

11/23/03

**Joshua 20-22**

The land having been distributed to the tribes, there is now a dispersing of the cities of refuge that were planned out before they entered the land.

**20:1-6**      **The appointing of the cities of refuge.**

**20:1**      The command came from the Lord.

- 1) The LORD spoke to Joshua. Vs. 1
- 2) The directive was to appoint for themselves cities of refuge, which God had spoken to Joshua previously through Moses, Vs. 2

**20:2-4**      The purpose of the cities of refuge.

- 1) That any person who commits manslaughter, accidentally or unintentionally may flee to it for refuge from the avenger of blood. Vs. 3
  - a) The refuge cities are mentioned in the Law in greater detail. Ex. 21:13, Num. 35:9-34
  - b) The avenger was the “gaal” of blood redeemer, the one who had the obligation to pursue and avenge the death of the close relative, his kinsman.

2) The Elders of the city at the gate would hear his case and provide a dwelling place. Vs. 4

\* The cities would all be one day’s journey and centralized throughout the land.

**20:5-6**      The policy of protection for the slayer.

- 1) If the avenger of blood pursues the man to the city of refuge, the elders are not to deliver him into his hands, due to the fact that it was accidental and not premeditated. Vs. 5
  - a) The policy was to be upheld with no pity for the murderer, only the accidental death. Deut. 19:1-13
  - b) Premeditated murder was punishable by death because it defiled land.. Gen. 9:6, Ex. 21:14, Num.35:33-34
- 2) The slayer must dwell in the city until he stands before the congregation for judgment and if found innocent, he must remain in the city until the death of the one who is high priest in those days, afterwards he may return to his city and home. Vs. 6

\* Jesus is our refuge city and He will never die, so we must abide in Him forever. Heb. 6:11,18-20

**20:7-8** The six cities of refuge.

- 1) Three on the west side of the Jordan. Vs. 7
  - a) Kedesh in Galilee, in the mountains of Naphtali, it means holy place.
  - b) Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, means back or shoulder.
  - c) Kirjath Arba (which *is* Hebron) in the mountains of Judah, means city of great one.
- 2) Three on the east side of the Jordan. Vs. 8
  - a) Bezer by Jericho eastward, in the wilderness on the plain, from the tribe of Reuben., means fortress
  - b) Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, means heights.
  - c) Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh., means their captivity.

**20:9** The summary statement of the refuge cities.

- 1) These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwelt among them.
- 2) The cities were for whoever killed a person accidentally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.

**21:1-42** The Levitical cities.**21:1-3** The Levites came to Eleazar.

- 1) The heads of the fathers of the Levites came to the leaders, Eleazar, Joshua and to the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the tribes of the children of Israel. Vs. 1
- 2) They came to Shiloh and reminded them of what God had commanded through Moses, to give them cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for our livestock. Vs. 2
- 3) So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance. Vs. 3  
\* Their cities and common lands. Num. 35:1-8

**21:4-6** The Kohathites.

- 1) The distribution was again by lots to Kohath. Vs. 4a
- 2) The children of Aaron the priest, *who were* of the Levites. 4b
- 3) They received thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Judah, from the tribe of Simeon, and from the tribe of Benjamin. Vs. 4c-f
- 3) The rest of the children of Kohath had ten cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh. Vs. 5

**21:6** The Gershonites.

- 1) The children of Gershon had thirteen cities by lot.
- 3) The land was from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

**21:7** The Merarites.

- 1) The children of Merari according to their families by lot again.
- 2) They had twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun.
  - a) Merarites had the responsibility of the boards of Tabernacle, bars, pillars and Sockets and of the court.
  - b) Gershonites had the responsibility of the curtains of Tabernacle, hanging of door, of the count, cords.
  - c) Kohathites had the responsibility of the furnishing.
  - d) Aaron and sons would cover them first lest they die  
\* Num. 1, 3-4, 8
- 3) And the children of Israel gave these cities with their common-lands by lot to the Levites, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses. Vs. 8  
\* Remember God took the Levites to Himself to minister to him and the Tabernacle, allowing the Israelites to

buy back their first-born son when acted as the priest. Num. 3:12

**21:9-42** The various cities and their numbers by lot.

**21:43-45** **The summary of God faithful promise.**

**21:43** The proclamation of God's faithfulness to His promise of giving them the land and their possessing it. Vs. 43

- 1) God would drive out the people progressively. Ex. 23:28-30, Deut. 7:22
- 2) God's delays are not denials.

**21:44** The proclamation of God's protection to subdue their enemies. Vs. 44

- 1) The failure to possess made them compromise.
- 2) They tolerated the people to dwell in the land.

**21:45** The proclamation of God's flawless character by the fact that not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. Vs. 45

\* God's word shall never pass away. Is. 55:11

**22:1-34      The return of the tribes on the east of the Jordan.**

**22:1-8**      The commendation of Joshua.

- 1) The two and a half tribes had been obedient to Moses and Joshua in everything. Vs. 1-2
- 2) They had accompanied the nine and a half tribes to conquer and occupy the land, as the God had commanded. Vs. 3
- 3) They were released from any further obligation and could return to the east side of the Jordan that God gave to them. Vs. 4
- 4) They were warned by Joshua to take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. Vs. 5
  - a) To love the LORD their God.
  - b) To walk in all His ways.
  - c) To keep His commandments.
  - d) To hold fast to Him.
  - e) To serve Him with all their heart and with all their soul.
- 5) Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents. Vs. 6
- 6) Joshua states the distinction of inheritance between the two half of the tribe of Manasseh. Vs. 7
- 7) Joshua told them to return with much riches to their tents, with very much

livestock, with silver, with gold, with bronze, with iron, and with very much clothing. Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren. Vs. 8

- a) Joshua did not enrich himself as the leader.
- b) Joshua did not abuse his authority by nepotism.

**22:9-10**      The construction of their memorial.

- 1) The children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel at Shiloh, to the land of their possession, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses. Vs. 9
- 2) When they And when they came to the region of the Jordan, in the land of Canaan, on the west side, they built an altar there by the Jordan--a great, impressive altar. Vs. 10

**22:11-20**      The consternation of the nine and a half tribes over the monument.

**22:11-14**      *The delegation of rulers sent.*

- 1) They heard someone say that the children of Israel had built an alter in the frontier of the land, so the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at

Shiloh to go to war against them. Vs. 11-12

- a) No specifics or details are mentioned by the person, so everyone is left to interpret the situation on their own.
  - b) They automatically concluded the extreme wrong.
- 2) Then the children of Israel sent Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, along with ten rulers. Vs. 13-14
- a) The way to confront is to do a Matthew 18.
  - b) The manner is in meekness, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” Gal. 6:1

**22:15-16** *The accusation by the rulers.*

- 1) They arrived to two and a half tribes with their minds made up regarding the altar. Vs. 15
  - a) Don’t believe anything till you hear it from the person’s own mouth.
  - b) Don’t repeat anything until you have verified it.
- 2) They declared the charges. Vs. 16
  - a) They were representing the entire congregation. Vs. 16a

- b) What treachery is this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD. Vs. 16b-c
- c) In that you have built for yourselves an altar, that you might rebel this day against the LORD? Vs. 16d-e

**22:17-19** *The reasoning with expressed by the rulers.*

- 1) They reminded them of their past, “Is the iniquity of Peor not enough for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD”. Vs. 17
- 2) They assumed they were right in their understanding, “But that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? And it shall be, if you rebel today against the LORD, that tomorrow He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.” Vs. 18
- 3) They reasoned with them, “Nevertheless, if the land of your possession *is* unclean, then cross over to the land of the possession of the LORD, where the LORD'S tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the LORD, nor rebel against us, by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the LORD our God.” Vs. 19

- 4) They pleaded with them about judgment on the entire congregation, “Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity.” Vs. 20

**22:21-27** The clarification of the monument.

- 1) The two and a half tribes responded to the accusations. Vs. 21
- 2) They cast themselves on the perfect knowledge of God and asked for their own judgment. Vs. 22
  - a) The LORD God of gods, is stated twice, He knows. Vs. 22a-c
  - b) They said, “Let Israel itself know--if *it is* in rebellion, or if in treachery against the LORD, do not save us this day.” Vs. 22d-g
- 3) They commended themselves to the judgment of Yahweh if they had built the alter to turn from following the LORD, or to offer on it burnt offerings, grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it. Vs. 23
- 4) They declared the reasons behind the building of the alter. Vs. 24-25
  - a) They did it for fear, that in time to come the descendants on the west side might say to their descendants on the

east side, “What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel?” Vs. 24

- b) That the LORD has made the Jordan a border between them and the tribes on the west would tell the two and a half tribes on the east, “You have no part in the LORD, resulting in causing their descendants to cease fearing the LORD. Vs. 25
  - \* In other words, to cut them off from being part of the people of God.
- 5) Their intent is stated. Vs. 26
  - a) Therefore we said, “Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice. Vs. 26
  - b) But that it may be a witness between them that in the future generations they would be able to go across and offer their offering to Yahweh at Shiloh or wherever God appointed and not be told “You have no part in the LORD.” Vs. 27
- 6) The evidence to their oneness would be the exactness of the alter they built to the one in the land of promise. Vs. 28
  - a) That when they say this to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, “Here is the replica of the

altar of the LORD which our fathers made”. Vs. 28a-c

- b) Though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between you and us. Vs. 28d-e
- 7) Their outrageous at being accused of such a thing. Vs. 29
  - a) Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn from following the LORD this day. Vs. 29a-b
  - b) By building an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the LORD our God which *is* before His tabernacle. Vs. 29c-f

**22:30-34** The reconciliation over the monument.

- 1) The word straightened out the misunderstanding and it pleased them the delegated. Vs. 30
- 2) Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest acknowledged their error and recognized they had not committed such a treachery against the Lord and kept them from committing a great mistake, “Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD.” Vs. 31

- 3) Phinehas, Eleazar and the rulers returned to the land of Canaan and reported the truth of the matter. Vs. 32
- 4) The matter pleased the congregation and there was no plans to go to war against them, to destroy them. Vs. 33
- 5) The children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar, Witness ”Ed”, “For it is a witness between us that the LORD is God.” Vs. 34