

## Introduction

Going from approx. 1406 B.C. (Moses dies, Israel's conquest of Canaan, Joshua rules the nation) to 1050 B.C. (Saul becomes king). 1406 B.C. Crossing the Jordan River, conquering Jericho, and setting up the cities of refuge, until 1376/1385 Joshua dies and the time of the Judges begins. Ending with Samuel who is born in 1105 and becomes the final judge in 1075. Saul becomes king in 1050 which ends a period of 356 years

48 Levitical cities (Priestly cities) "Though the Levites were not the exclusive residents of any one city (they shared them with other Israelites), they were posted there for specific duties. They tended to the work of the Lord and the service of the king (1 Chr 26:30–32). Collecting tithes (Nm 18:21; Dt 14:28), handling legal and judicial matters (1 Chr 26:29; 2 Chr 17:8; 19:8–10), military garrison duties (1 Chr 26:1–19), and managing the storehouses (1 Chr 26:22) were all Levitical responsibilities. Though they served by rotation in the capital (1 Chr 27:1), they also had similar duties the year round in their home districts (1 Chr 26:29–32)."<sup>1</sup>

Within the 48 cities, 6 were designated as cities of refuge

## [Joshua 20:1-9](#)

### 6 cities of refuge

- Based on;

### Exodus 21:12–13 NLT

*"Anyone who assaults and kills another person must be put to death. But if it was simply an accident permitted by God, I will appoint a place of refuge where the slayer can run for safety.*

- Example of unintentional killing;

### Deuteronomy 19:5 NLT

*For example, suppose someone goes into the forest with a neighbor to cut wood. And suppose one of them swings an ax to chop down a tree, and the ax head flies off the handle, killing the other person. In such cases, the slayer may flee to one of the cities of refuge to live in safety.*

- There is NO room for murder [Deut 19:1-13](#)

### Deuteronomy 19:13 NLT

*Do not feel sorry for that murderer! Purge from Israel the guilt of murdering innocent people; then all will go well with you.*

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<sup>1</sup> Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible Levitical Cities

## Context to “Cities of Refuge”

- [Numb 35:9-34](#)
  - [Numb 35:13](#) Six cities, 3 east and 3 west of the Jordan River.
  - 6 cities, represent the work of men
  - “As a symbolical number it denotes *imperfection, non-completeness*, falling as it does just short of seven, which denotes perfection”<sup>2</sup>
- Easily accessible for everyone in the whole country.
  - [Deut 19:6](#) If it is too far away those who accidentally killed someone might be killed themselves unfairly

## Entering the city of refuge

- [Judges 20:4](#) “state his case in the hearing of the elders”
- [Numb 35:12](#) “stands before the congregation for trial”

**The one who wants to enter must testify what went wrong (*repentance*).**

### Mark 1:15 NKJV

*and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”*

### James 5:16 NLT

*Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.*

## Atonement

### Numbers 35:33 NKJV

*So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it.*

- Old Testament perspective

### Leviticus 17:11 NLT

*for the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the LORD. It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible.*

- Waiting for the High Priest to die

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<sup>2</sup> A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament

### Joshua 20:6 NKJV

*And he shall dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgment and until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the slayer may return and come to his own city and his own house, to the city from which he fled.' ”*

- New Testament perspective

### Romans 5:11 KJV 1900

*And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

### Saint Augustine of Hippo

Two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self.

### How does this all apply to us?

#### Where do we flee to, find “refuge”?

- Fantasy, films, music, hobbies, money, sex, drugs, alcohol, sports, social media
- All places we ‘go to’ to get away from stress, fear, sadness, anger, emptiness.
  - **Looking for fulfilment or “rest”**

### Jesus raises the bar

- You have heard that it was said...But I say to you...

### Matthew 5:21–22 NKJV

*“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.*

- “without a cause” are later added, perhaps to soften the statement made by Jesus.
- *Raca*: “empty-headed one”, Aramaic expression of abuse. Followed-up by the term “You fool”

### Romans 3:23 NLT

*For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.*

- There is no room for any defilement in Christ

**Numbers 35:34 NLT**

*You must not defile the land where you live, for I live there myself. I am the LORD, who lives among the people of Israel.”*

**1 Corinthians 6:19–20 NLT**

*Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.*

- Christ made atonement

**Romans 3:24 NLT**

*Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.*

**Take refuge in the 7th city, Jesus Christ**

**2 steps to enter the 7th city**

**1) Depend on Jesus' word**

**Entering the “city” begins with a confession**

**Mark 1:15 NKJV**

*and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”*

**James 5:16 NLT**

*Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.*

**2) Depend on Jesus' work**

**You'll find fullness in the 7th city**

**Psalm 34:8 NLT** *Taste and see that the LORD is good.*

*Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!*

**You'll find Hope and Rest in the 7th city**

**Hebrews 6:18–20 NLT** *So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.*