

Title: Christ our Refuge
Text: Joshua 20: 1-9
Date: September 12, 2010
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Read Joshua 20. What is a refuge? A refuge is a place of hope to which the one may flee for safety and security.

Proposition: These six cities of refuge typify God our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ who is the refuge for guilty sinners. The believer is someone who, as a guilty sinner, has fled to Christ our Refuge.

Hebrews 6:18: That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19: Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20: Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

You are a guilty sinner. God's holy justice demands vengeance. The only refuge for you is in Christ. Flee to Christ by faith and you shall be saved from the avenger of blood. *'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'*

I. CHRIST IS THAT REFUGE. NOTICE THE NAMES OF THE CITIES.

1. KEDESH (Joshua 20: 7) means 'holy'. Christ is the Holy One.

Hebrews 7:26: For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

2. SHECHEM (Joshua 20: 7) means 'the shoulder'.

- The government of the world and of his church is on his shoulder.

Isaiah 9: 6: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder:

- The sin of his people fell on his shoulder and he put it away.

Isaiah 53: 6: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

- He finds each of his lost sheep...

Luke 15:5: And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

3. HEBRON (Joshua 20: 7) means 'fellowship'--communion.

I John 1:3: Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:9: God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

4. BEZER (Joshua 20: 8) means 'a fortified place'.

Proverbs 18: 10: The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe

Psalm 91:2: I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust

5. RAMOTH (Joshua 20: 8) means 'exalted'.

Philippians 2:9: God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name:

Ephesians 2:4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

6. GOLAN (Joshua 20: 8) means 'revealed', or 'manifested'.

- Christ is God manifest--revealed--in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16).
- In Christ the righteousness of God is revealed (Romans 3: 21, 22.)
- Christ is know by divine revelation in those who are called by his grace.

Galatians 1: 15: But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16: To reveal his Son in me,...

So we see that God in Christ is the refuge for sinners. Do you need a refuge?

Deuteronomy 33:27: The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms.

Psalms 62:6: He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved. 7: In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God. 8: Trust in him at all times; *ye* people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge for us. Selah.

II. THE CITIES OF REFUGE WERE SET FORTH BY GOD.

Joshua 20: 1: The LORD also spake unto Joshua

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior appointed by God to be the refuge for our souls (Rom. 3:24-26)

Romans 3: 24: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

III. THE WAY INTO THE CITY WAS PREPARED SO THERE WAS CLEAR ACCESS FOR THE GUILTY.

Deuteronomy 19:3: *Thou shalt prepare the way...that every slayer may flee thither.*

First, Christ himself is the Way (v6)

When the high priest died, the guilty man went free. So long as the high priest was living, no harm could befall the guilty criminal who dwelled in the city of refuge. When Christ our High Priest died at Calvary, he obtained eternal redemption for God's elect. Now he lives forever at God's right hand, as the High Priest over the house of God.

Hebrews 10:11: And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13: From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14: For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Secondly, Christ himself has removed all obstacles for each child for whom he died to draw near unto God our Refuge.

- Christ fulfilled the law!
- Christ satisfied justice!
- Christ put away sin!
- Christ conquered Satan!
- Note: The city of refuge was only for those guilty of manslaughter, Christ is the refuge for those guilty of all sin.
- Note: The city of refuge was for Jew and Gentile (v9: for all the children of Israel and the stranger)
- Christ is our Refuge to preserve us in temptation
- Christ is our Refuge to comfort us in trouble (John 14:1-3).
- Christ is our Refuge to protect us from every danger (Ps. 56:3; 112:7).

Thirdly, Christ has sent his messengers to make clear the Way.

Isaiah 62: 10: Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

IV. THE CITIES WERE NEAR. SO IT IS THAT CHRIST JESUS IS NEAR FOR REFUGE FOR THE GUILTY.

No matter where you were in Israel, on either side of the Jordan, you could easily flee to one of these cities

Romans 10: 6: But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7: Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8: But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Believe on Christ and abide in him. If the avenger of blood caught the guilty man outside the city of refuge, he could kill him; If God almighty finds you outside of Christ: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die!*" But If the guilty man fled into the city of refuge, abiding in that city, he was under the protection of God's law. Likewise, every sinner who flees into Christ by faith is under the protection of God's holy law and justice!

We enter Christ by faith, by believing on him, and inside Christ our Refuge means no death.

John 5: 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Romans 8:1: *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit....33: Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. 34: Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Galatians 3:13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:

John 3:18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

V. ABIDE IN CHRIST AND LIVE.

Joshua 20: 6: He shall dwell in the city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment...

Perseverance does not make us Christ's disciples, it is the evidence that we are Christ's disciples, indeed.

Hebrews 3:14 "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."

When we are found in Christ in that day, perfected in him, then we shall enter into new Jerusalem our heavenly city with Christ.

AMEN!