



Cover to Cover: Joshua 20

Cities of Refuge

Watch: <https://www.bible.com/en-GB/videos/3024-joshua-the-bible-project>

Context: The book of Joshua is largely about the conquest and inhabitation of the Promised Land. The opening chapters of conquest slowly give way to the details and instructions from the Lord about living in the Promised Land. Here we see the intent of the land was not simply as an inheritance, but that it be a land where true justice flourished and true worship be cultivated (i.e. the Levitical cities, ch. 21). Ch. 20 draws our attention to a very important passage related to justice, which will be our theme for this session.

Think about Pastor's sermon on Rahab from this past Lord's Day:

- What strikes you about her story as a whole?
- How can Rahab's faith be informative today? (Josh 2:9, 6:25; Heb 11:31; James 2:25)
- Think of a woman of faith you know. Share of her inspiration to you.
- Hot potatoes:
 - Is it ever morally justifiable to lie?
 - How should we view Israel's destruction of the Canaanites?
- What do you think about Rahab, a prostitute, being the great...great grandmother of Jesus?

Read: Josh 20

Questions

1. What do you think it speaks that God is concerned with cultivating justice amongst His people in the land He has given to them?
2. Long before the Law of Moses, what had God said on the subject of capital punishment? On what grounds is the murder to be put to death? (Gen 9:6)

3. vv. 1–2- What had God said to Moses on tonight's subject (Num 35:6–34 and Ex 21:12–14)?
 - a. Do you notice anything here not reiterated in Joshua that may be of note?
 - b. Even the stranger and sojourner were included. What does this show?
4. What were the cities to be a refuge from? (v. 3b)
5. *The avenger of blood was the same person as the kinsmen redeemer, the closest male relative responsible for matters of care and justice.*
6. (v. 3) *In Canada's Criminal Code there are three degrees of murder: 1st (premeditated), 2nd murder (spontaneous) and manslaughter (to some degree unintentional), similar to what is described here.*
7. Describe an example of what may classify as manslaughter.
8. Why was the manslayer to flee?
9. What role did the city of refuge have for the manslayer? For both parties?
10. If the manslayer was acquitted, for how long was he to remain in the city? For what purpose? What does Ro 12:19 speak into the subject?
11. What do you think it would have been like to have lived as a resident in a city of refuge?
12. What does the geography of these cities tell us about their function?
13. Nu 35:34 gives the reason for this Law. What is it? How would violence pollute the land?
14. What lessons of justice may this passage on Israel's civil law speak to 21st century Canada?
15. Read Ps 18:2. Though an imperfect analogy, how are we, as sinners, like the manslayer? Why is it wise to seek refuge in the salvation of the Cross? (see Prov 18:10)

What is the Lord teaching you these days? How can we praise Him? How can we be praying for one another?

