

## Where To Flee For Refuge (Numbers 35)

**Introduction:** *Grace to the Levites (v. 1-5)*

The Levites' curse (Gen 34:13-26) for the murder of the men of Shechem (Gen 34:13-26) was now turned into a blessing.

### 1. The requirements of justice

One of the duties of the Kinsman-Redeemer was to find and kill the murderer. The kinsman was to look after the personal interests of others, take their debts on himself.

Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6, God made man in his own image. There is something different about the death of a human being than the death of any other creature.

*(a) There must be a place of shelter while a man awaits trial (v. 12)*

This is the closest thing to a "jail" in the law of God.

*(b) You must judge the intent to distinguish between murder and manslaughter (v. 16-23)*

And the state has been given the sword by God (Rom 13:4).

*(c) There must be a fair hearing to investigate the death (v. 24)*

Judged by the congregation.

*(d) There is a high standard for justice—two or three witnesses (v. 30)*

Many Christians in our day are rightly for upholding the death penalty. But what about God's standard of evidence?

*(e) There is no ransom for murder, unlike other capital crimes (v. 31-34)*

There is no way to clear away the guilt of blood except by the death of the guilty. The blood of the innocent "pollutes the land" (v. 33-34). As God said of Cain, "The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground" (Gen 4:10, see Job 31:38-39, Rev 6:10).

### 2. The refuge of mercy

Don't miss the irony that these were *Levitical* cities. Remember why Levi had been cursed to begin with—it was because of his murder of a city. Every time they received another murderer or manslayer fleeing for refuge, they would be reminded of the grace they had received.

If you feared that the avenger would hold you guilty, you had to flee immediately to a city of refuge. And if only guilty of manslaughter, you would stay in the city till the death of the High Priest (see Josh 20:4-6).

**NT Application:** *Christ the avenger, Christ the high priest (Heb 6:18-20)*

The avenger of blood is also the high priest, whose death makes us safe. In him, we have a place to flee for refuge.

"We ... have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Heb 6:18-20).