

Deuteronomy19

#Cities of Refuge

19 When the Lord your God has destroyed the nations whose land he is giving you, and when you have driven them out and settled in their towns and houses,

2 then set aside for yourselves three cities in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess.

3 Determine the distances involved and divide into three parts the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, so that a person who kills someone may flee for refuge to one of these cities.

4 This is the rule concerning anyone who kills a person and flees there for safety—anyone who kills a neighbor unintentionally, without malice aforethought.

5 For instance, a man may go into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and as he swings his ax to fell a tree, the head may fly off and hit his neighbor and kill him. That man may flee to one of these cities and save his life.

6 Otherwise, the avenger of blood might pursue him in a rage, overtake him if the distance is too great, and kill him even though he is not deserving of death, since he did it to his neighbor without malice aforethought.

7 This is why I command you to set aside for yourselves three cities.

8 If the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as he promised on oath to your ancestors, and gives you the whole land he promised them,

9 because you carefully follow all these laws I command you today—to love the Lord your God and to walk always in obedience to him—then you are to set aside three more cities.

10 Do this so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which the Lord your God is giving you as your inheritance, and so that you will not be guilty of bloodshed.

11 But if out of hate someone lies in wait, assaults and kills a neighbor, and then flees to one of these cities,

12 the killer shall be sent for by the town elders, be brought back from the city, and be handed over to the avenger of blood to die.

13 Show no pity. You must purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent blood, so that it may go well with you.

14 Do not move your neighbor's boundary stone set up by your predecessors in the inheritance you receive in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess.

#Witnesses

15 One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

16 If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse someone of a crime,

17 the two people involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the Lord before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time.

18 The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against a fellow Israelite,

19 then do to the false witness as that witness intended to do to the other party. You must purge the evil from among you.

20 The rest of the people will hear of this and be afraid, and never again will such an evil thing be done among you.

21 Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.