### Deuteronomy

## Chapter 19

1‘And when Jehovah your God has destroyed the nations that He’s giving to you, along with their lands, cities, and houses that you’ll inherit and live in, 2you must set aside three cities in the midst of the land that Jehovah your God is giving to you... 3Perform a survey and divide the borders of your land into three parts, [then assign central cities as] places of refuge for those who’ve [unintentionally] killed someone.  
  
 4‘And this is the rule:  
  
 ‘Those who are guilty of manslaughter (anyone who’s accidentally struck his neighbor; someone whom he’s never disliked) may run to [one of these cities] and stay there.  
  
 5‘For example:  
  
 ‘If someone should go into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and his ax head flies off its handle and hits his neighbor, killing him... He must then flee to one of these cities and live there, 6so that the angry blood avenger doesn’t chase him down and kill him (because he isn’t worthy of death, since he hasn’t hated his [neighbor] in the past)… But, that’s what will happen if [the refuge cities] are too far away.  
  
 7‘This is why I’m telling you to set these three cities aside!’  
  
  
 8‘And if Jehovah enlarges your borders (as He promised your ancestors that He would do), and if He gives you all the land that He said He would give to you, 9you must obey these Commandments that I’m giving to you today.  
  
 ‘[Since you must] love Jehovah your God and always walk in His ways, you must choose three cities within your borders, 10so that the blood of those who are innocent won’t be spilled in the land that Jehovah your God is giving to you as your inheritance, and none of you will ever be found guilty of [spilling innocent] blood.’  
  
  
 11‘However, if someone truly hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him, then sneaks up and kills him, and he thereafter flees to one of these cities, 12the local elders must hand him over to the blood avenger, who must kill him.  
  
 13‘Don’t feel sorry for him, because you must cleanse the [spilled] innocent blood from IsraEl, so that things may go well for you.’  
  
  
 14‘Also, don’t move your neighbor’s property markers that were set by your ancestors as their inheritance… Those who’ll be assigned to you in the land that Jehovah your God is giving to you as your inheritance.’  
  
  
 15‘In addition:  
  
 ‘The testimony of a single witness may never be used against a person for any sins that he may commit… It requires two or three witnesses to prove anything.’  
  
  
 16‘And if someone brings a charge against a person [that can’t be proven], 17both people in the controversy must stand before Jehovah and before the priests or judges in those days.  
  
 18‘Then the judges must seriously investigate the matter to see if the person has brought a false charge against his brother... 19And if he has – you must do the same wicked thing that he wanted to do to his brother, to him!  
  
 ‘You must remove the evil from among yourselves, 20so that the rest will hear about it and be afraid to do such bad things among you.  
  
 21‘Don’t forgive this person…  
  
 ‘It must be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, and foot for foot!’