

## 12.38 Cities of Refuge; Care for Levites (Numbers 35:1–34; Deuteronomy 4:40–49; 18:1–13; 19:1–13)

(The teacher might want to combine this lesson with Lesson 12.38 “Cities of Refuge; Care for Levites.”)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows.

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional needed materials.
- A large rock
- Nancy Ganz’s treatment of this story is excellent in *Numbers: A Commentary for Children*, published by Shepherd Press, 2006.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Tips and terms are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *manslayer*: a person who kills someone accidentally
- *blood avenger*: a close relative of someone killed who is obligated to slay the person by whom his relative is slain
- *murderer*: someone who kills another with intention
- *expiation*: making payment for guilt or a crime; similar to atonement

### Scripture: (NASB)

Numbers 35:1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho, saying, 2 “Command the sons of Israel that they give to the Levites from the inheritance of their possession cities to live in; and you shall give to the Levites pasture lands around the cities. 3 The cities shall be theirs to live in; and their pasture lands shall be for their cattle and for their herds and for all their beasts.

4 “The pasture lands of the cities which you shall give to the Levites *shall extend* from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits around. 5 You shall also measure outside 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, with the city in the center. This shall become theirs as pasture lands for the cities.

6 The cities which you shall give to the Levites *shall be* the six cities of refuge, which you shall give for the manslayer to flee to; and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities. 7 All the cities which you shall give to the Levites *shall be* forty-eight cities, together with their pasture lands. 8 As for the cities which you shall give from the possession of the sons of Israel, you shall take more from the larger and you shall take less from the smaller; each shall give some of his cities to the Levites in proportion to his possession which he inherits.”

9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11 then you shall select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge, that the manslayer who has killed any person unintentionally may flee there. 12 The cities shall be to you as a refuge from the avenger, so that the manslayer will not die until he stands before the congregation for trial. 13 The cities which you are to give shall be your six cities of refuge. 14 You shall give three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan; they are to be cities of refuge. 15 These six cities shall be for refuge for the sons of Israel, and for the alien and for the sojourner among them; that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there.

16 ‘But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17 If he struck him down with a stone in the hand, by which he will die, and *as a result* he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18 Or if he struck him with a wooden object

in the hand, by which he might die, and *as a result* he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 19 The blood avenger himself shall put the murderer to death; he shall put him to death when he meets him. 20 If he pushed him of hatred, or threw something at him lying in wait and *as a result* he died, 21 or if he struck him down with his hand in enmity, and *as a result* he died, the one who struck him shall surely be put to death, he is a murderer; the blood avenger shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

22 ‘But if he pushed him suddenly without enmity, or threw something at him without lying in wait, 23 or with any deadly object of stone, and without seeing it dropped on him so that he died, while he was not his enemy nor seeking his injury, 24 then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the blood avenger according to these ordinances. 25 The congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the blood avenger, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge to which he fled; and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. 26 But if the manslayer at any time goes beyond the border of his city of refuge to which he may flee, 27 and the blood avenger finds him outside the border of his city of refuge, and the blood avenger kills the manslayer, he will not be guilty of blood 28 because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer shall return to the land of his possession.

29 ‘These things shall be for a statutory ordinance to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

30 ‘If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. 31 Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. 32 You shall not take ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to live in the land before the death of the priest. 33 So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. 34 You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel.’”

Deuteronomy 4:40 So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.”

41 Then Moses set apart three cities across the Jordan to the east, 42 that a manslayer might flee there, who unintentionally slew his neighbor without having enmity toward him in time past; and by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: 43 Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, and Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

44 Now this is the law which Moses set before the sons of Israel; 45 these are the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, when they came out from Egypt, 46 across the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites who lived at Heshbon, whom Moses and the sons of Israel defeated when they came out from Egypt. 47 They took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites, *who were* across the Jordan to the east, 48 from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of Arnon, even as far as Mount Sion (that is, Hermon), 49 with all the Arabah across the Jordan to the east, even as far as the sea of the Arabah, at the foot of the slopes of Pisgah.

18:1 “The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the LORD’s offerings by fire and His portion. 2 They shall have no inheritance among their countrymen; the LORD is their inheritance, as He promised them.

3 “Now this shall be the priests’ due from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, either an ox or a sheep, of which they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach. 4 You shall give him the first fruits of your grain, your new wine, and your oil, and the first shearing of your sheep. 5 For the LORD your God has chosen him and his sons from all your tribes, to stand and serve in the name of the LORD forever.

6 “Now if a Levite comes from any of your towns throughout Israel where he resides, and comes whenever he desires to the place which the LORD chooses, 7 then he shall serve in the name of the LORD his God, like all his fellow Levites who stand there before the LORD. 8 They shall eat equal portions, except *what they receive* from the sale of their fathers’ *estates*.

9 “When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. 13 You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. 14 For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you *to do* so.

15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. 16 This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.’ 17 The LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well. 18 I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. 20 But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ 21 You may say in your heart, ‘How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’ 22 When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

19:1 “When the LORD your God cuts off the nations, whose land the LORD your God gives you, and you dispossess them and settle in their cities and in their houses, 2 you shall set aside three cities for yourself in the midst of your land, which the LORD your God gives you to possess. 3 You shall prepare the roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God will give you as a possession, so that any manslayer may flee there.

4 “Now this is the case of the manslayer who may flee there and live: when he kills his friend unintentionally, not hating him previously-- 5 as when a man goes into the forest with his friend to cut wood, and his hand swings the axe to cut down the tree, and the iron head slips off the handle and strikes his friend so that he dies--he may flee to one of these cities and live; 6 otherwise the avenger of blood might pursue the manslayer in the heat of his anger, and overtake him, because the way is long, and take his life, though he was not deserving of death, since he had not hated him previously. 7 Therefore, I command you, saying, ‘You shall set aside three cities for yourself.’

8 “If the LORD your God enlarges your territory, just as He has sworn to your fathers, and gives you all the land which He promised to give your fathers-- 9 if you carefully observe all this commandment which I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in His ways always--then you shall add three more cities for yourself, besides these three. 10 So innocent blood will not be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, and bloodguiltiness be on you.

11 “But if there is a man who hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him and rises up against him and strikes him so that he dies, and he flees to one of these cities, 12 then the elders of his city shall send and take him from there and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. 13 You shall not pity him, but you shall purge the blood of the innocent from Israel, that it may go well with you.

### **Introduction/Review:**

Although the land east of the Jordan River had not been fully conquered and although Israel left the land of the Moabites, Edomites, and Ammonites to those nations, yet enough territory had been conquered that the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and one-half Manasseh had ample fields for their livestock. These two and one-half

tribes, however, were obligated to cross over Jordan to help the other tribes gain their possession in Canaan.

## Story:

### *Levite cities*

Israel was camping in the plains of Moab on the east side of the Jordan River opposite the city of Jericho [locate these features on a map]. Although Moses would soon die, he was still leading the people. The Lord said to him, “Command the sons of Israel that each tribe gives the Levites cities to live in from the land they possess. They shall also give the Levites pasture lands around those cities. The cities and their pasture lands shall belong to the Levites, not to the tribes in whose land they are located. Further, the pasture lands of the cities that you give to the Levites shall extend from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits. In addition, you shall also measure outside the city on each side of the city ✓another two thousand cubits with the city in the center. This extension from the city is pasture lands.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, let’s do the math and discover how much pasture land each city had. [Show the math on a board.] If a cubit is eighteen inches, multiply that by 3000 cubits. That gives us 54,000 inches. To find the number of feet, we need to divide by twelve (12 inches = 1 foot.) That gives us 4500 feet, which is almost a mile (5280 feet). (18 inches x 3000 cubits = 54,000 inches ÷ 12 inches = 4500 feet.)<sup>2</sup> So each Levite city’s pasture lands spread out almost a mile in all directions from the wall of the city.

The Lord said, “Give the Levites forty-two cities. In addition, give them six more cities called *cities of refuge*. Take more cities from the larger tribes, and take fewer cities from the smaller tribes. Each tribe shall give some of his cities to the Levites in proportion to the size of his possession.”<sup>3</sup>

### *Manslayers*

“Now, regarding the cities of refuge,” continued the Lord, “they are to be a place where a manslayer can flee so that he can be safe from an avenger of blood.”

Let’s understand this instruction: A manslayer is someone who has killed/slain someone without intending to slay that person. The Lord gave four illustrations of how a manslayer might accidentally put someone to death. (1) The manslayer might push another person without intent to hurt him. (2) He might throw an object that accidentally killed someone. (3) Without knowing someone was below him in a pit, a man might drop a heavy stone that killed that person. (4) The last illustration is “as when a man goes into the forest with his friend to cut wood, and his hand swings the axe to cut down the tree, and the iron head slips off the handle and strikes his friend so that he dies” (Deuteronomy 14:5).

### *Cities of refuge*

In such cases, the manslayer needed to run to the nearest city of refuge. The blood avenger, a close relative of the deceased, chased the manslayer with the intention of killing him to expiate the blood of his relative. ✓Perhaps friends of the slayer would try to stop or dissuade the avenger from his pursuit. However, once inside the city, the manslayer would be safe until after he was brought to trial in which the congregation would judge between the slayer and blood avenger.

If the manslayer was found innocent of murder, he could not leave the city of refuge but had to continue to live there until the high priest died. Therefore, if the manslayer at any time went beyond the border of his city of refuge and the blood avenger found him outside that city, the blood avenger could kill the manslayer without guilt. Why? Because the manslayer should have followed the law and remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. However, after the death of the high priest, the manslayer could freely return to his own land, and the avenger of blood could not kill him.

The law for a manslayer and his safety in a city of refuge applied not only to Israelites but also to aliens and temporary residents.

### *Murderers*

What about a murderer, a person who hated and intentionally killed someone? He was to be put to death if at least two witnesses proved the murder. Even though the murderer had fled to a city of refuge, the blood avenger was to put the murderer to death if the congregation found him guilty. If a murderer offered money to preserve his life, that bribe must be refused; the murderer had to die.

God gave His purpose for this just practice: “So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel” (Numbers 35:33, 34). Shedding innocent blood (murder) brought guilt upon the land. That guilt could not be cleansed unless the murderer died.

### ***City locations***

Where were these six refuge cities located? They were positioned equidistant throughout the land, and the roads to the cities were maintained (Deuteronomy 19:3) so that it would be relatively easy for a man to reach the nearest city. Three cities of refuge were on the east side of the Jordan River. They were [locate] Bezer for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites. The three cities of refuge on the west side of Jordan were chosen after Israel conquered the land.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Food for Levites***

Thus, forty-eight cities, including six cities of refuge, provided for the Levites’ habitation, but they had other needs that the rest of the tribes also had to supply. The Lord commanded, “Since the tribe of Levi has no portion of land with Israel because I, the LORD, am their inheritance as I promised them, they shall eat of the LORD’s offerings. This shall be the priests’ due from the people who offer a sacrifice, either cattle or sheep. They shall give to the priest the shoulder, the two cheeks, and the stomach.”<sup>5</sup> In addition, the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, and the first shearing of sheep went to the Levites. “The LORD your God has chosen Levi from all the tribes to serve the LORD forever,” God said.

Hearing all this, it might seem as if the Levites had to depend a lot on the other tribes. Actually, they had to depend on the Lord to cause the tribes to supply as God had commanded. They themselves, however, were also indispensable to the other tribes, for the Levites were to teach the people the Word of God. If the people served God as they were commanded, the Levites would prosper and the people would follow the Lord.

### ***Detestable things***

On the other hand, as God had warned before and warned now, if Israel left God’s ways and followed the ways of their neighbors, they would incur the wrath of God. God said, “When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.”

God called false worship rituals “detestable,” for they truly were abominable. I don’t want even to mention the demonic activities done in worship of false gods. However, Deuteronomy 18:10 through 14 does list them.<sup>6</sup> This scripture also tells us that the nations’ practice of these detestable works was the reason the inhabitants needed to be driven out of the land. God wanted his people to be blameless before the Lord; therefore, the abominations of the nations were not allowed in Israel.

### ***The true Prophet***

In stark contrast to false detestable deities, God promised the coming of a true prophet, one like Moses, to whom the people should listen. God said, “He shall speak all that I command him” (Deuteronomy 18:18). Other prophets might say they were from God, but the evidence would be in whether their prophecies actually came true. If the prophecy did not come to pass, the prophet was false and should die.

This was not true, however, for the coming prophet who was like Moses. We know that this true prophet was none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. [See “We see Jesus” under “Lessons from this lesson” found below for more details on the true prophet, Jesus.]

<sup>1</sup>“The first 1000 [cubits] were for their cattle and goods, these 2000 for their gardens, orchards, fields, and vineyards” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-35-5.html>).

<sup>2</sup>If we do the same figuring with a 22-inch cubit, this is what we get: 22 inches x 3000 cubits = 66,000 inches ÷ 12 inches = 5500 feet—a little over a mile.

<sup>3</sup>“[O]ut 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 21:1-45). . . . [T]he 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 (Genesis 49:7)” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-35-8.html>).

<sup>4</sup>“[I]n the land of Canaan . . . were Kadesh in Galilee, in Mount Naphtali; Shechem in Mount Ephraim; and Kirjatharba, or Hebron, in the mountain of Judah (Joshua 20:7)” [see map below] (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-35-14.html>).

<sup>5</sup>“**Quest.** How doth this agree with other texts, in which the shoulder and the breast, and those parts only, are the priest's due, not the cheeks and maw? **Ans.** 1. Who shall tie God's hands? What if he now makes an addition, and enlargeth the priest's commons? Nothing more usual than for one scripture to supply what is lacking in another, and for a latter law of God to add to a former. 2. The breast may be here omitted, because it is comprehended under the shoulder, to which it is commonly joined, and with which it was waved before the Lord. 3. The Hebrew word here rendered *maw* or *stomach*, which was reckoned among dainties by the ancients, is not to my remembrance used elsewhere, and therefore it may have another signification, and some render it the breast, others take it for the uppermost part of the stomach, which lies under the breast” (<https://www.studydrive.org/commentary/deuteronomy/18-3.html>).

<sup>6</sup>Detestable practices in Deuteronomy 18:10–14: Making sons daughters pass through the fire; using divination; practicing witchcraft; interpreting omens; being a sorcerer; casting a spell; being a medium or a spiritist; calling up the dead.

### Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:

*In the cities of refuge:*

“[T]o Christ sensible sinners flee for shelter and safety, which supposes danger in themselves from the law and justice of God.”

“The word properly signifies cities of gathering, or of reception. There [is] a gathering of the elect of God to Christ . . . at effectual calling, which is an act of God's grace . . . when souls gather to Christ as their Saviour for righteousness, peace, pardon, rest, and everlasting life.”

“[I]n Christ, those that flee to him, and are received by him, are retained and preserved from Satan, law, hell and death.”

“The cities of refuge were of God's appointing; so Christ, as a Saviour, and rock of refuge to his people, is appointed and foreordained of God.”

The “redemption and atonement, peace and reconciliation, liberty, life and salvation [of those who flee to Christ] are owing to the death of Christ, their high priest. . . . [C]ertain it is, that the death of Christ, our high priest, atones for every sin of those that flee to him, and by which they are reconciled to God” (The above points are from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/numbers-35-29.html>).

*In His being the Prophet God would send:* (see John 6:14; Acts 3:22 ; and Acts 7:37)

Like Moses, Jesus “was a prophet mighty in word and deed, and . . . foretold future events, as his own sufferings and death, and resurrection from the dead, the destruction of Jerusalem, and other things.”

He “taught and instructed men in the knowledge of divine things, spake as never man did, preached the Gospel fully and faithfully, so that . . . the doctrine of grace and truth came by him.”

He “was raised up of God, called, sent, commissioned and qualified by him for the office of a prophet, as well as was raised from the dead as a confirmation of his being that extraordinary person.”

“[H]e was like to Moses in the faithful discharge of his office, in his familiar converse with God, in the miracles which he wrought; as well as in his being a Mediator, and the Redeemer of his people, as Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, and the deliverer of them out of Egypt” (The above four points are from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/deuteronomy-18-15.html>).

### Activities:

- Play dough: houses; city; cattle; sheep
- Snack: First fruits of grain (flour), olive oil, and grape juice were to be given to the Levites. These three ingredients are found in Golden Grape Cake. A recipe is at <http://www.welchs.com/recipes/golden-grape-cake-grape-juice-reduction>. (Instructions for making the grape juice reduction called for in the recipe are at <https://www.sheknows.com/health-and-wellness/articles/843849/how-to-make-a-juice-reduction-for-desserts/>.)
- Review questions (Game: Print, back with paper towel, and cut out the clipart runners found below. For each correct answer, a student moves a runner across the board to and inside a felt 9x9” city of refuge.)
  1. Why did the Levites not inherit land as the other tribes did? [The Lord was their inheritance.]
  2. How many cities were to be given to the Levites? [Forty-eight.]
  3. What were six special Levite cities called? [Cities of refuge.]
  4. How many cities were east of Jordan? West of Jordan? [Six; six.]
  5. Define *manslayer*. [A person who accidentally kills someone.]
  6. If a manslayer fled to a city of refuge, what had to happen for him to stay there? [Had to have a trial; if found to be innocent, he could stay until the high priest died.]
  7. What food was to be given to the Levites? [Certain parts of the sacrificed cattle and sheep; first fruits of grain, olive oil, and wine.]
  8. Fill in the blanks. God did not want His people to learn about the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Canaanites. [Detestable things; or the worship practices to false gods.]
  9. Fill in the blank. “The LORD your God will raise up for you a \_\_\_\_\_ like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.” [Prophet.]
  10. Who is this prophet? [Jesus Christ.]

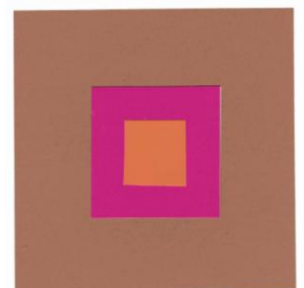
### Memory Verse[s]:

- Exodus 20:1–17. An enlarged copy of the words, the “Exodus 20:1–17” song sheet, and motions are in Lesson 12.15 or on the “Lessons” and “Songs” pages at [teachingthebibleto kids.org](http://teachingthebibleto kids.org). “Stop! It’s the Law,” a song that teaches only the basic Ten Commandments, is found on the same “Songs” page.

### Handwork:

- Make a Levite city with its pasture lands by cutting for each student a 1.5-inch square for the city, a 3.5-inch square for the 1000-cubit section, and a 7.5-inch square for the 2000-cubit section. Glue the small square in the middle of the 3.5-inch square, and the 3.5-inch square in the center of the 7.5-inch square. Glue the large square to the page with Psalm 46:1, 2 found below.

God is our refuge and strength,  
—O very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change  
—And though the mountains ally into the heart of the sea.



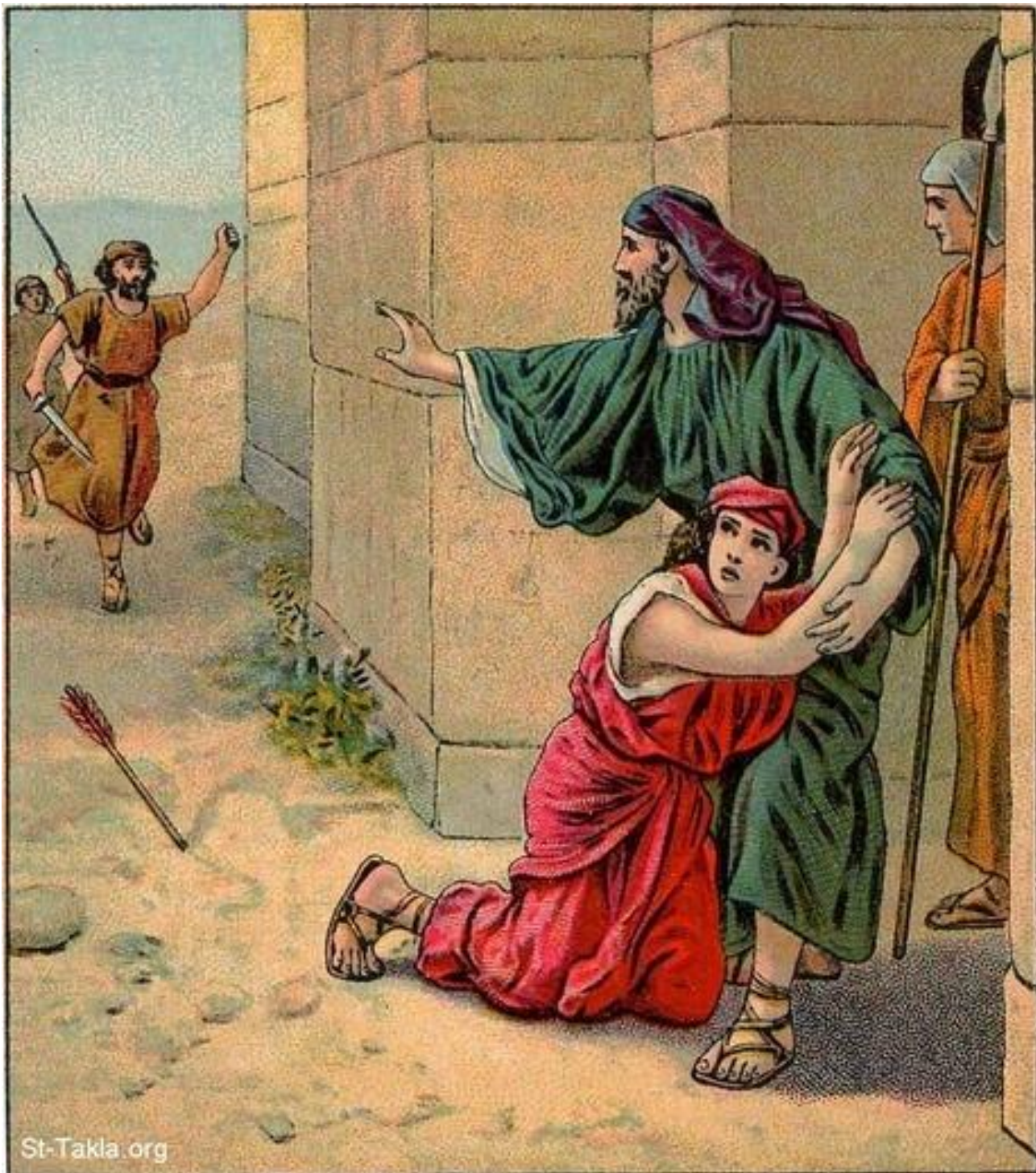
**manslayer**

**blood avenger**

**murderer**

**expiation**





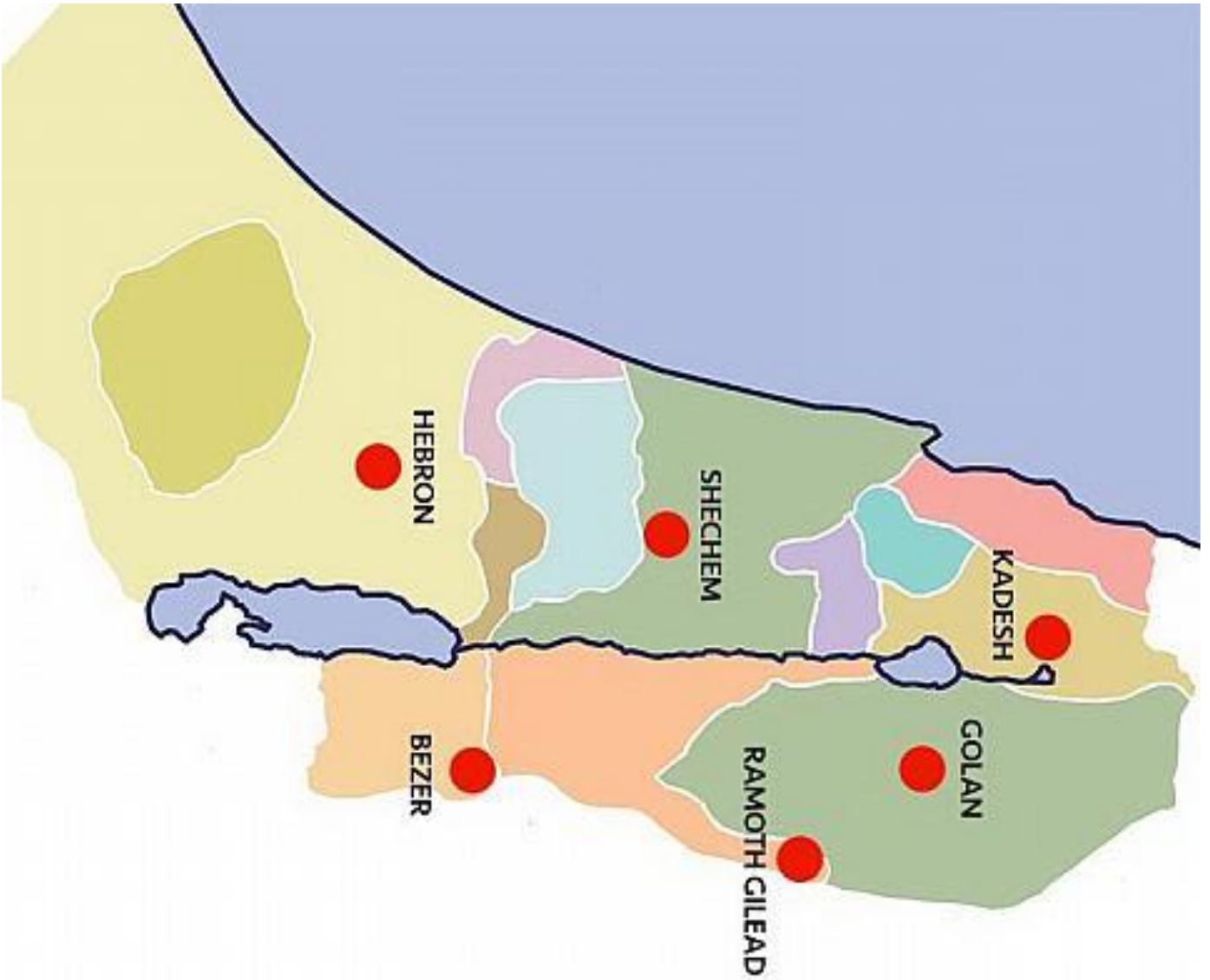
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## CITIES OF REFUGE.

Josh. 20 : 1-9.

**GOLDEN TEXT :—**God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

**Ps. 46 : 1.**



12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL  
CITIES OF REFUGE

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**God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change  
And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea.**

— Psalm 46:1, 2

