1-9

- Vs – 5 If the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not offer up the slayer to the avenger, because he smote his neighbor unwittingly
- The slayer is safe until the death of the high priest



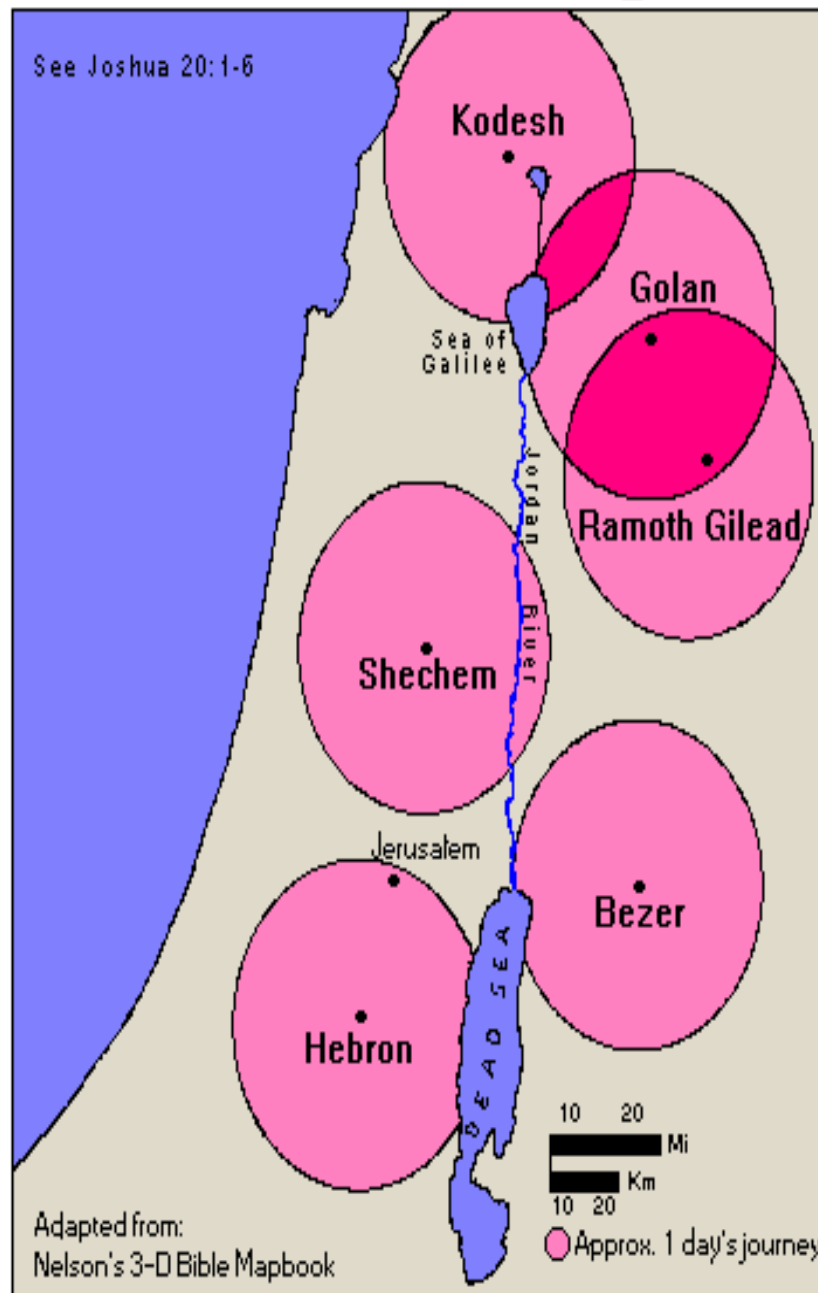
Six Cities of Refuge

- The six cities were placed conveniently, so that anyone could be saved in one day.
- Three cities on each side of the Jordan River.
- God's plan of salvation called for salvation the same day.



Cities of Refuge

See Joshua 20:1-6



Adapted from:
Nelson's 3-D Bible Mapbook

God's Plan for Salvation

- The plan of salvation was for everyone
 - Jews
 - Gentiles
 - Travelers
 - Visitors



Example of How It Worked

- The Bible and history record how the cities of refuge worked.
- Here is an example to help understand God's plan for those who killed unwittingly.



Example of How It Worked

- A man was riding a donkey across a ridge.
- Below the ridge in the valley a family was gathered around a tent.
- As the donkey walked along the ridge, he pushed a rock loose.



Example

- The loose rock began rolling down the steep hill.
- As the rock tumbled down the hill, it picked up speed.



How God's Law Worked

- At the bottom of the hill the rock bounced and struck a boy dead.
- According to the law, whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.
- The Father had to avenge the death of his son.



He Fled for the City of Refuge

- The slaying was accidental.
- The slayer had been taught God's word and knew about God's plan of salvation.
- It was an accident, but it was death unless he got to the city of refuge, for protection by the high priest.



He Fled for the City of Refuge

- The slayer told the donkey: you better get me to the nearest city of refuge pronto or you and I will both be dead meat.
- After making arrangements for the burial of the dead son, the father went after his son's killer.



The Way Was Made Straight

- Deuteronomy and Jewish history tell us that the roads to the cities of refuge were:
 - Made straight
 - Were well maintained
 - Were frequently marked.
 - Were non-stop



The Way Was Made Straight

- The manslayer is rushing to the nearest city of refuge. He believes he is hours ahead of the avenger.
- The avenger of blood is chasing after the manslayer, just minutes behind him.



How It Worked

- After travelling several hours, the manslayer arrives at the city of refuge.
- He places himself in the hands of the High Priest.



How It Worked

- Then he asks: how is your health?
(why)
- He was saved until the death of the high priest.
- The avenger arrives shortly thereafter but, according to God's Law, can't touch the slayer.



Safe While The High Priest Lives

- Then the manslayer goes to the city gate, looks out at the avenger, sticks out his tongue and says:
- Na na, nuh na na. (rsv)



Safe While The High Priest Lives

- He tells the avenger. The high priest is healthy, doesn't drink or smoke.
- He has promised as long as he lives to never leave me nor forsake me.
- No man can pluck me out of his hand.
- He will in no wise cast me out.



So What?

- What does this ancient law have to do with us today?
- It has everything to do with all of us, but few know anything about it.



Reference: Rabbi Ginzburg

- “In Biblical times, road signs pointing to the nearest city of refuge were liberally scattered throughout the Land of Israel. Each sign had two words: *Miklat Miklat*”
- “The road sign pointing to the city of refuge actually points one toward a new, Messianic consciousness.”



Moses Wrote of Christ

- John 5:46
- Had you believed Moses, you would have believed me, for Moses wrote of me (Christ).



Moses Wrote of Christ

- Moses wrote the Pentateuch, the first five books of the law, including Deuteronomy, which tells of the High Priest in the city of refuge who saves the manslayer of innocent blood.



Acts 28:23-24

- ...persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law and out of the prophets.
- The books of the Law did not name Christ, but described what he was all about.



Acts 28:23-24

- The books of the law (including Numbers and Deuteronomy) were used to teach the people about Jesus
- Jesus is not named anywhere in the books of the law but the lessons and illustrations teach us who Jesus is and our relationship to Him.



Galatians 3:22-25

- Under the law, manslayers had to flee to the city of refuge.
- Before Christ died, all men were under the Old Testament Law.



Galatians 3:22-25

- The law was a schoolmaster (an object lesson) to bring us to Christ.
- Placing yourself in Christ's Hands, by faith is an eternal refuge.



We Caused Christ's Death

- I Peter 2:24
- Christ died for our sins.



We Caused Christ's Death

- We didn't mean to do it, but we caused the death of an innocent man, Christ.
- Under God's law, if you kill a man, you must be killed.



We Caused Christ's Death

- His blood is upon us because of our sins.
- The wages of death is sin. Death is chasing us all. Death is catching up fast. We assume it is further back, but in reality it is much closer than we think.



The Path Was Made Straight

- We are responsible for the slaying of an innocent man.
- Luke 3:4
- God has prepared a refuge for us manslayers.
- Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight



Christ Is Our High Priest

- Hebrews 6:18-20
- We have a refuge from death.
- Christ got to the city ahead of us.
- Jesus is our high priest.
- Jesus is the alpha and omega. He is the eternal one who does not die.



The High Priest Lives

- The manslayer was safe from the avenger until the death of the high priest.
- Revelation 1:8



The High Priest Lives

- At the city of refuge, you were saved as long as the High Priest lived.
- Jesus our High Priest is eternal.
- He lives, he lives. He lives forever.
- While in his hands we live. He will never leave us nor forsake us. No man can pluck us out of his hands.



Hebrews 7:22-25

- An unchangeable priesthood
- This priest never dies
- He saves to the uttermost



Safe With The Highest High Priest

- John 10:28
- “I will in no way cast you out.”
- John 6:37
- “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”



Salvation In One Day

- The cities of refuge were strategically placed so that the city could be reached the same day that a person wanted to be saved.
- II Corinthians 6:2
- Today is the day of salvation.



Names of Cities of Refuge

1. Hebron – means “fellowship”
 - Our sins separate us from God. Our sins keep us from having fellowship with God.
 - I Corinthians 1:9 says: “we are called to his fellowship.”



Kedesh

2. Kedesh – Means “holy sanctuary”
 - Ephesians 2:19-22
 - Christ is our holy sanctuary.



Shechem

3. Shechem means “bare the burden”
 - The prophet Isaiah prophesied this in Isaiah 10:27
 - “And it shall come to pass in that day that his burden shall be taken away from off thy neck, and the yoke (burden) shall be destroyed because of thy anointing.”
 - Christ bore our burdens on the cross.



He Bore Our Burdens

- Galatians 3:13
- “Christ hath redeemed us from the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.
- A tree was made into a cross. Christ hung on that tree bearing our sin burdens on his own body.



Golan

4. Golan means “circle of joy”
 - A circle represents completeness.
 - We are complete in him. Col 2:10
 - When we have assurance that we are saved from our sins and know it, there is a joy.
 - I John 1:4



Bezer

5. Bezer means “fortress”

- A might fortress is our God.
- The fortresses were made of the largest and strongest rocks.
- Our refuge is in The Rock of Ages.



Let Your Wife Know Where You Are

- When the accidental killer was on his way to the city of refuge, he asked someone to get a message to his wife.
- The message:
- Your old geezer is on the way to Bezer.



Ramoth Gilead

6. Ramoth Gilead means exalted.
 - We were lowly sinners.
 - With Christ we are sons of God, ambassadors, exalted.



Psalm 46

- Three times we are told that God is our refuge.



Isaiah 4:5

- The Lord....a place of refuge.



Everyone Is One of Two

- Everyone on earth falls into two categories.



Everyone Is One of Two

1. Those who have never been to the city of refuge. They either never knew about the plan, or they knew and rejected God's plan for salvation.

They are not in the hands of the High priest who saves from sin.



Everyone Is One of Two

2. Those who heard about and believed God's plan of salvation. They realized they were sinners and needed to get in the hands of the high priest for eternal life.

By faith, they have placed their life in the hands of the High Priest.



It is God's Plan, Not Man's Plan.

- Every religion made by man involves some form of good works.
- God's plan of salvation involves faith in the plan for salvation.
- This is not taught in public colleges or universities, so it is rejected as unreal.



God's Plan is Simple

- *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

2 Corinthians 11:3



Why Die As A Fool Dieth ?

- Joab lured Abner into a trap and killed him to avenge the death of Asahel. What is striking about this story is the remark made by David when he mourned the death of Abner:
2 Sam. 3:33 - “Died Abner as a fool dieth?”



Why Die Like A Fool ?

- Abner had died at the very gates of Hebron - one of the cities of refuge. David was saying: Abner, you died like a fool! You were right there at the gates of the refuge. All you had to do was walk right in. You could have been saved, but you died like a fool!"



Tell Everyone About God's Plan

- Ezekiel 18:4 The soul that sinneth shall surely die.



Hebrews 6:18-20

- “All saved by grace have a strong consolation, who have led for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”



Assurance of Salvation

- Did the accidental manslayer know that he had been to the city of refuge?
- Was there any doubt that he had placed himself in the hands of the high priest?



Match the Below With God's Plan

- Many times when I have asked people if they are “saved”, I have received uncertain answers:
 - “I hope so”, “I think so”
 - “If my good works outweigh my bad works”, “I’m a pretty good person”
 - “No one can know for sure”



What Should We Do?

1. If you have not understood and followed God's plan for salvation.

If you are not sure that you have been to the city of refuge and placed your life in the hands of the high priest, do it today.



What Should We Do?

2. If you know for sure that you have been to the city and are in the hands of the high priest as long as he lives, then you need to tell others about God's plan of salvation.



In Conclusion

- No one *is required* to flee to the city of refuge.
- The Bible says: whosoever will, may come.
- The wages of sin is death. The angel of death is on the way.
- Death is closer than you may think. God's plan is for salvation this day.

