

Numbers

For our admonition. 1 Corinthians 10:11

10 April 2024

Lesson: 26

Numbers 35-36

Preparing to Enter the Promised Land

Once again, the main outline is from the Open Bible, slightly edited.

Special Cities in Canaan

Cities for the Levites (35:1-8)

God commanded that they give the Levites both cities and suburbs. The suburbs of the cities were all the land within 1000 cubits (457 m, nearly .5 km) from the city wall (35:4). In the next verse (35:5) we read that they were to measure 2000 cubits on the east, south, west, and north. Some commentators think this means that they had an additional 2000 cubits for their fields and gardens. We cannot be certain.

The Levites were to receive 48 cities throughout the land (35:6-7). Six of those cities were to be designated as cities of refuge (see stars on the map).

Cities of Refuge (35:9-34)

God said that the purpose of these six cities was to provide protection for a person who accidentally killed a person (35:11-12). Three cities of refuge were on each side of the Jordan. Note their locations. They were spread out to aid those in need of protection.

God set the rules for judging the person's guilt (35:16-23). Intentional murder must be distinguished from accidental homicide.

The congregation was to determine the guilt of the killer. If guilty, he was to die. If he was not guilty of murder, he was to remain in the city until the death of the high priest for protection.

Execution was always the penalty for intentional murder (35:31). Those who accidentally kill someone, without exception, they must remain in the city of refuge until the death of the priest (35:32). This seems harsh for the innocent person, but it would certainly motivate people to be careful.

God said that shedding of blood would defile the land (35:33-34).

Special Problems of Inheritance (36:1-13)

The children of Gilead, who were part of the tribe of Manasseh, reminded Moses of the Lord's promise concerning the problem of those men who had no sons, namely, Zelophehad.

Moses agreed that the point of these men was valid, and that God had established a



resolution.

God gave the daughters of Zelophehad (and any other in similar circumstances) this answer. *"Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry"* (Numbers 36:6). Today, marrying one's cousin is not permitted because of potential genetic defects, but evidently, back in those days this was not yet an issue of concern. This would keep the inheritance within the tribe.

Principles for Us Today

God's provision for the Levites, for the accidental killer, and for the man who had no sons reminds us that he cares for His people. We can trust His loving care.

God sanctioned capital punishment for murder to deter the crime. He never repealed this truth. It should be used yet today.

As cities of refuge protected the innocent, so we ought to protect them as well.