

BIBLE READING

Joshua 20

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¹ Then the LORD said to Joshua: ² "Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses, ³ so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood. ⁴ "When he flees to one of these cities, he is to stand in the entrance of the city gate and state his case before the elders of that city. Then they are to admit him into their city and give him a place to live with them.

Joshua 20

⁵ If the avenger of blood pursues him, they must not surrender the one accused, because he killed his neighbor unintentionally and without malice aforethought. ⁶ He is to stay in that city until he has stood trial before the assembly and until the death of the high priest who is serving at that time. Then he may go back to his own home in the town from which he fled."

Joshua 20

⁷ So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. ⁸ On the east side of the Jordan of Jericho they designated Bezer in the desert on the plateau in the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead in the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan in the tribe of Manasseh. ⁹ Any of the Israelites or any alien living among them who killed someone accidentally could flee to these designated cities and not be killed by the avenger of blood prior to standing trial before the assembly.

CITIES OF REFUGE

3 lessons from Joshua 20

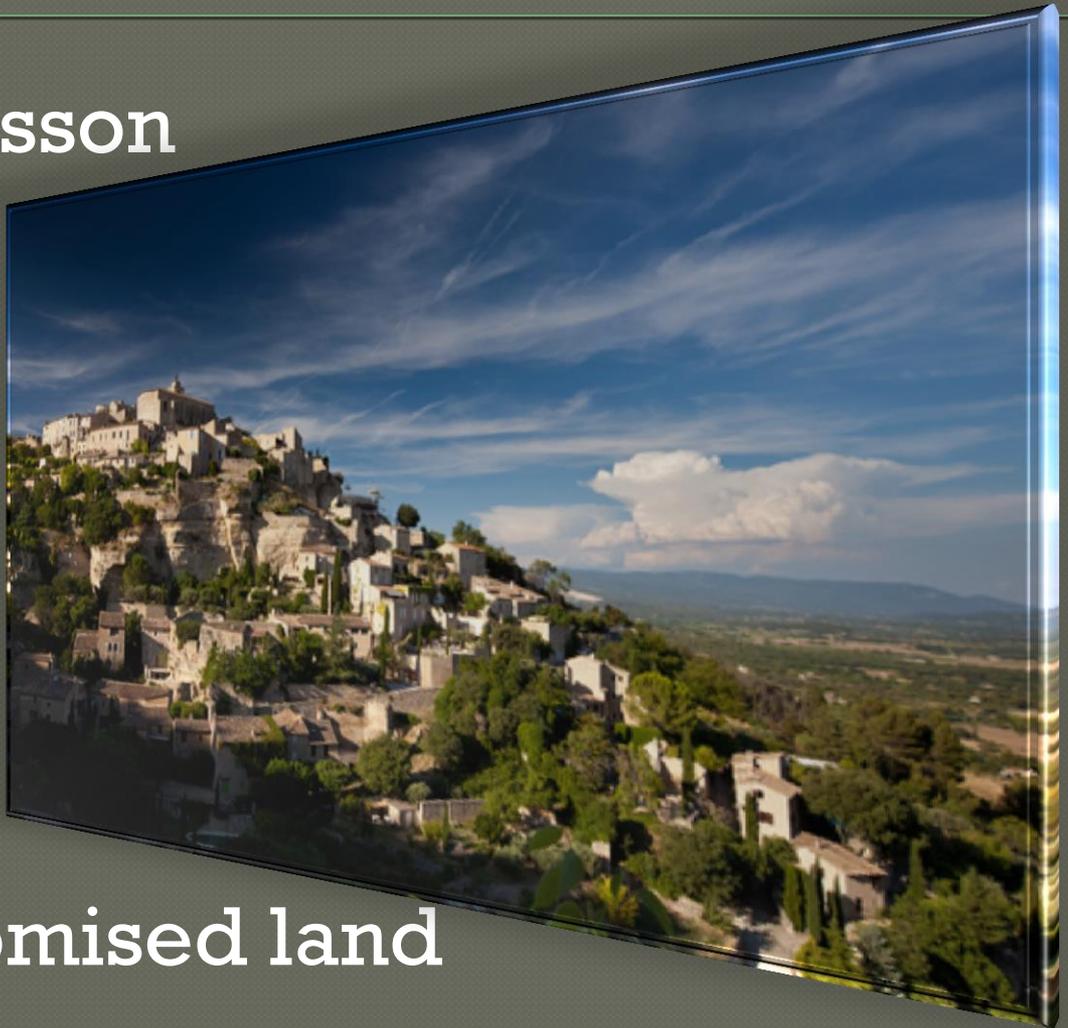
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IBC Eindhoven 23-08-2020

1. What about it?

- A historical lesson

- ~1400 BC

- While Israel enters the promised land



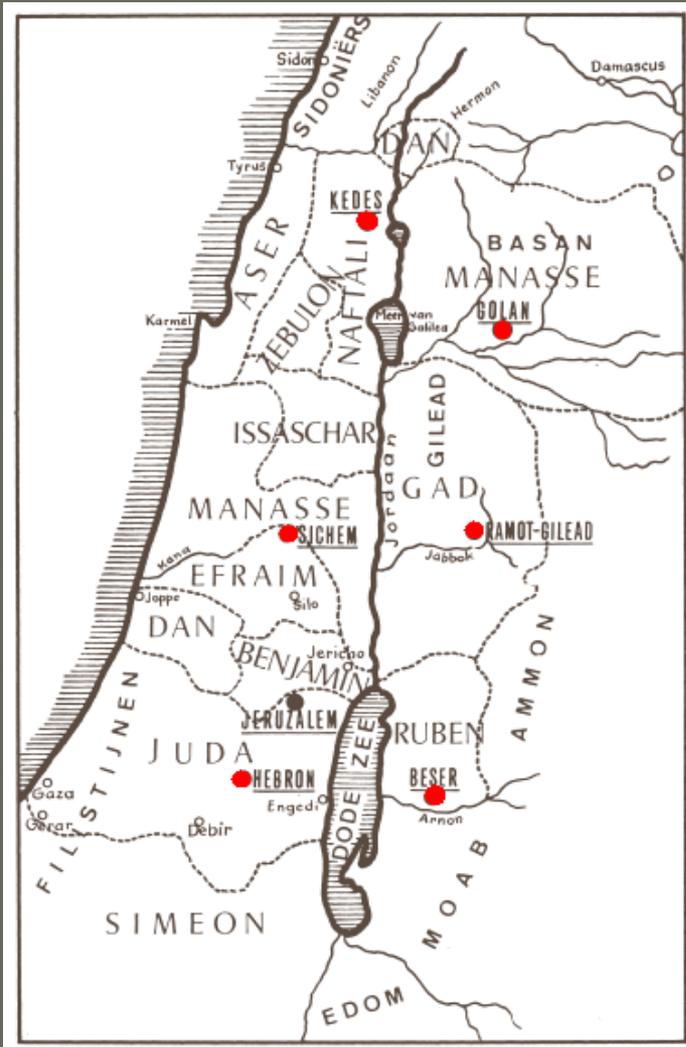
Definition of refuge

- ◉ Protection or shelter, as from danger or hardship
- ◉ A place providing protection or shelter
- ◉ A source of help, relief, or comfort in times of trouble

Principle

- ◉ Protection in case of accidental killing
- ◉ Protection against 'avenger of blood'
- ◉ Safe in the city until death of high priest
- ◉ Free after death of high priest
- ◉ For Jews and for aliens

Location of the cities



- Equally spread
- On top of hills

Through the ages

◉ In past centuries

- Netherlands: Vianen, Culemborg (middle ages)
- Hawaii: Pu'uhonua o Honaunau (until 19th century)

◉ In modern age

- Asylum: protection of those fleeing political, religious, or social persecution
- Church asylum

2. What about Jesus?

- A prophetic lesson

Hebrews 6:18-20 NLT: So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. [19] This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. [20] Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Back to the principle

◉ protection in case of accidental killing

1 John 1:7: But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

◉ protection against 'avenger of blood'

1 Peter 5:8b: Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

John 3:16 NLT: For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

Back to the principle

- **Safe in the city until death of high priest**

Hebrews 7:23-24 NLT: There were many priests under the old system, for death prevented them from remaining in office. But because Jesus lives forever, his priesthood lasts forever.

- **Free after death of the high priest**

Isaiah 53:5: But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

- **For Jews and for aliens**

Galatians 3:28 NLT: There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Jesus our refuge?

- ◉ Did we run to Jesus for refuge?
- ◉ Are we within the walls of the city?

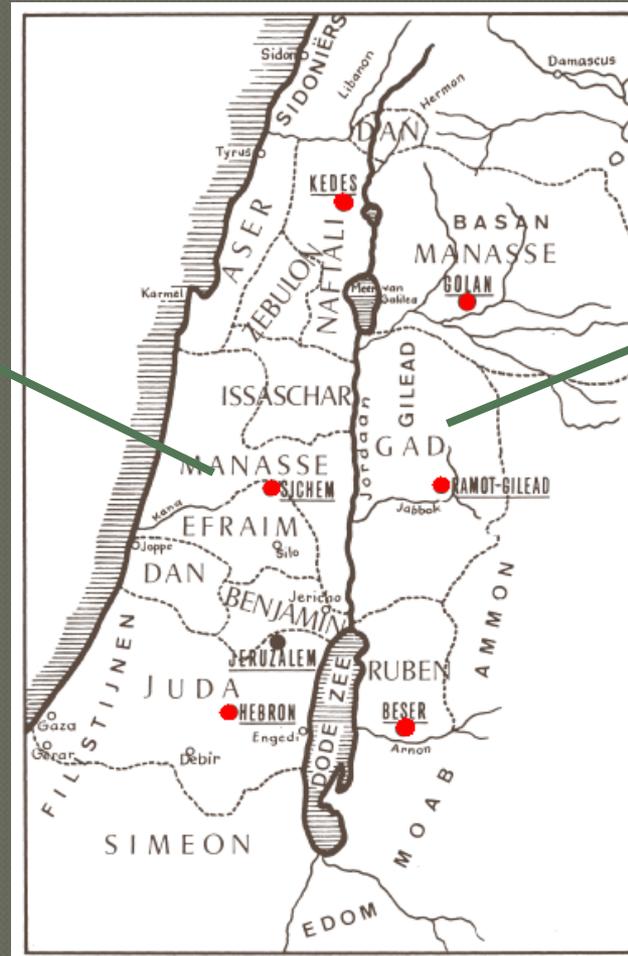
3. What about us?

- A spiritual lesson

Romans 15:4: For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope

Cities of refuge

The
promised
land



The desert,
battle field

Names with meaning

○ 3 cities in the promised land

- **Kedesh: holiness**

1 Peter 2:9: But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

- **Shechem: dedication**

Matthew 6:33 NLT: But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

- **Hebron: fellowship**

John 14:23: If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Names with meaning

○ 3 cities east of the Jordan

- Bezer: fortress, defense

Ephesians 6:11: Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.

- Ramoth: heights

Matthew 5:14+16: You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. [..] ¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

- Golan: captivity, exile

1 Peter 2:11: Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

What are we?

◉ Am I

- Living a holy life?
- Dedicated to God?
- In fellowship with the Father?

- Protected by Gods armor?
- Visible to others?
- Longing for home, away from evil?