### Numbers

## Chapter 35

1Then the Lord spoke to Moses by the JorDan River near JeriCho (west of MoAb) and said:  
  
 2‘Now, give orders to the children of IsraEl and tell them that they must allot cities for the Levites to live in and own. They must provide them with suburbs around their cities to live in, 3which have pens for their cattle and all their animals.  
  
 4‘These suburbs that they are to give to the Levites must run out and around their city walls for 3,000 feet (914m). 5So, they must measure out:  
  
 • 3,000 feet (914m) on the east side,  
 • 3,000 feet (914m) on the south side,  
 • 3,000 feet (914m) on the west side, and  
 • 3,000 feet (914m) on the north side...  
  
 ‘...and their cities must be in the center.  
  
  
 6‘They must also give the Levites 6 refuge cities, which will become havens for those who kill someone [accidentally]. In addition, they must provide them 42 more cities.  
  
 7‘So altogether, they must give the Levites 48 cities, in addition to their suburbs.  
  
 8‘[As to the size and location] of these cities that the children of IsraEl are to give them; those who have much must give much, and those who have less may give less... But all [the tribes] must give some of the cities that they’re going to inherit to the Levites.’  
  
  
9Then the Lord spoke to Moses and said:  
  
 10‘Speak to the children of IsraEl and tell them that when they cross the JorDan into the land of CanaAn, 11they must assign refuge cities to which those who accidentally kill someone may run.  
  
 12‘These cities must be havens of refuge from those who would avenge the blood [of the one who was killed]. And there, no killer may be executed before he stands trial in a court.  
  
 13‘There must be six of these cities that you are to set aside as places of refuge:  
  
 • 14Three on the east side of the JorDan, and  
 • Three in the land of CanaAn.  
  
 15‘They must serve as places of refuge for the children of IsraEl, for aliens, and for those who are just visiting in your land. These cities must be places of refuge where anyone may run who’s killed a man unintentionally.  
  
 16‘However, if [a man] strikes [and kills a person] with something that’s made of iron, the man must die, for he is a murderer and all murderers must be put to death! 17And if he throws a rock in an attempt to kill him and the person dies, he’s a murderer and all murderers must be put to death. 18And if he hits him with a wooden instrument that he’s holding in his hands and kills him, he’s a murderer and all murderers must be put to death.  
  
 19‘Those who would avenge the blood [of the one who was killed] must execute the murderer… When they catch him, they must kill him!  
  
 20‘If someone is angry and stabs another, or throws something at him from ambush, 21or if he beats him in anger and the man dies; the one who struck him must be put to death, for he is a murderer. The blood avenger must absolutely kill the murderer when he finds him.  
  
 22‘However, if someone is accidentally stabbed (where no anger is involved), or something hits him (other than from ambush), 23or he’s accidentally hit with a rock and he dies when no enemy was looking to harm him... 24Then the court must use these rules to judge between the one who did the striking and the blood avenger.  
  
 25‘And [if he’s found innocent], the gathering must save the slayer from the blood avenger and allow him to stay in the refuge city that he ran to. And he must live there until the High Priest (the one who was anointed with the holy oil) dies.  
  
 26‘But if the person who did the killing should ever leave the city that he ran to for refuge, 27and the blood avenger should find him outside the refuge-city limits, and the blood-avenger kills him, he has done no wrong.  
  
 28‘For the man should have stayed in the refuge city until the High Priest died. Only after the death of the High Priest may the slayer return to his homeland.  
  
  
 29‘These are the rules of judgment that are to be used throughout all your generations and wherever you live. 30You must execute someone as a murderer whenever there’s enough evidence. But, one piece of evidence against a person isn’t enough to have him put to death.  
  
  
 31‘Also, you may not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer who has been condemned to death… He absolutely must die. 32And you may not accept a ransom to keep a man from having to stay in a refuge city and live there until the death of the High Priest.  
  
 33‘So, you must not pollute the land that you live in with murder, because blood pollutes the land. And the only way that the land may be purged of shed blood is with the blood of the one who shed it.  
  
 34‘You must not dirty the land where you’re living and where I’m living among you!  
  
 ‘For I am Jehovah, who dwells in the midst of the children of IsraEl.’