

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 33 – Cities Of Refuge Through The Death Of Joshua And Eleazar (Joshua 20-24)

1. Who could rightly flee to a city of refuge?

- *“Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood” (Joshua 20:2-3; cf. Numbers 35:10-34 and Deuteronomy 19:1-12).*

2. Was one who rightly fled to a city of refuge expected to declare his presence there?

- Yes, (Joshua 20:4).

3. How long could one who rightly fled to a city of refuge stay under the safety of that city?

- *“And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled... These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation” (Joshua 20:6; 9).*

4. How much of what God promised was received by Israel?

- *“And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass” (Joshua 21:43-45).*

5. The children of Gad, Reuben, and half of Manasseh wanted to stop short of the land promised to Israel on the other side of the Jordan. They were told they could have that land, but they needed to continue fighting alongside their brethren until all of the tribes received their land (Numbers 32:1-31 and Joshua 1:12-16). Did the children of Gad, Reuben, and half of Manasseh keep their promise to fight alongside their brethren until the end?

- Yes, they did: *“And said unto them, Ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you: Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God. And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side Jordan” (Joshua 22:2-4).*

6. What did Joshua command the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh to heed diligently?

- *“But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep*

his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul. So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away: and they went unto their tents” (Joshua 22:5-6).

7. What misunderstanding occurred when the children of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh built an altar by Jordan?

- The rest of Israel thought that the altar was to offer sacrifices upon. They thought that the children of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh were departing from God. They were ready to go to war (**Joshua 22:10-20**). However, the children of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh had no intentions to offer sacrifices on that altar or to depart from God (**Joshua 22:21-29**).

8. Was the misunderstanding cleared up?

- Yes: *“And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation and heads of the thousands of Israel which were with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the Lord is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord. And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again. And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt. And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar Ed: for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God” (Joshua 22:30-34).*

9. List six “reminders” Joshua gave the children of Israel in chapter twenty-three.

- **Verse 3.** *“And ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you.”*
- **Verses 4-5.** *“Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. And the Lord your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the Lord your God hath promised unto you.”*
- **Verses 6-8.** *“Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left; That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: But cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day.”*
- **Verses 9-10.** *“For the Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day. One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.”*

- **Verse 11.** *“Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God.”*
- **Verses 12-13.** *“Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you: Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you.”*
- **Verse 14.** *“And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.”*
- **Verses 15-16.** *“Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord your God promised you; so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.”*

10. How much history did God have Joshua remind the children of Israel about?

- “And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even **Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor**: and they served other gods.
- 3. And I took your father **Abraham** from the other side of the flood, and led him **throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed**, and gave him **Isaac**.
- 4. And I gave unto Isaac **Jacob and Esau**: and I gave unto **Esau mount Seir**, to possess it; but **Jacob and his children went down into Egypt**.
- 5. I sent **Moses also and Aaron**, and I **plagued Egypt**, according to that which I did among them: and afterward **I brought you out**.
- 6. And **I brought your fathers out of Egypt**: and ye came unto the sea; and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and horsemen unto the red sea.
- 7. And when they cried unto the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and **brought the sea upon them, and covered them**; and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season.
- 8. And I brought you into the land of the **Amorites**, which dwelt on the other side Jordan; and they fought with you: and **I gave them into your hand**, that ye might possess their land; and **I destroyed them from before you**.
- 9. Then **Balak** the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and warred against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you:
- 10. But **I would not hearken unto Balaam**; therefore he blessed you still: so I delivered you out of his hand.
- 11. And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Gergashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and **I delivered them into your hand**.
- 12. **And I sent the hornet before you**, which drave them out from before you, even the two kings of the Amorites; but **not with thy sword, nor with thy bow**.

- 13. **And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour**, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not do ye eat.”
11. What should the history lesson do for Israel as Joshua is now preparing to die?
- Joshua sets forth the purpose of the history lesson: *“Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord”* (**Joshua 24:14**).
 - It should strengthen them and remind them how great God is (**Psalms 77:11-20; 105:5-11**).
12. What kind of leadership is exhibited by Joshua when he gives Israel a choice of whom they’ll serve?
- Joshua shows great leadership in that he can vouch for his household serving God (**Proverbs 20:7; 11, I Timothy 3:4-5, and Titus 1:6**). Notice: *“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: **but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord”*** (**Joshua 24:15**).
13. Do we see that Joshua’s reminder of the good God had done was effective in the answer of the children of Israel to Joshua’s questioning of whom they’d serve?
- Yes: *“And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed: And the Lord drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the Lord; for he is our God”* (**Joshua 24:16-18**).
14. What response was given to Joshua’s statements in verses nineteen and twenty?
- *“And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the Lord”* (**Joshua 24:21**).
15. Were there strange gods among the children of Israel in our current context?
- Obviously so (**Joshua 24:22-23**).
16. How long did Israel serve the Lord?
- *“And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel”* (**Joshua 24:31**).
17. Who dies as the book of Joshua concludes?
- Joshua (**Joshua 24:29**) and Eleazar (**Joshua 24:33**).
 - No one was individually selected to replace Joshua. Phinehas would stand in the place of his father as the priest (**Numbers 18:1; cf. Joshua 22:30**).