

Refuge City Church — August 22, 2021
“Refuge and Rest” [Joshua 18-21]

Joshua 18: Final allotments to the remaining tribes

1 Then the whole congregation of the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land lay subdued before them. **2** There remained among the people of Israel seven tribes whose inheritance had not yet been apportioned. **3** So Joshua said to the people of Israel, “How long will you put off going in to take possession of the land, which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you?”

- The tabernacle moved to Shiloh; settled at the geographical center of the promised land.
- **QUOTE:** “Christians are also called upon to see the worship of God as central to their lives. As with the gatherings at the Shiloh sanctuary so regular meetings for worship are a chief means to provide unity and common encouragement for faithful living.” [Richard Hess]
- **Hebrews 10:25**, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”
- The importance of the local church to gather with your “tribe” and rejoice in all God has done and provided.
 - **Psalm 100**, “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.”
- **Verse 3:** “How long will you put off going in to take possession of the land?”
 - Why the hesitation? Why forsake what God has clearly given them?
 - Everyone loves change right??
 - This is a people that have been wandering, essentially homeless, for 40 years [some born along the way...it’s all they know].
 - Even the history they knew was land they had been living in was not truly theirs. It was a land of slavery. But it was ‘comfort’ to them.
 - **[in hunger] Exodus 16:3**, “Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”
 - **[in thirst] Exodus 17:3**, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”
 - **[in uncertainty/death] Numbers 14:3-4**, “Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”
 - A sense of permanency provided some uncertainty I’m sure.
 - What keeps us from moving forward and experiencing all that God wants to do in and through us?

- Laziness, fear, lack of trust, unknown circumstances, allowing other issues beyond your control to distract your attention from the immediate...
- **Matthew 6:25, 27, 31, 33-34**, “Therefore I tell you, **do not be anxious about your life**, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?** Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. **“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”**
- **Matthew 11:28-30**, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest**. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Joshua 19: Joshua’s Inheritance

- Final allotments of inheritance are given to the remaining tribes [Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan]
- Joshua receives his promised inheritance; much like Caleb [faithfulness]
- **Verse 51**: “...So they finished dividing the land.”

Joshua 20: Cities of Refuge

- 1** Then the Lord said to Joshua, **2** “Say to the people of Israel, ‘Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, **3** that the manslayer who strikes any person without intent or unknowingly may flee there. They shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood.
- 6 cities are designated as ‘cities of refuge’ throughout the promised land [3 on the east side of the Jordan River, and 3 on the west side]
 - Spread out in a way that is easily accessed by an individual wherever they reside.
- Established by God’s law [Numbers 35]
 - Those who commit unintentional murder, could find reprieve until their case is heard [innocent until proven guilty].
 - God’s justice is evaluated from a matter of sin from the heart; not by mistakes.
 - Condemnation/Punishment is given to those who’s hearts are hardened and reject God’s law and justice.
- What is the significance of these cities of refuge?
 - **Psalm 46:1**, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”
 - **Hebrews 6:18-20**, “so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”
 - Paraphrased from Pastor David Guzik, with scripture added by me.

Cities of Refuge	Jesus
6 cities established. Close by/easy access.	Acts 17:26-27 , “that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,”
Available to anyone [Numbers 35:15 , “...for the people of Israel, and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them...”]	John 3:16 , “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
Ultimate purpose of the city = justice & salvation	John 20:31 , “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”
The only option for salvation. If your pursued and caught, you are at the mercy of law.	Hebrews 9:22 , “Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” John 14:6 , “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
Inside = life / Outside = death	Romans 6:23 , “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” John 10:10 , “...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”
Ultimate freedom comes with the death of the High Priest [Joshua 20:6 , “And he shall remain in that city...until the death of him who is high priest at the time...”]	Hebrews 6:19-20 , “We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever...”
DIFFERENCE	
Cities were set aside for the presumed innocent	Psalms 14:3 , “They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.” Romans 5:8 , “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Jesus provides life & salvation for the guilty!

Joshua 21: Levites Inheritance

1 Then the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites came to Eleazar the priest and to Joshua the son of Nun and to the heads of the fathers' houses of the tribes of the people of Israel. **2** And they said to them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, “The Lord commanded through Moses that we be given cities to dwell in, along with their pasturelands for our livestock.” **3** So by command of the Lord the people of Israel gave to the Levites the following cities and pasturelands out of their inheritance.

- The Levite tribe receive their cities and blessings. **[MAP of Levitical cities; including cities of refuge]**
 - Spread throughout the land, so the people could have close access to God’s presence, teaching, and refuge.
- These towns represent the people giving a portion of their land back to the Lord.
 - We give back to God what He has first given to us.

- All for the purpose of love, support, & provision for those in need, and to ensure the Word of God is proclaimed within close proximity.

43 Thus the **Lord** gave to Israel all the land that **he** swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. **44** And the **Lord** gave them rest on every side just as **he** had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the **Lord** had given all their enemies into their hands. **45** Not one word of all the good promises that the **Lord** had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.

Conclusion

- Inheritance, blessings, cities of refuge... Sounds like the church, doesn't it?
 - **Acts 2:44-47**, "And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."