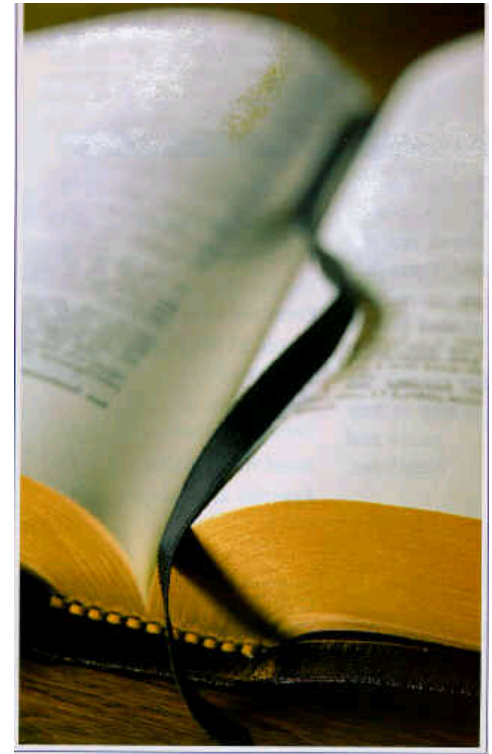


# The Cities of Refuge

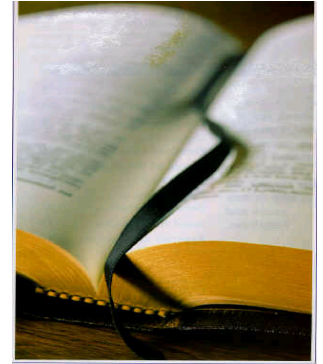
**Bible Basics Conference**

*12-13. November 2015*

Michael Hardt



# Joshua 20



Jos 20:1 And Jehovah spoke to Joshua, saying,

Jos 20:2 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint for yourselves the cities of refuge, whereof I spoke unto you through Moses,

Jos 20:3 that the slayer who unwittingly without intent smiteth any one mortally may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

# The Concept

Distinction  
between man  
slayer and  
murderer

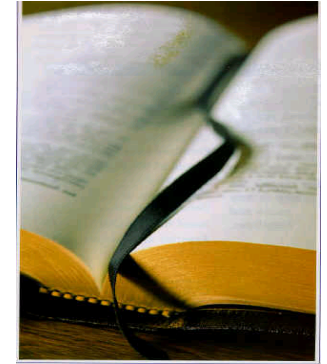
Protection for  
the man  
slayer

Token of  
God's grace



# The locations





## Verse 2: ‘whereof I spoke unto you through Moses’

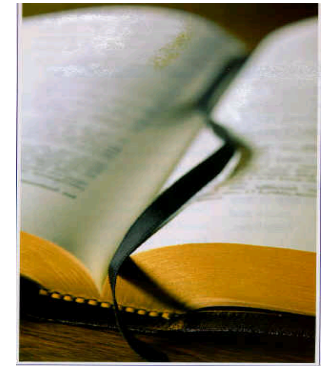
- This is an allusion to:
  - Exodus 21:13
  - Numbers 35
  - Deuteronomy 19

He that striketh a man, so that he die, shall certainly be put to death. But if he have not lain in wait,... I will appoint thee a place to which he shall flee. Exo 21:13

- Surprising at first sight: God deals with this subject in great detail – in 3 chapters.

**WHY?**

# Why?



## Three important reasons (in ascending order):

1. Tells us something about God's character (grace, mercy)
2. Illustrates our salvation (parallel and contrast)
3. A prophetic picture
  - Christ was slain
  - It was done with intent
  - But God finds a way to offer refuge to the Jewish people.

Explain different emphasis of each chapter

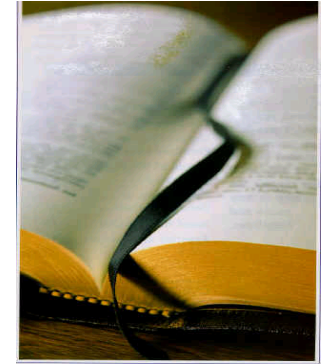
# Joshua 20:3

...that the slayer who **unwittingly without intent** smiteth any one mortally may **flee** thither: and they [the cities] shall be your **refuge** from the **avenger of blood**.

## Example:

“...someone goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and his hand swings the axe to cut down a tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbour so that he dies—he may flee to one of these cities and live...” (Deut. 19:5, ESV)





# The Avenger

“and they shall be your **refuge** from the **avenger of blood.**”

GOEL: Redeemer or Avenger?

- Leviticus 25: an impoverished Israelite could be **redeemed**
- Numbers 35: a murdered man could be **avenged**
  
- What do the two have in common?
- In both cases the GOEL was the closest relative (**‘next of kin’**)

## Pause for thought:

We had become guilty and God would have had to judge us, to be the **Avenger**.

But in Christ He became the **Redeemer**.



# Joshua 20

**Jos 20:4** And he shall flee unto one of those cities and stand at the entrance of the **city-gate**, and shall declare his matter in the ears of the elders of that city; and they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may **dwell among them**.

**Jos 20:5** And if the **avenger of blood** pursue after him, they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; for he smote his neighbour **unwittingly**, and **hated him not** previously.



## Gospel application:

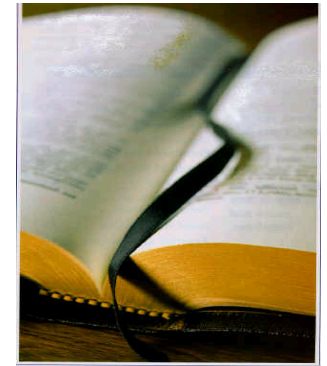
- All men are man slayers / guilty
- But God offers a city of refuge
- The question is ‘have you fled, or are you exposed to the avenger?’

“To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts”

Heb. 4:7

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation!

Heb 2:3



# Joshua 20

- ...but there must be more to it.
- Some details cannot be explained by the Gospel application

## Until the death of the High Priest

Jos 20:6 And he shall dwell in that city, until he have stood before the assembly in judgment, **until the death of the high-priest** that shall be in those days; **then** shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

The **city** gave refuge.

The **death** of the High Priest gave liberty.



## Until the death of the High Priest

To see the significance we must understand the 'prophetic' meaning:

1. Christ = the man slain
2. Jews = the man slayer
3. The Jews had done this with intent
4. But God opened the city of refuge to them
5. They are now in the city of refuge
6. They are still waiting to receive their liberty and inheritance
7. This they will receive, on the basis of the death of Christ (the High Priest).



## Until the death of the High Priest

1. Christ = the man slain
2. Jews = the man slayer

**Act\_2:23** --him, given up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, **ye**, by *the* hand of lawless *men* , **have** crucified and **slain**.

**Act\_5:30** The God of our fathers has raised up Jesus, whom **\*ye\* have slain**, having hanged on a cross.

### Note:

The other nations are all guilty as well. But much of the OT is concerned with Israel and Christ.



## Until the death of the High Priest

3. The Jews had done this with intent

How can you prove intent?

Num 35:16 And if he have smitten him **with an instrument of iron**...

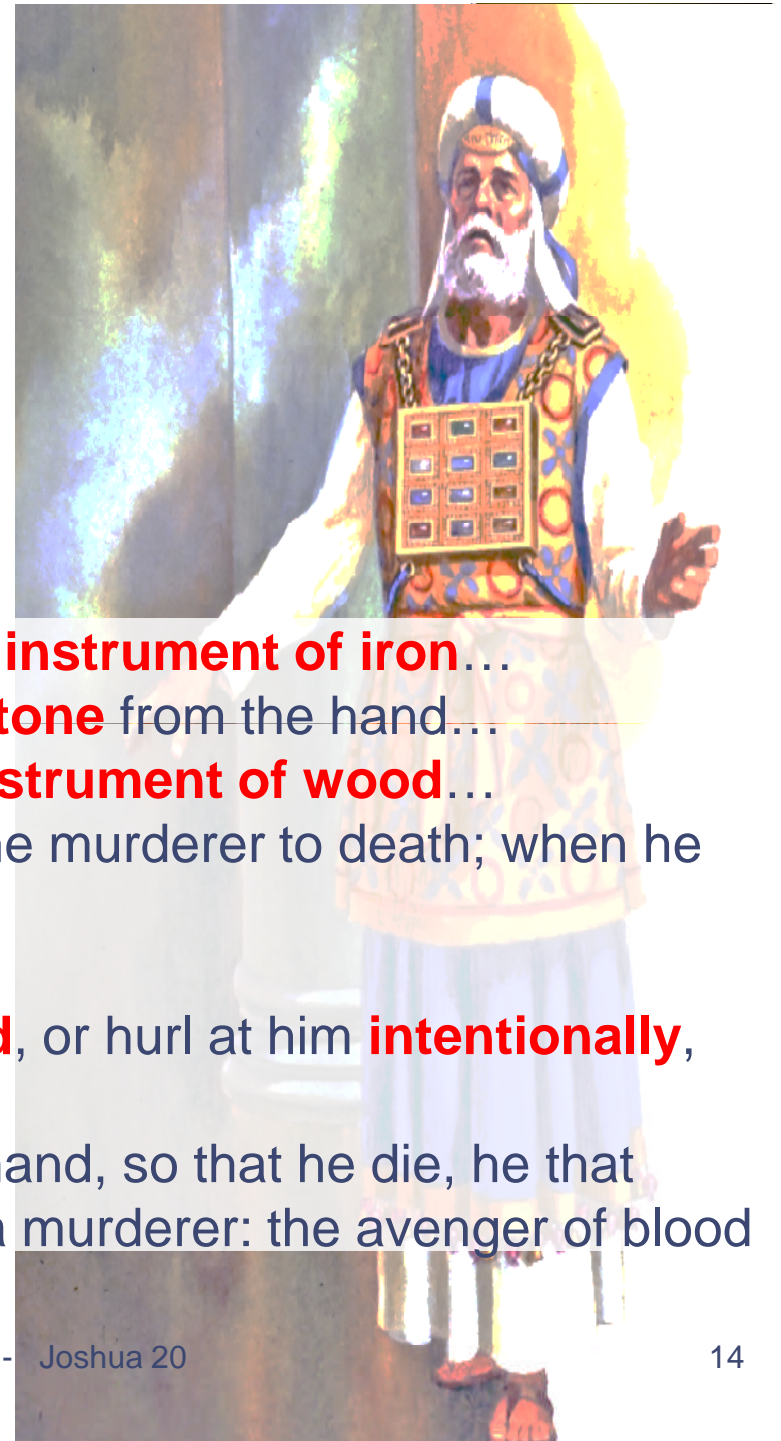
Num 35:17 And if he have smitten him **with a stone** from the hand...

Num 35:18 Or if he have smitten him with an **instrument of wood**...

Num 35:19 the avenger of blood, he shall put the murderer to death; when he meeteth him, he shall put him to death.

Num 35:20 And if he thrust at him **out of hatred**, or hurl at him **intentionally**, so that he die,

Num 35:21 or **from enmity** smite him with his hand, so that he die, he that smote him shall certainly be put to death; he is a murderer: the avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death --





## Until the death of the High Priest

3. The Jews had done this with intent

Num.35	New Testament
instrument of iron	... in his hands the mark of the nails... (Jn 20:25) him, ye have crucified [Gr 'fastened'] Acts 2:23
with a stone	They took up therefore stones that they might cast <i>them</i> at him... The Jews therefore again took stones that they might stone him. Jn. 8:59; 10:31
instrument of wood	him, ye have crucified Acts 2:23
out of hatred	But his citizens hated him... (Luke 19:14) They hated me without a cause (Jn. 15:25)
intentionally	From that day therefore they took counsel that they might kill him. (Joh 11:53)

## Until the death of the High Priest

### 4. But God opened the city of refuge to them

Heb. 6:19

who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us,

- Hebrews was written to Christians of Jewish background
- They understood the allusion
- They had 'fled for refuge'

Acts 3:15

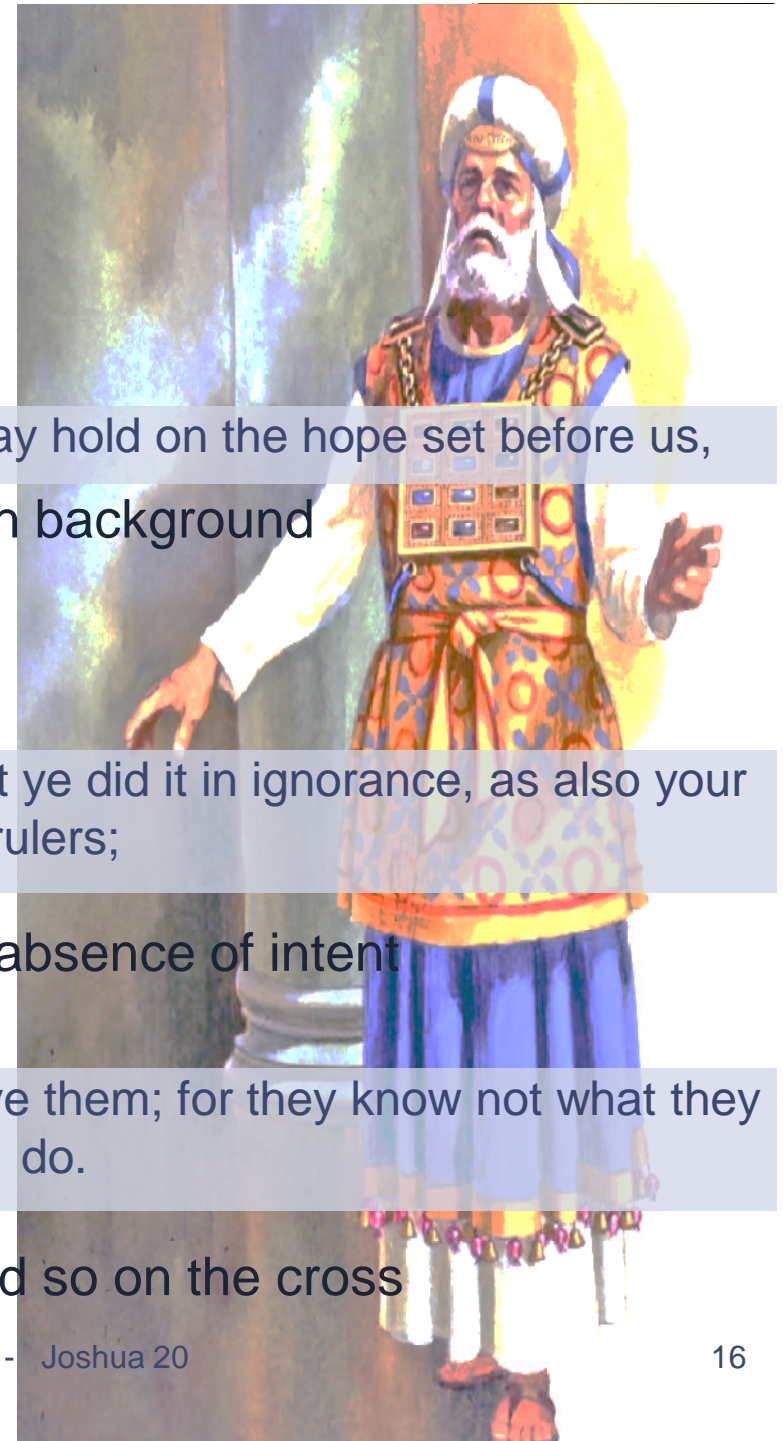
And now, brethren, I know that ye did it in ignorance, as also your rulers;

- Peter credits the Jews with ignorance and absence of intent

Luk 23:34

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

- He could do this, because the Lord had said so on the cross





## Until the death of the High Priest

5. They are now in the city of refuge
6. They are still waiting to receive their liberty and inheritance

Act 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

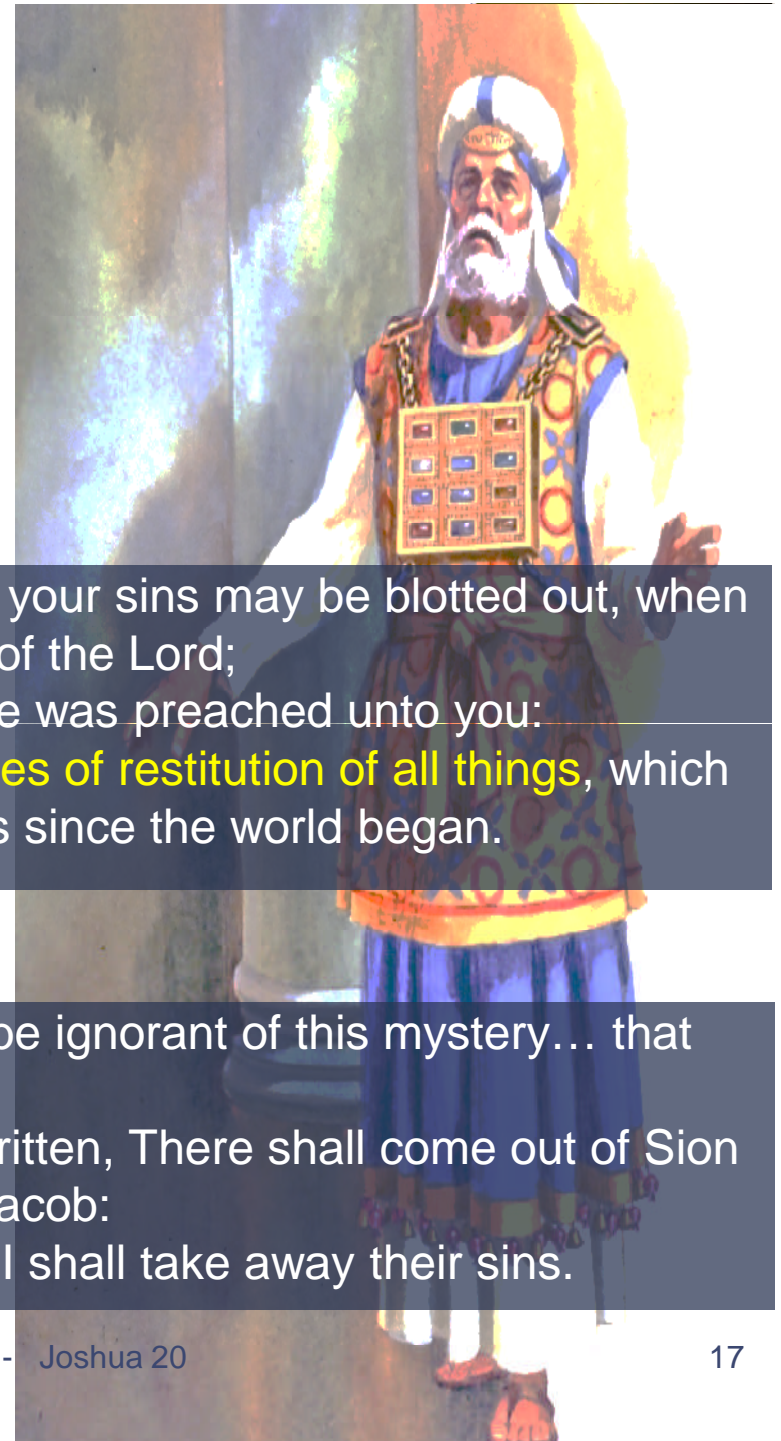
Act 3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

Act 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive **until the times of restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Rom 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery... that blindness in part is happened to Israel.

Rom 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Rom 11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.



## Until the death of the High Priest

7. This they will receive, on the basis of the death of Christ (the High Priest).

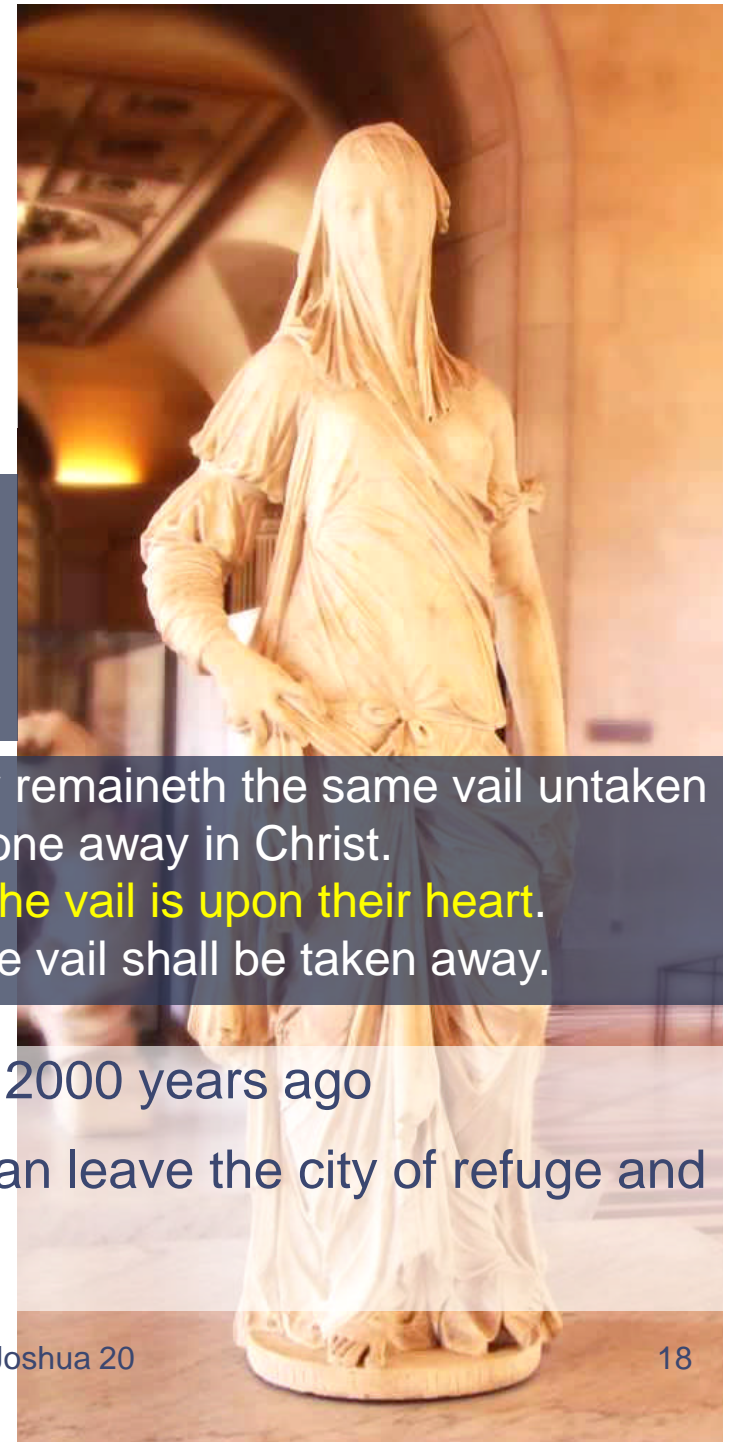
Zec 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,

2Co 3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

2Co 3:15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, **the vail is upon their heart.**

2Co 3:16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

- The death of the High Priest occurred around 2000 years ago
- Once they accept this and receive Him they can leave the city of refuge and receive their inheritance.



# Joshua 20

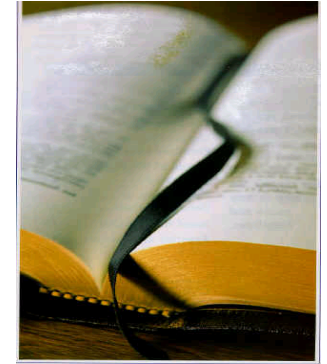
Jos 20:7 And they hallowed

- **Kedesh** in Galilee in the hill-country of Naphtali, and
- **Shechem** in the hill-country of Ephraim, and
- **Kirjath-Arba**, that is, Hebron, in the hill-country of Judah.

Jos 20:8 And beyond the Jordan from Jericho eastward, they assigned

- **Bezer** in the wilderness, in the plateau, out of the tribe of Reuben, and
- **Ramoth** in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and
- **Golan** in Bashan of the tribe of Manasseh.





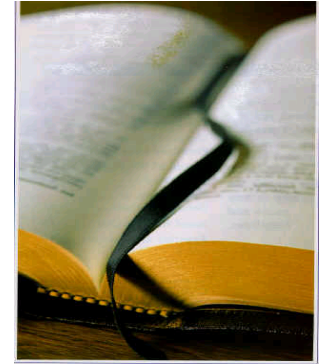
# Joshua 20: the names and their meaning

- In Joshua (only) we are told the names of the six cities of refuge
- These names are suggestive of many aspects of cities of refuge.

City of Refuge	Meaning
<b>Kedesh</b>	Sanctum / holy place
<b>Shechem</b>	Ridge
<b>Kirjath-Arba = Hebron</b>	City of four (giants), Communion
<b>Bezer</b>	Inaccessible
<b>Ramoth</b>	heights
<b>Golan</b>	captive



# Joshua 20



**Jos 20:9** These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever smiteth any one mortally without intent might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the assembly.