The Cities of Refuge

Joshua 20

The division of the land was decided, Joshua 15-19, was based upon two factors: the size of the tribe and by lot. The land was not given out according to birth order. The territory that Judah received, the largest tribe, included 103 cities. Zebulun, the smallest tribe, received 12 cities. The Levites were not given a specific property but they received 48 cities throughout all the promise land. Six of those Levitical cities were designated as "cities of Refuge."

A. **A Refuge** is not a vacation destination. It's more than a place to rest your feet. It was a place to feel safe and a place that a person would run to or flee to when there was trouble.

> Since the flood, God required life for life (Gen 9:6)

> But what if some died accidentally? It was premeditated?

1. Joshua 20:1-6; Numbers 35:9-24

- In the event of a death, the family of the victim could avenge the death by taking the life of the one who caused the death.
- The "manslayer," the one who caused the death, could flee to a "City of Refuge" and find safety
- He would be tried by the judges there
- If it was determined to be accidental, he had to remain in that city until the death of the high priest (Num 35:24-25)
- If he left the city before the death of the high priest, the avenging family could take his life (Num 35:26-28)
- Access to these refuge cities were to be convenient and the roads well taken care of (Deut 29:1-3)

Lessons from the City of Refuge

1. The cities of Refuge was _____ idea: an act of _____
2. The purpose of the cities of Refuge was to _____ the life of a manslayer
3. The cities were accessible by _____ and open for _____ people (Num 35:15)
4. The manslayer had to _____ to one of the cities. It was his _____
5. As long as the manslayer stayed in the refuge city he was _____. He could only return to his home when the high priest died.

- 2 Samuel 3:26-27, 33-34

2. Jesus our refuge (Heb 6:18-19)

How is Jesus our "refuge"?

What differences do you see from Jesus and the cities of Refuge?