

Numbers Chapter 35

Verses 1-8: This portion deals with cities for the Levites. They received about 15 square miles or about one-tenth of one percent of the land of Canaan. In a society where farmland was at a premium, this small fraction of the land meant they certainly had to depend on the generosity of the other tribes among whom they lived for their well-being. They received 48 cities listed (in Joshua chapter 21:1-42).

In place of land, the tribe of Levi was given 48 cities spread throughout Israel where they could raise their “cattle” and “goods”. These cities are listed in (Joshua 21:1-42).

Numbers 35:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan [near] Jericho, saying,"

After he had described the borders of the land, and given instructions about the division of it among the several tribes. And named the persons that should be concerned in parting and putting it into the possession of the Israelites. Now He makes a provision for the Levites. For though they had no inheritance in the land as a tribe, yet it was proper they should have cities and houses to dwell in. For it would not be suitable that they should be always about the tabernacle, as they were in the wilderness": And it is concerning this the Lord is said to speak to Moses.

"In the plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho": Where the Israelites now were, and had been for some time.

"Saying": As follows.

This is a brand new message from the LORD to Moses. This again, is just before they enter the land of promise at Jericho. These are some more last minute instructions, on how the inheritance is to be handled.

Numbers 35:2 "Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give [also] unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them."

“Of the inheritance of their possession” (According to 18:23), the Levites were to have no land as inheritance in Canaan, so the Levites did not inherit these towns; they only lived in them.

“Suburbs for the cities round about them”: The Levites were also given grazing land around the cities so that their animals might feed.

Numbers 35:3 "And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts."

For them and their families, and indeed for nothing else, they having no trades nor worldly business to carry on in them.

"And the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle": For stables and stalls to put them up in. And for barns and storehouses to lay in provender for them.

"And for their goods": Where to bestow them, as the increase of their fields, oliveyards, and vineyards (see Luke 12:18).

"And for all their beasts": Or living creatures. Or "for their whole life"; or livelihood, whatsoever was for the support of it. The Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of explanation, for all their necessities.

The Levites had been separated out from the other tribes of Israel, from the very first time they were counted. They were not to labor with their hands in the fields. They were to serve God and the people in the ministry. They did not receive an allotment of land. They were to live of the things of the tabernacle, or the temple, as it would soon be. They needed a place to have homes for their families. That is what is covered in this lesson. The cities were where they would serve the Lord. The suburbs here, is speaking of an area where they could graze their livestock. It was almost impossible to live in those days without a few cows. The children of the other tribes tithed in the tabernacle, and the Levites lived of those tithes and offerings.

Numbers 35:4 "And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, [shall reach] from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about."

The dimensions and bounds of them were not left to the Israelites. To give what ground they pleased for this purpose, but were fixed to what length they should be. These;

"Shall reach from the walls of the city, and outward, a thousand cubits round about": Which was half a Sabbath day's journey, and pretty near half a mile. Which all around a city must contain a considerable quantity of ground, if the city was of any size. As it is certain that some of them given them at least were.

At the time this was written, the Levitical tribe was the governing body of the church. These cities were not where the shepherds lived. The shepherds lived on farms, where their sheep were. These cities, which were given to the Levites, were to extend 1,500 feet out from the wall of the city, for the grazing of their animals.

Numbers 35:5 "And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city [shall be] in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities."

Before only 1000 cubits were ordered to be measured, and now 2000. Even 2000 more, which were to be added to the other. And to begin where they ended. The first 1000 were for their cattle and goods. These 2000 for their gardens, orchards, fields, and vineyards. And so the Jewish writers understand it. Jarchi observes, that 1000 cubits are ordered, and after that 2000; and asks, how is this? Or how is it to be reconciled? To which he answers, 2000 are put to them round about, and of them the 1000 innermost are for suburbs. And the outermost (i.e. the 2000), are for

fields and vineyards. And with this agrees the Misnah, from whence he seems to have taken it. And the same was to be on every other side of the city, south, west, and north, as follows.

"And on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits": Which, added to the other 1000 all around, must make a large circumference of land.

"And the city shall be in the midst": In the midst of the circuit of three thousand cubits all around, so that it must stand very pleasant and convenient.

"This shall be to them the suburbs of the cities": Such a quantity of ground, consisting of so many cubits, shall be assigned to every city. The suburbs or glebe land to a Levite's city, on the four sides were four squares. And each square consisted of seventy-six acres, one rood, twenty perches, and eighty square feet. All the four squares amounting to three hundred and five acres, two roods, one perch, besides fifty-seven feet square, according to Bishop Cumberland.

It appears from this, that past the area of the grazing of their animals, was an area of 1,500 feet for the growing of gardens and vineyards. The entire area outside the wall would be 3,000 feet in every direction. This is not explained in detail, so we must assume this is correct.

Verses 6-15: Six of the Levites' cities were designated "cities of refuge", three east of the Jordan and three west of it (Deut. 19:1-13; see note on Joshua 20:1-9).

Numbers 35:6 "And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites [there shall be] six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities."

The Levitical cities were in a special manner the Lord's. And therefore the places of refuge, where the manslayer might remain under the protection of a special institution devised by divine mercy. Were appropriately selected from among them. No doubt also the Priests and Levites would be the fittest persons to administer the law in the doubtful cases which would be sure to occur (compare notes in Num. 35:24).

There are six cities chosen out to be a place for a manslayer to go for safety. These six cities are called cities of refuge. There were to be 42 cities for the Levites, besides the cities of refuge.

Numbers 35:7 "[So] all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites [shall be] forty and eight cities: them [shall ye give] with their suburbs."

Of these forty-eight cities, their names, and what tribes they were in. And which of them were particularly cities of refuge. An account is given in (Joshua 21:10).

"Them shall ye give, with their suburbs": According to the dimensions before prescribed.

The 42 cities for the Levites and the 6 cities for the cities of refuge make 48 cities. The Levites were a fairly small tribe, so they, divided into 42 cities will be small towns in the beginning.

Numbers 35:8 "And the cities which ye shall give [shall be] of the possession of the children of Israel: from [them that have] many ye shall give many; but from [them that have] few ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth."

What shall fall by lot for their inheritance, and they shall be possessed of. And though they are, shall not refuse, nor grudge to give them, according to the direction of God. Whose the land is, they holding it under him.

"From them that have many ye shall give many, but from them that have few ye shall give few": Which rule was observed. For out of Judah, whose lot was large, and out of Simeon, whose inheritance was within that of Judah, because it was so large, nine cities were given. Whereas out of the other tribes only four cities out of each were given, and out of one of them but three (see Joshua 21:1).

"Everyone shall give of his cities unto the Levites, according to his inheritance which he inheriteth": And the Levites, being thus dispersed among the several tribes, were of great advantage to them. To instruct them in the knowledge of divine things. So that though hereby Jacob's curse on this tribe had its fulfilment, that it should be divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel. Yet that became a blessing to the rest of the tribes (see Gen. 49:7).

These cities were not 4 from each tribe. which would have made up 48. Those who had many cities gave more cities, and those who had few cities gave few. Those who received the most in inheritance, gave the most for the Levites.

Verses 9-34: "Avenger": When a man was killed, it was the duty of his nearest male relative, "the avenger of blood" (verses 12, 19, 21, 24-25, 27), to kill the man responsible. The Hebrew word is *go'el* and is translated "redeemer" or "kinsman". He was the one who should "buy" his relative out of trouble (5:8; Lev. 25:25-26; Ruth 3:12; 4:1, 6, 8; Job 19:25; Isa. 59:20). The law in this context allowed the execution of the manslayer only if the deed was deliberate. Murderers must be executed, and manslaughterers must dwell in a city of refuge until the death of the high priest (verse 28). This law's primary concern was the provision of cities of refuge for manslaughterers (verse 15). The law also considered who was qualified for admission (verses 16-25), and then what might happen if he left the city before the death of the high priest (verses 26-28). It prescribed the evidence required for a conviction of murder (verse 30), and it prohibited ransom (verses 31-32). The Levites were the permanent inhabitants of the cities of refuge and took responsibility for admitting the manslaughterers. The death of the high priest atoned for the manslaughterer and allowed the guilty man to return home. The function of the high priest anticipated the ministry of our Lord, not only in His life of offering sacrifice and prayer on behalf of the people, but also in His death (compare Heb. Chapters 4-9).

Six of the Levitical cities were to be established as “cities of refuge” (see Deut. 19:1-13). These cities were to be havens giving protection to any person who accidentally killed another person (manslaughter).

Numbers 35:9 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,"

At the same time, or he continued his speech unto him.

This is a break in the other message.

Numbers 35:10 "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan;"

Now, directly.

"When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan": As they quickly would, being now very near it. And of which there was the utmost certainty, since the Lord had promised to bring them over that river, and put them in possession of that land.

Numbers 35:11 "Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares."

And, according to the Jewish writers, these were neither to be made large nor little, but middling. And they appointed them where there were markets and fairs, at which goods were to be sold. And where there was plenty of water, and a multitude of people. And where there were but few, they fetched others from other places. And they neither made nets for hunting, nor twisted ropes in them, nor sold any warlike instruments. Lest the avenger of blood should use himself to come thither, under pretense of buying such things, and kill the manslayer.

"That the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares": Or through error, or mistake, not on purpose. With design, or through malice and enmity, as is afterwards more largely explained.

These cities are to be set up immediately. Those who kill someone need a place to run to, until they can be properly judged, as to the punishment they are to receive. "Unawares" is the key to the verse above.

Numbers 35:12 "And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment."

“The avenger”: The meaning of this term is “near of kin”. It refers to the person chosen by a family to deal with a loss suffered in that family. Here the close relative of a homicide victim would seek to avenge his death, but not until proper judgment was made.

This is not a place like a prison that he has been sent. This is a place of safety, until it can be determined whether this is murder, or an accident.

Numbers 35:13 "And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge."

Of the forty-eight cities they were to give to the Levites (Num. 35:7).

"Six cities shall ye have for refuge": Which, I think, makes it clear, that not all the forty-eight cities were for refuge, only six of them.

For this large number of people, it would take six cities to care for all of the people with this problem.

Numbers 35:14 "Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, [which] shall be cities of refuge."

Which were Bezer in the wilderness, out of the tribe of Reuben. And Ramoth in Gilead, out of the tribe of Gad. And Golan in Bashan, out of the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 20:8).

"And three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan": Which were Kadesh in Galilee, in Mount Naphtali. Shechem in Mount Ephraim; and Kirjath-arba, or Hebron, in the mountain of Judah (Joshua 20:7).

"Which shall be cities of refuge": The three on the other side Jordan, the Jews say, were separated by Moses. And the three in the land of Canaan by Joshua, but not one of them was a refuge until they were all separated. It may seem strange that there should be as many in the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan, as in the nine tribes and a half in the land of Canaan. Let it be observed, what the Jewish writers say. Moses separated three cities beyond Jordan, and opposite them Joshua separated three in the land of Canaan. And they were like two rows in a vineyard. Hebron in Judea was opposite Bezer in the wilderness. Shechem in Mount Ephraim was opposite Ramoth in Gilead. Kadesh in Mount Naphtali was opposite Golan in Bashan. And the three were so disposed, that there was as much space from the south (of the land of Israel), to Hebron as from Hebron to Shechem.

Three of these cities shall be located on the east side of Jordan in the territories of Gad, Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh. According to Deuteronomy, Moses decided these cities would be: Bezer of the Reubenites, Ramoth of the Gadites, and Golan of the Manassites. The other nine and one half tribes located in what used to be Canaan, shall have three cities as well. These are places of safety, where the manslayer can run until he is judged.

Numbers 35:15 "These six cities shall be a refuge, [both] for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither."

For an Israelite, and a proselyte of righteousness, one that embraced the Jewish religion. And in all things conformed to it. And to whom there was but one law in things civil and religious.

"And for the sojourner among them": The proselyte of the gate, who renounced idolatry, and observed the commands of the sons of Noah. But in other things did not comply with the Jewish

ceremonies. Yet had the benefit of the cities of refuge equally with the other. Though the Jews say, such a proselyte or sojourner had only this privilege, who slew a proselyte. But not if he slew an Israelite. But for this distinction there is no foundation in the text.

"That everyone that killeth any person unawares may flee thither": Whether an Israelite, or a proselyte of righteousness or of the gate.

In the land of promise, the same law applies to all. The children of Israel are under the same law as the stranger, or the person who has decided to live with them.

Verses 16-28: God provided the cities of refuge to protect those who had unintentionally killed someone. The congregation would judge whether the person's motive was out of "hatred" or "without enmity". Someone who accidentally took the life of another had to stay in the city of refuge until the "death" of the high "priest". He or she could be killed for leaving the city before then (Exodus 21:23-24; Deut. 19:1-13).

Numbers 35:16 "And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he [is] a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death."

As with a hatchet, hammer, sword, knife, etc.

"He is a murderer": The instrument used by him, and with which he smote, shows that he had a bad design, and intended to kill. Or he would never have smitten a man with such instruments.

"The murderer shall surely be put to death": Be condemned to death, and be executed, by the order of the civil magistrate. According to the law in (Gen. 9:6), and not be allowed the benefit of a city of refuge.

This is the beginning of the instructions, on how to tell if the death is murder or not. A piece of iron would certainly be an instrument of death. The person who hit with the iron, would have the intention of killing the person they hit.

Numbers 35:17 "And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he [is] a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death."

"Or with a stone of the hand", which the Jews interpret of a stone so big as to fill a man's hand. And so;

"Wherewith he may die": At whom it is thrown. Is sufficient to cause his death, if struck with it. So the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it of a "stone of fullness of hands, which is sufficient that a man may die with it". Or be killed by it.

"And he die": By the blow he receives from it. Either immediately or in a short time after.

"He is a murderer, and the murderer shall surely be put to death": As in the above case.

This also is speaking of someone throwing a rock intending to kill him. If he dies, it would be murder, because the desire of the person throwing the rock was to kill him.

Numbers 35:18 "Or [if] he smite him with a hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die,

A stick, or staff, or club.

"Wherewith he may die, and he die": Which is sufficient to kill a man, as the same Targum explains it. And a man dies with the blow that is given him by it.

"He is a murderer, and the murderer shall surely be put to death": No pardon given him, or the benefit of the city of refuge allowed him.

Here again, this speaks of one who hit him with a board with the intent of killing him.

Numbers 35:19 "The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him."

Swift retribution according to the law of (Gen. 9:5-6).

The "revenger" was generally, a brother of the victim, or someone closely related to the victim. The revenger was not held guilty, when he killed someone in this case.

Numbers 35:20 "But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die;"

Or, "and if", since the Scripture is still speaking of such that shall die for murder. Though in another instance, without having the privilege of a city of refuge. If he thrusts him with a sword or knife. Or rather, since, if anything of that kind is included in the first instance of smiting with an instrument of iron. Push him down from a high place, as Aben Ezra; so the men of Nazareth intended to have dispatched Christ in that way (Luke 4:29).

"Or hurl at him by lying in wait, that he die": As a bowing wall, as the same writer instances in. Push down that upon him as he passes along. Lying in wait for him; or throws anything at him, with an intention to kill him, and does. Or casts down anything upon him, a large stone, or anything else, by which he dies.

This in our society, would be classified as premeditated murder. This is when a person kills from hate. This is murder.

Numbers 35:21 "Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote [him] shall surely be put to death; [for] he [is] a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him."

Give him a blow with his fist, on some part of his body where life is most in danger. And which issues in death.

"He that smote him shall surely be put to death, for he is a murderer": And therefore, according to the original law, ought to die. Without reprieve or pardon. And notwithstanding this law made for cities of refuge, which were to be denied him.

"The revenger of blood shall slay the murderer when he meeteth him": That is, when he is condemned, as both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret it. After a hearing and trial of his case.

This is still speaking of someone who plans to kill, and then carries it out. The revenger shall slay him for the murder he committed.

Numbers 35:22 "But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait,"

Push him from a precipice, before he is aware. Without any malicious design against his life, but merely through accident.

"Or have cast upon him anything": From the top of a house, or from a building he is pulling down. Or pushes a bowing wall upon him, not knowing that he is passing by it.

"And without laying of wait": Or having contrived to do it, just as he goes along, or in any other similar way.

Numbers 35:23 "Or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing [him] not, and cast [it] upon him, that he die, and [was] not his enemy, neither sought his harm:"

Which is sufficient to kill a man, if thrown at him.

"Seeing him not": And so without intention. The Jews from hence gather, that a blind man is to be acquitted and dismissed. And not banished and so stands in no need of a city of refuge. Though others say he is to be banished, and needs it. And ought to have the privilege of it.

"And cast it upon him that he die": Casting, it upon another account, and with another view. But yet falling upon a man, it kills him.

"And was not his enemy, neither sought him harm": It was never known that they were at variance. Or that the slayer had ever by any overt act discovered any malice and enmity against the deceased. By word or deed, or ever sought to do him any injury. Either to his person or property.

Both of these are speaking of accidentally killing someone. This is not in hate or anger. It is an accident.

Numbers 35:24 "Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments:"

“Judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood”: The congregation was called to decide the motive of the killer, whether it was with or without hostility. If there was evil intent, the killer was turned over to the avenger to be put to death. If, however, hostility could not be proven to exist between the killer and the victim, then the killer was allowed to remain in the city of refuge.

When the matter is brought before the congregation, they shall decide whether this was an accident, or whether this is premeditated murder. If it was an accident, the revenger must not kill him.

Numbers 35:25 "And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil."

“Unto the death of the high priest”: The manslayer without evil intent was to remain in the city of refuge until the death of the High-Priest. The death of the High-Priest marked the end of an old era and the beginning of a new one for the manslayer.

The person who accidentally killed someone could live in the city of refuge, and no harm would come to him. He would be required to stay there, until the high priest died. At the death of the high priest, the sentence would be finished, and he could return to his home without fear of the revenger.

Numbers 35:26 "But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled;"

Which seems to be the three thousand cubits assigned to every city of the Levites. And so to the cities of refuge. And which, according to the Jewish writers, were a refuge, as the city itself. And it is said, "he, that kills a man there, is killed for him. But though the border is a refuge, the slayer does not dwell in it. As it is said (Num. 35:25). "He shall abide in it", but not in its borders."

"Whither he was fled": On account of manslaughter.

Numbers 35:27 "And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood:"

Without the suburbs, fields, and vineyards belonging to it.

"And the revenger of blood kill the slayer": Being exasperated against him, and to avenge the blood of his relation on him.

"He shall not be guilty of blood": Or be reckoned murderer, or die for it.

If the one who killed the other man does not stay in the city of refuge, until the priest dies, he will be at the mercy of the revenger. The revenger can kill him, and not be punished for it.

Numbers 35:28 "Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession."

Nothing could give him his liberty but his death. So that though this was a merciful provision made in such cases for such persons. And was a considerable benefit and privilege. Yet it carried in it some appearance of a punishment. Since such a person was confined within the boundaries of one of the cities of refuge as long as the high priest lived. And this was done to make persons cautious how they were any way accessory to the death of another, though without design.

"But after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession": To that part of the land, and to that tribe to which he belonged. To his house and family, and to his possessions and inheritances, whatever he had. And to all the honors and privileges he before enjoyed. And under no danger from the avenger of blood henceforward.

This is very much like serving the sentence. When the high priest dies, he is pardoned. While the high priest is alive, he must stay in the city of refuge.

Verses 29-34: The Law took justice just as seriously as murder: a person could not be put to death by the testimony of only one witness; two were needed. Those who committed murder, however, were to be executed, and those who committed manslaughter had to stay in a city of refuge. These provisions were in place because the unjust taking of life "defileth the land".

Numbers 35:29 "So these [things] shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings."

The killer was safe only within the walls of his city of refuge. He became a virtual exile from his home. The provisions here made serve to mark the gravity of the act of manslaughter, even when not premeditated. And the inconveniences attending on them fell, as is right and fair, upon him who committed the deed. Unto the death of the high priest. The atoning death of the Savior cast its shadow before on the statute-book of the Law and on the annals of Jewish history. The high priest, as the head and representative of the whole chosen family of sacerdotal mediators, as exclusively entrusted with some of the chief priestly functions. As alone privileged to make yearly atonement within the Holy of Holies, and to gain, from the mysterious Urim and Thummim, special revelations of the will of God. Was, preeminently, a type of Christ. And thus, the death of each successive high priest pre-signified that death of Christ by which the captives were to be freed, and the remembrance of transgressions made to cease.

This is just one more commandment that the LORD gave these people to help them live peaceable lives together. God gave civil laws, dietary laws, as well as religious laws that they must live by. The LORD was their only law. They did not have an earthly king.

Numbers 35:30 "Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person [to cause him] to die."

“Witnesses”: No one could be judged guilty of death on the testimony of only one witness. Two or more witnesses were required in all capital cases (compare Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

This is just saying in the matter of death, there must be more than one witness. A person could not be convicted with just one witness.

Numbers 35:31 "Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which [is] guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death."

Though he would give all his wealth and substance, all his estates and possessions, and whatever he is worth in the world. For all that a man has he will give for his life. But these are not to be taken, nor anything, and everything his friends may offer for him. All is to be rejected, the life of such a man is not to be saved on any consideration.

"Which is guilty of death": As he is who kills a man willingly and purposely. But one may be guilty of killing another, and yet not be deserving of death. When it is done ignorantly and accidentally with respect to him, for which reason this clause is added.

“But he shall be surely put to death”: By the order of the civil magistrate. And if this is not done either through want of evidence, or the fault of the judge, or the criminal clemency of the chief governor. God sooner or later will take vengeance on such a person.

This is saying, have no mercy on him who commits murder. If he is guilty of premeditated murder, he must be put to death.

Numbers 35:32 "And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest."

Though for killing a man unawares.

"That he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest": The high priest. Such a man's liberty was not to be purchased with money, nor even his life to be bought off, should he be taken without his city. A great ransom could not deliver him from the avenger, because he was guilty of this law, which so wisely and mercifully provided for him. And consequently guilty also of great ingratitude to God, as well as of a breach of his law. And of disrespect to his high priest, under whom he was protected.

This is also saying, do not pardon someone before they have served out their sentence. He must stay in the city of refuge until the LORD says his sentence is over, by the death of the high priest.

Numbers 35:33 "So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye [are]: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it."

“Blood that is shed therein”: Though murder and inadvertent killing polluted the land, murder was atoned for by the death of the murderer. Failure to observe these principles would make the Land unclean. If the whole Land became unclean, then the Lord would no longer be able to dwell in their midst.

The sin of murder is actually a sin against God, and the life He placed in that person. Sin pollutes the land. Only by the shedding of blood, can sins be washed away.

Numbers 35:34 "Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel."

By the commission of such atrocious crimes, or suffering them to go unpunished. Or by taking a compensation for the life of the guilty person.

"Wherein I dwell": Which is added to strengthen the exhortation. And as giving a reason why care should be taken not to pollute it. Because the Holy God dwells there. As he did in the tabernacle erected for him. And in such a peculiar manner as he did not in other lands.

"For I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel": He now dwells among them as their God, and their King. His tent or tabernacle being pitched in the midst of the camps of Israel. And so he would continue to dwell among them when they were come to the land of Canaan, so long as they observed his laws, statutes, and ordinances. And therefore it behooved them to be careful that they did not pollute themselves and their land, and cause him to depart from them.

He is saying, "Be ye holy for I am holy. He will not dwell in a polluted land. He left the land of Israel, just before the Babylonians destroyed it. He will not inhabit a person proclaiming to be a Christian, if there is sin in his life.

Numbers Chapter 35 Questions

1. Where was Moses, when he received this message from the LORD?
2. Where will they enter the Promised Land?
3. What would be the inheritance for the Levites?
4. Who would give them to them?
5. Why did the Levites need the suburbs?
6. How many feet outside the city was for their animals?

7. What does the author believe the other footage to be for?
8. How many cities of refuge would there be?
9. How many cities would the Levites have?
10. Why can we assume these will be small cities?
11. How many cities did each tribe give?
12. When shall they establish the cities of refuge?
13. Who were the cities of refuge for?
14. Who must the manslayer stand before to be judged?
15. Why was it necessary to have six cities of refuge?
16. How many cities of refuge would be on either side of the Jordan?
17. What were the names of the cities of refuge on the eastern side of Jordan?
18. Who are the cities of refuge for?
19. If you hit someone with an instrument of iron, you have committed _____.
20. Murder is when you _____ to kill someone.
21. Who was the "revenger of blood" usually?
22. In our society, killing that is planned ahead of time is called _____.
23. Verses 22 and 23 are speaking of what kind of killing?
24. Who lived in the city of refuge?
25. How long must they stay there?
26. What happened, if they came out earlier?
27. Is the revenger guilty of murder?
28. Why did God give civil laws to these people?
29. In the matter of death, there must be _____ than _____ witness to convict a person.
30. What is verse 31 saying?
31. What is verse 32 saying?

32. The sin of murder is actually against _____.

33. When will God not inhabit a person?