



NUMBERS 35:1-15

Bible Study

MT. ZION FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH
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VISION

The vision of the Mt. Zion First African Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia will reach and reproduce within its surrounding community, a people inspired and equipped with a passion for the truth of God's Word and His compassion for others who will be enablers of change.



THEME

MOVING FORWARD

AS A

GROWING CHURCH



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

The word “*refuge*” means a place of shelter and protection. The Bible names the six cities as being cities of refuge: Golan, Ramoth, and Bosor, on the east (left bank) of the Jordan River, and Kedesh, Shechem, and Hebron on the western (right) side.



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

1-3 Then GOD spoke to Moses on the Plains of Moab at Jordan-Jericho: “Command the People of Israel to give the Levites as their part of the total inheritance towns to live in. Make sure there is plenty of pasture around the towns. Then they will be well taken care of with towns to live in and pastures for their cattle, flocks, and



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Beware of Discouragers

other livestock. 4-5 “The pasture surrounding the Levites’ towns is to extend 1,500 feet in each direction from the city wall. The outside borders of the pasture are to measure three thousand feet on each of the four sides—east, south, west, and north—with the town at the center. Each city will be supplied with pasture.



6-8 “Six of these towns that you give the Levites will be asylum-cities to which anyone who accidentally kills another person may flee for asylum. In addition, you will give



them forty-two other towns—
forty-eight towns in all, together
with their pastures. The towns that
you give the Levites from the common
inheritance of the People of Israel are
to be taken in proportion to the



size of each tribe—many towns from a tribe that has many, few from a tribe that has few.” 9-15 GOD spoke to Moses: “Speak to the People of Israel. Tell them, When you cross the River Jordan into the country of Canaan,



Cities of Refuge

*designate your asylum-cities,
towns to which a person who
accidentally kills someone can flee
for asylum. They will be places of
refuge from the avenger so that
the alleged murderer won't be*



Cities of Refuge

killed until he can appear before the community in court. Provide six asylum-cities. Designate three of the towns to the east side of the Jordan, the other three in Canaan proper— asylum-cities for the People of



Cities of Refuge

Israel, for the foreigner, and for any occasional visitors or guests—six asylum-cities to run to for anyone who accidentally kills another.”



Numbers 35:1-5 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

"They shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment." ([Numbers 35:12](#))

This is the key verse that we will focus on this morning. WHEN prescribing the inheritance of the Israelites in the land



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

of Canaan, God ordered that six of cities be set aside as "cities for refuge." We note the *purpose of the cities*, the *place of the cities*, and *the proving in the cities*.

Purpose of the cities. "For refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not." These cities were to provide protection from the



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

avenger for one who had unintentionally or accidentally killed another person. The avenger, often blind with rage, would kill the manslayer regardless of fault. The city of refuge would stop this unlawful revenge. It provided for protection from a lawless society.



Place of the cities. In the context of this verse we are told that these six cities of refuge were taken from among the cities where the Levites lived. Since the Levites lived throughout the land of Israel, this meant that the cities of refuge were located throughout the land. Three were on the



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

west side of Jordan and three were on the east side of the Jordan. The cities were so spaced that they were easily accessible from any part of the land. There is a Gospel lesson in their location—it tells us that the Gospel, which is a refuge from judgment as were the cities, is accessible to all people. The



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

Gospel is for "whosoever." No one is excluded from the Gospel. All men have access to the Gospel of Christ.

Proving in the cities. "Until he stand before the congregation in judgment." The city of refuge was not to prevent justice. All those who fled to the city eventually had to



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

stand trial and prove whether or not they were innocent. If a person guilty of murder fled to the city hoping for protection from due judgment for his evil deed, he would only get protection until there was a just trial in which he had to prove his innocence. God is a God of justice. Calvary proves that.



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

Grace is not bestowed at the expense of justice, for Christ died and paid the due punishment for our sins so that God might forgive us and be just is so doing ([Romans 3:26,31](#)). Paul writes: *“Having faith in him sets us in the clear. God decided on this course of action in full view of the public—to set the world in*



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

(verse 26 continued) *the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus, finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured. This is not only clear, but it's now—this is current history! God sets things right. He also makes it possible for us to live in his rightness.”*



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

And verse 31 reads: *”But by shifting our focus from what we do to what God does, don’t we cancel out all our careful keeping of the rules and ways God commanded? Not at all. What happens, in fact, is that by putting that entire way of life in its proper place, we confirm it.*



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

What is God's place of refuge? God is our refuge, our safe place, our retreat, the place we go when we are afraid. And there is a lot of fear going around. God is also our strength or "*power*." This is the same word that Jesus uses in Acts 1:8 when he promises to give us "*power*" with the coming of the Holy Spirit who now lives within us.



Numbers 35:1-15 (MSG)

Cities of Refuge

Next Week

Read chapter 35

Commandments and Judgments

