

Avenger and Redeemer (Slide 1)
Numbers 35

Reading: Numbers 35:9-34

God, speaking to Moses, divided up the land of **Canaan** the redeemed Nation of Israel on the other side of the **Jordan** into cities. In the beginning of **Numbers 35**, we see that He designates that certain cities will be for the **Levites** and outlines the parameters of those cities based on the size of the tribe.

The rest of the Chapter is reserved for what He calls the *“Six Cities of Refuge.”*

Numbers 35:6 (Slide 2)

“Now among the cities which you will give to the Levites you shall appoint six cities of refuge, to which a manslayer may flee.”

When they crossed over the River Jordan to the Canaan land they were to ***“appoint six cities of refuge”*** that were spread out so that all may have access to them. Whether a stranger or an Israelite.

In verses 9-15, He outlines the purpose of these cities. They were to be places of safety in the event someone accidentally kills someone else.

At the time of the Lord's instruction they were observing what He commanded in:

Genesis 9:6 (Slide 3)

"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man."

That one who would seek justice is called the **"avenger."** The *next of kin* who was to carry out the Lord's judgement.

It seems plausible/ logical that if the one who had accidentally killed someone doesn't reach the **city of refuge**/ safety.....caught in the open they could be killed by the **avenger**.

So it was important for the **manslayer** to reach the **city of refuge** and to stay in the city until he is cleared of any wrong doing and until the priest of that city dies.

Otherwise, the land of which God dwells with the Israelites will be defiled. It is defiled because men fail to meet the mandates set up by God in regards to justice.

This is also a significant role of the **avenger**, to prevent the land from being defiled. If it is determined that capital punishment is in order, he must be the one to avenge the death.

This correlates with the fact that Jesus will sit in the judgement seat on that great day! It is only right that He will be the **redeemer** and the **avenger**:

John 5:22 (Slide 4)

For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son

The triumph of Jesus over death and the grave as depicted in the facts of the Gospel, are fully brought to life in the imagery of **Revelation 19**:

Revelation 19:11-16 (Slide 5)

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. (Slide 6) ***13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in***

heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. (Slide 7) And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

(Slide 8)

***KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.***

The striking of these nations is what **John** was a witness to as a testimony against those who oppressed Christianity. These were the things that would come shortly.

It is in answer of:

Revelation 6:10 (Slide 9)

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" And that is what happened to those nations that had as their mantra, "There is no God!"

Psalm 14:1a

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

In the symbolic messaging of Revelation 19: Jesus is both avenger and redeemer. There is no reason to believe that His purpose has changed for the coming day of judgement.

The shedding of blood for justification and redemption has always been significant in the eyes of God:

Hebrews 9:22 (Slide 10)

And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

In **Numbers 35**, part of the process has also included the need to investigate and determine if the offense is worthy of capital punishment. When one has accidentally killed someone else, that individual is given a fair trial.

God also outlines what constitutes murder in **Numbers 35**. In this case, one is also given the opportunity to utilize the **city of refuge** until it is determined by at least 2 witnesses that he is guilty of murder. If so, the **avenger** will proceed to meet God's justice by shedding his blood.

The shedding of blood in both instances corresponds with justice and redemption.

It's interesting that the Hebrew word for "**avenger**" is translated just about everywhere else as "**redeemer.**" I believe it is no accident that early on in the Holy Scripture that God is teaching all who would read and understand the Holy Bible that God has dual roles.

There are many people who argue the points of **Numbers 35** from the standpoint of different rules for a civil society. Yet, I personally believe the rules God outlines in **Numbers 35** are the *true mark of a civil society*.

We can certainly see the result of a relaxed attitude toward God's true meaning of Justice in our own society.

However, I don't want to make that a point of our discussion today. I would rather focus on being in the *Biblical, Spiritual City of Refuge* as a *Christian*. This city is a place of redemption.

Colossians 1:19-20 (Slide 11)

19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

*Rightfully so, Jesus is the **avenger**. Yet, His blood shed on the cross was offered to bring peace between God and those who once were enemies because of our sin.*

Colossian 1:21-23 (Slide 12)

21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— (Slide 13) 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Through Christ, we are looking for a **City of Refuge** that is governed from above. It isn't determined by a geographical location on a map or *GPS*. It is a city not made with hands but by the Spiritual power of God.

Those who are outside this City are in danger of falling into the hands of the "just" **avenger**!!

We also are looking toward a City where our High Priest will never die. A place we can dwell forever and ever.

We have been *avenged* and *redeemed* at the same time by the blood of Christ.

Colossians 2:11-15 (Slide 14)

11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, (Slide 15) who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements (Slide 16) that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

This is a City of which we can enter now! Through baptism we enter that City. It is a matter of life and death that we make a commitment to stay in that City!

Outside of that City, the avenger can claim us but inside we have redemption/ safety:

Revelation 22:12-13 (Slide 17)

12 “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

Be prepared!

5 **wise virgins** were prepared to meet the **Bridegroom**, 5 **Foolish virgins** thought they were prepared but in reality took no action for their own salvation. They had the same opportunity, same ability, heard the same message but they lacked faith!

The **Bridegroom** was delayed, yet, I believe the 5 **wise virgins** not only had filled their lamps with oil, prepared to meet the **Bridegroom**, the **redeemer**, while they slept, one hand held the lamp handle and the other had taken hold of the additional oil they would need.

The 5 **foolish virgins** did neither. When they realized that it was too late, they wanted someone else to “**work out their salvation**” for them. In reality they became spectators rather than participants.

When the 5 wise “could not” help them, the foolish ones left to search for more oil. While they were gone, the “**redeemer**” came and took those who were prepared. At

the same time, He left those who didn't take the situation seriously to the rightful just hands of the **avenger**! The door was shut forever and ever.

I am going to a City

I am going to a city,

Where the streets with gold are laid,

Where the tree of life is blooming,

And the roses never fade.

Here they bloom but for a season;

Soon their beauty is decayed.

I am going to a city,

Where the roses never fade.

In this world we have our troubles,

Satan snares we must evade.

We'll be free from all temptations,

Where the roses never fade.

Invitation

*If you are not on the road to that ultimate **city of refuge**, then you must be on the alert for the **avenger**. Today, I*

encourage you to get prepared, be baptized today before the **Bridegroom** returns. Don't wait, don't delay!

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God!

If you are already a citizen of His Kingdom but have a need for prayer, please let us know and we will lift your petition up to the only true God.

Please let us know how we may serve you this day.....

Reading

Numbers 35:9-34

9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11 then you shall appoint cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person accidentally may flee there. 12 They shall be cities of refuge for you from the avenger, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the congregation in judgment. 13 And of the cities which you give, you shall have six cities of refuge. 14 You shall appoint three cities on this side of the Jordan, and three cities you shall appoint in the land of Canaan, which will be cities of refuge. 15 These six cities shall be for refuge for the children of Israel, for the stranger, and for the sojourner

among them, that anyone who kills a person accidentally may flee there.

16 'But if he strikes him with an iron implement, so that he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17 And if he strikes him with a stone in the hand, by which one could die, and he does die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18 Or if he strikes him with a wooden hand weapon, by which one could die, and he does die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 19 The avenger of blood himself shall put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death. 20 If he pushes him out of hatred or, while lying in wait, hurls something at him so that he dies, 21 or in enmity he strikes him with his hand so that he dies, the one who struck him shall surely be put to death. He is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

22 'However, if he pushes him suddenly without enmity, or throws anything at him without lying in wait, 23 or uses a stone, by which a man could die, throwing it at him without seeing him, so that he dies, while he was not his enemy or seeking his harm, 24 then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood according to these judgments. 25 So the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and

the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled, and he shall remain there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. 26 But if the manslayer at any time goes outside the limits of the city of refuge where he fled, 27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the limits of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood, 28 because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession.

29 'And these things shall be a statute of judgment to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 30 Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty. 31 Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. 32 And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. 33 So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. 34 Therefore do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the

midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.' ”

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