



SAVED TO SERVE
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THE CITIES OF REFUGE

1. In this Sabbath School Lesson, we will study the cities of refuge which were given as a possession to the tribe of Levi. For context, read Numbers 35 & Joshua 20.
 2. How many cities of refuge were there? Numbers 35:6 _____
 3. For whom were the cities of refuge made? Numbers 35:6, 11
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“Six of the cities assigned to the Levites—three on each side the Jordan—were appointed as cities of refuge, to which the manslayer might flee for safety...This merciful provision was rendered necessary by the ancient custom of private vengeance, by which the punishment of the murderer devolved on the nearest relative or the next heir of the deceased. In cases where guilt was clearly evident it was not necessary to wait for a trial by the magistrates. The avenger might pursue the criminal anywhere and put him to death wherever he should be found. The Lord did not see fit to abolish this custom at that time, but **He made provision to ensure the safety of those who should take life unintentionally.**” {PP 515.2}

4. Were the cities of refuge only for the Israelites? Numbers 35:15

 5. What would happen to someone who intentionally slayed another person? Numbers 35:16-19

 6. How were the roads leading to the city of refuge to be kept? Deuteronomy 19:2, 3
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“The cities of refuge were so distributed as to be within a half day’s journey of every part of the land. **The roads leading to them were always to be kept in good repair**; all along the way signposts were to be erected bearing the word “Refuge” in plain, bold characters, that the fleeing one might not be delayed for a moment.” {PP 515.3}

7. What happened when the innocent slayer arrived at the gate of the city of refuge? Joshua 20:4 **Answer:** They had to confess their fault.
 8. What had to happen before a person was officially declared innocent and worthy of remaining in the city of refuge? Numbers 35:12, 22-25
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“...But while the guiltless were not to be rashly slain, neither were the guilty to escape punishment. **The case of the fugitive was to be fairly tried by the proper authorities, and only when found innocent of intentional murder was he to be protected in the city of refuge.** The guilty were given up to the avenger.” {PP 515.3}

9. **Note:** Let us now make present day applications for the city of refuge.
 10. Who is our refuge? Psalm 91:2; Proverbs 18:10 _____
 11. What must we do to obtain refuge in Christ?
 - a) 1 John 1:9
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b) Isaiah 1:18; Matthew 11:28-30

12. Should we sin willfully? 1 John 2:1

13. **Note:** Whenever someone killed another person, they were pursued by the avenger of blood. If they were innocent and made it to the city before the avenger of blood caught up with them, then they were safe, but if not, the avenger of blood was allowed to kill them.

14. Who would the avenger of blood represent? 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9, 10; John 8:44

15. **Note:** Satan is always after us, seeking for opportunities to kill us and prevent us from obtaining eternal life. Remember that the roads to the city of refuge had to be kept clear so that nothing would hinder the innocent slayer from reaching the city.

16. How does Satan seek to hinder us from reaching Jesus, the city of refuge? See quotations below.

“Many are the ways by which Satan works through human influence to bind his captives. He secures multitudes to himself by attaching them by **the silken cords of affection** to those who are enemies of the cross of Christ. **Whatever this attachment may be, parental, filial, conjugal, or social, the effect is the same;** the opposers of truth exert their power to control the conscience, and the souls held under their sway have not sufficient courage or independence to obey their own convictions of duty.” {GC 597.1}

“**He who fled to the city of refuge could make no delay. Family and employment were left behind. There was no time to say farewell to loved ones. His life was at stake, and every other interest must be sacrificed to the one purpose**—to reach the place of safety. Weariness was forgotten, difficulties were unheeded. The fugitive dared not for one moment slacken his pace until he was within the wall of the city.” {PP 517.1}

17. What does Jesus say concerning putting our family or worldly cares above Him? Matthew 10:37, 38

18. How long was an innocent person to stay within the city of refuge? Numbers 35:25

19. What would happen if a person ventured out of the city of refuge? Numbers 35:26, 27

20. What does this teach us about the type of relationship should we have with Jesus? John 15:4, 5; 1 John 5:12

“**The prisoner who at any time went outside the city of refuge was abandoned to the avenger of blood.** Thus the people were taught to adhere to the methods which infinite wisdom appointed for their security. **Even so, it is not enough that the sinner believe in Christ for the pardon of sin; he must, by faith and obedience, abide in Him.** “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” Hebrews 10:26, 27. {PP 517.3}

21. **Note:** This destroys the theory of “once saved always saved.” We can be in Christ one moment and without Christ the next. Read Ezekiel 18:24-26. As we transition, notice that there is another application for the avenger of blood: it is the second death.

22. What does 1 John 3:4 tell us? _____

23. How many have sinned, and what are the wages of sin? Romans 3:23; 6:23

24. **Note:** Since all have sinned, the law requires that we pay the penalty for sin which is death, even the second death. However, those who find refuge in Jesus by confessing their sins and abiding in Him, will have the blood of Jesus to declare them innocent! As we close, remember this point: the innocent slayer had to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. See Numbers 35:25, 28.
25. Where is Jesus right now, and what is He doing? Hebrews 8:1, 2; Romans 8:34
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26. **Note:** So when Jesus calls our name in the judgment and finishes His work as High Priest, if we have all our sins confessed and are found abiding in Him, the devil will not have any power over us. We will be free in Christ from the penalty of the law (the second death), and we will enter into the New Jerusalem.

Meditate on these words:

“...We cannot with safety look away from our Saviour for one moment, for a dart of Satan will be hurled at our weakest points. **In the exercise of a living faith in the merits of Christ alone are we safe.** The helpless soul of the sinner must hang on Jesus. If he lets go his hold for one moment, he is in imminent peril of hurting his own soul and of imperiling the souls of others.”
{12MR 288.3}