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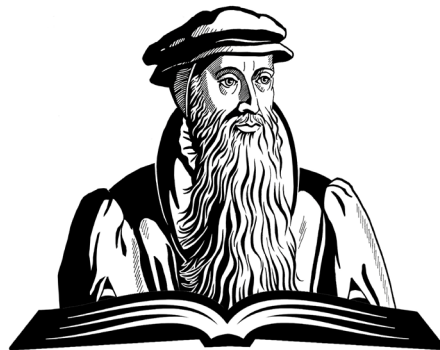
**BIBLE FOR
6TH GRADE STUDENTS**

Old Testament

Lesson 43:

Cities of Refuge

Lecture Presenter: Mr. Daniel Van Brugge



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

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Module

BIBLE FOR 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

Old Testament

45 LESSONS

(Additional lessons forthcoming)

Mr. Daniel Van Brugge

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| 01. The Bible: The Word of God | 25. Joseph Raised out of Prison |
| 02. Creation: The Work of an Almighty God | 26. Joseph and His Brethren |
| 03. Man: A Special Place in God's Creation | 27. Jacob Comes to Joseph |
| 04. A Gracious Promise | 28. God Heard Their Cry |
| 05. Cain and Abel | 29. Moses and the Burning Bush |
| 06. Only Noah Found Grace | 30. Let My People God |
| 07. The Coming Judgment –A Way of Escape | 31. Deliverance |
| 08. The Noahic Covenant | 32. God's Patience with a Complaining People |
| 09. The Tower of Babel | 33. Keeping the Law: Not to Merit but to Show
Thankfulness |
| 10. Abram: Called by God | 34. The Lord Dwells Among His People |
| 11. Abram Intercedes for Lot | 35. A Priest for the People |
| 12. Melchizadek | 36. Moses Intercedes for a Rebellious People |
| 13. Righteous by Faith | 37. Worshiping God Rightly |
| 14. Two Sons | 38. Walk Not According to the World |
| 15. Lessons from Lot's Life | 39. Hearts of Ingratitude |
| 16. Faithless Abraham – Faithful God | 40. Aaron's Rod Blossoming |
| 17. Abraham Tested – God's Provision | 41. The Serpent of Brass Lifted Up |
| 18. Isaac and Rebekah | 42. Phinehas: Turning Away God's Wrath |
| 19. Jacob: A Better Desire than Esau | 43. Cities of Refuge |
| 20. Jacob the Deceiver | 44. A New Generation |
| 21. God Preserves Jacob | 45. Moses' Last Days |
| 22. Jacob Returns to Beth-el | |
| 23. Joseph Loved – Joseph Hated | |
| 24. An Eye upon God | |

Lesson 43

Cities of Refuge

Numbers 32–36

Memory Verse

“Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person unawares. And 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 35:11–12

Cities of Refuge

The forty years in the wilderness is almost accomplished. The children of Israel would soon cross into the land of Canaan—the land of promise. In preparation for the day that was fast approaching, God tells them that there are to be six cities that will be cities of refuge. These cities are a manifestation of God’s goodness.

Why the Cities were Necessary

Created in the image of God, the life of man is precious. Jesus himself asked the question, “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). Man is of more value than the whole world. Therefore, to murder a man is to destroy something of great value. Murdering a man is an attack on the image of God.

Because murder was such a terrible crime, God declared “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man” (Genesis 9:6). According to the word of the Lord, the just punishment for a murder was death. During the Old Testament period, when a person was murdered, a close family member was to slay the murderer. But what if the murder was not intentional? Was there no place of safety for him? God, in his mercy, to protect those who killed a man unintentionally, told Israel to set up cities of refuge. A city of refuge was a place of safety, a place where one could escape the avenger of blood (Numbers 35:19).

Why Six Cities?

The goodness of God is magnified in this, that there was not one city of refuge, but six. As the Israelites conquered the land, they would be spread out far and wide. To appoint one place would have meant a great distance for some. How difficult it would have been to reach that one city.

However, in mercy, God has six cities set apart—three on each side of the Jordan. The cities were located on both sides of the Jordan River.

Cities of Refuge: A Type of Christ

The cities of refuge must have been a relief to those who were accused of murder but did not kill a person, or had killed a person accidentally. Remember, one who was indeed a murderer could not escape the punishment by entering the city. Here, however, the man who killed accidentally, would find refuge. Once having entered the city, he could not just leave. He had to stay in the city until the high priest died. Once the high priest died, he was free. Free to return to his own home.

All mankind has sinned. No one is excluded from this truth. The “wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Like the man who was pursued by the avenger of blood, we may ask, “What am I to do? How can I escape?” God in his mercy has made a place of refuge from his wrath and hot displeasure. The refuge is not to be found in a city, but in a person—Jesus Christ. One does not come to Christ by walking many miles, but by believing. “Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:29–31).

According to the book of Numbers, the man had to remain in the city until the death of the high priest. If he left the city before that time, the avenger of blood could still overtake him. Jesus Christ is the great High Priest. He has paid the price for sin, one time for all time. In him, his people are secure—eternally secure: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

Christ is the greater refuge. A refuge from all our sins. If a man being pursued for murder made it to a city of refuge, it was not absolutely guaranteed that he would live. If he had indeed killed out of enmity, he would not have found refuge. Christ, however, turns none away that come with a broken heart and a contrite spirit (Psalm 51:17), none who repent and believe. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sins—sins in thought, word and deed.

Questions

Numbers 32

1. Noticing that the land on the east side of Jordan was good for cattle, the children of _____ and _____ requested that they stay on the east side and not cross the Jordan.

2. What did the Israelites, who desired to stay on the east side of Jordan, promise to do before they received the land? _____

Numbers 33

3. When the Israelites went into Jordan to possess the land they were to destroy all of the following, except:
- a. Their pictures
 - b. Their molten images
 - c. Their high places
 - d. Their crops

Numbers 35

4. The six cities of refuge were to be among the:
- a. Gadites
 - b. Levites
 - c. Reubenites
 - d. Benjamites
5. The Levites were to receive _____ cities.
- a. Six
 - b. Twelve
 - c. Twenty-four
 - d. Forty-eight
6. After the Israelites crossed the Jordan to possess the land, they were to establish cities of refuge on both sides of the Jordan. Which statement best reflects the positioning of those cities of refuge, in relationship to the Jordan River?
- a. 1 on the east side – 5 on the west side
 - b. 3 on the east side – 3 on the west side
 - c. 0 on the east side – 6 on the west side
 - d. 5 on the east side – 1 on the west side
7. Read Numbers 35:20 and 35:22. What lies at the root of an intentional act of murder as opposed to an accidental killing?

Discussions

1. Paul, in Galatians 3:28, makes the following statement concerning the church—“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Reflecting upon Paul’s statement concerning the body of the church, discuss the similarity between his statement and what is written in Numbers 33:54—“And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man’s inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit.”

2. In Numbers 33:55, we read: “But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.” How may this instruction apply in the life of a Christian?

3. Discuss why all killing is not murder. Consider Numbers 35:22–24 and Genesis 9:6.

4. The psalmist writes, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1) Thinking about this verse, show how the cities of refuge pointed to that greater refuge, Jesus Christ.
