

The Hebrew word (ga'al) translated "avenger" in Joshua 20:3 is translated "redeemer" or "kinsman" in other contexts such as Lev. 25 and Ruth 3-4.

Joshua 20 – 22

Levitical Cities; Tribes Return

Legal Sanctuary Cities

- Six cities throughout territory
- Protection from avenger of blood
 - For manslayer, not murderer
 - Contingent on results of trial
 - Details in Num. 35:6-34; Deu. 19:1-13
- Convicted murderer will be executed
- Manslayer must stay inside city limit
- After death of high priest, the manslayer's record is clear; he is set free
 - Precursor to Hebrews 7:26-27



Levitical Cities

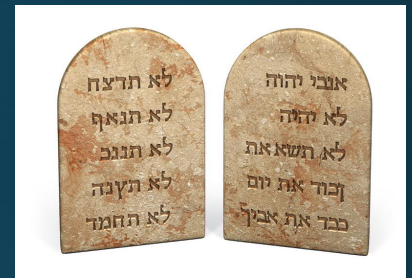
- First prescribed in Num. 35:1-5
- No tribal land; cities with surrounding pasture land were their inheritance
- Levites were not the only residents
- Each division of Levites received cities from a group of tribes
- 48 cities in all
- Similar list in I Chr. 6:54-81, with some variations



Thank You for Your Service (22:1-9)

- You have not forsaken brothers
- You have followed Moses and me
- Be very careful to...
- You may return to your land across Jordan
- Divide the spoil with your brothers
 - Only 40,000 of 110,000 had gone to help the main conquest (compare Josh. 4:13 to Num. 26:7, 18, 34)

Do
Walk
Keep



Love
Cleave
Serve



Altared Landscape (22:10-20)

- Trans-Jordan tribes build a replica altar along the Jordan
- Other tribes are ready to go to war over this. Why?
- Potential violation of centralized worship (Deu. 12:4-14)
- Potentially an altar of idolatrous worship (Deu. 13:12-16)
 - Punishable by death & destruction
- It was on “our” side of Jordan
- Delegation is sent with Phinehas to investigate
- Main concern: iniquity of a few will bring God’s wrath on all

Altar Ego (22:21-29)

- God called as witness of their sincerity (v. 22, 23, 29)
- This was a symbolic altar, not a functional one
 - We know there is only one legitimate place of worship
- Main concern: in time, we will be viewed as illegitimate because we are not in the actual promised land
- This altar will remind us of our rights to (and responsibilities to) the true altar before the Tabernacle

Altared Outcome (22:30-34)

- Phinehas and delegation accepts their explanation
- Western tribes accept delegation's report
- War is averted
 - Altar is presumably allowed to stand
- Lessons from this story
 - Admirable zeal for scriptural worship of Jehovah
 - Don't act rashly on assumptions or gossip; investigate
 - The calm, reasoned response to accusations (Prov. 15:1)
 - Willingness to change position, acquiesce