

Deuteronomy 19

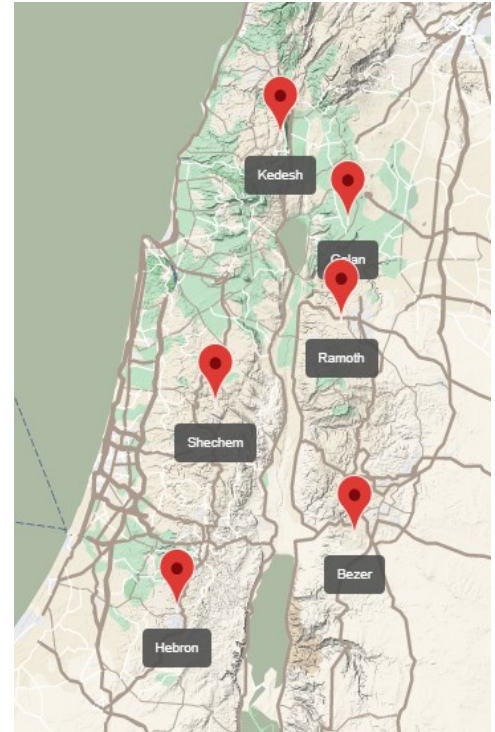
February 14, 2024

In Deuteronomy 4:41-43 we read of Moses establishing three cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan, in Bezer, Ramoth in Gilead, and Golan. In Joshua 20, the Lord instructs Joshua to set up three more in Kedesh of Galilee, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Hebron in Judah. The six cities are not clustered together but spaced out on the roads running through the more populated areas of the land. That was so an accidental manslayer could reach safety in time to avoid retribution by an “avenger of blood” – probably a relative of the victim.

But look at verse 9. If Israel obeys the Lord, He will enlarge their territory and the six cities of refuge will expand to nine.

We don’t read that ever happened. The children of Israel never claimed the whole land from the river to the sea as promised in Deuteronomy 11:24. So they never learned the names and places of the three cities. The possibility never became reality.

Do we ever wonder what unknown plans and blessings the Lord has in store for us when we are obedient? “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9).



Questions:

1. What is the purpose of cities of refuge?
2. This well known hymn compares Christ to the cities of refuge:
*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*
What are similarities between the Lord and those cities? Differences?
3. What are the conditions and consequences for the Lord enlarging the territory of Israel?

4. Can you think of ways that Christianity is a “scaleable” religion (allowing for future expansion)?
5. What principle can we see in verses 10 and 13?
6. What is the plain meaning of verse 14? Are there any indirect applications?
7. Verse 21 gives the principle of “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” etc. How does this law place a limit on the vengeance that can be taken in response to a crime or injury?
8. What did the Lord Jesus say about this law?