

# Deuteronomy 19:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee.

## Analysis

**That innocent blood be not shed in thy land** (וְלَا יִשְׁפַּךְ דָם נָקִי בְּקָרְבָּ אֶרְצֶךָ), velo yishafech dam naki bekerev artzecha)—dam naki (innocent blood) refers both to murder victims and to manslayers wrongly killed by vengeance. Shafach (shed, poured out) emphasizes the gravity of bloodshed, which defiles the land.

**Which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee**—corporate guilt for innocent blood pollutes the entire community. Numbers 35:33 states, 'Blood defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.' The cities of refuge prevent two kinds of blood-guilt:

1. unpunished murder,
2. killing the innocent manslayer.

God's justice system protects both victim's rights and accused's rights, maintaining the land's sanctity. This principle underlies Jesus's warning about Jerusalem's blood-guilt (Matthew 23:35) and the crowd's terrible cry, 'His blood be on us, and on our children' (Matthew 27:25).

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern cultures recognized that innocent blood cried out for vengeance and polluted the land (Genesis 4:10). Israel's system was unique in providing institutional protection for the accidental killer while still maintaining justice for murder. The land theology—that Canaan was God's gift requiring holiness—meant bloodshed had spiritual consequences beyond individual guilt. This explains passages like Deuteronomy 21:1-9, where an unsolved murder requires communal atonement ritual. The principle that land is defiled by violence and injustice appears throughout Scripture.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does the concept of corporate responsibility for injustice challenge modern individualism?
2. In what ways does Christ's shed blood cleanse the guilt that innocent blood brings upon humanity?

## Interlinear Text

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אֲשֶׁר אֶרְצָב בְּקֶבֶת אֶל אֶלְעָמִים: יִשְׁפַּנְתָּךְ תְּבִנְתָּךְ בְּבָבָבְךָ בְּגַם בְּאֶרְצָב  
H3808 be not shed H8210 and so blood H1818 That innocent H5355 in H7130 thy land H776 H834  
which the LORD H3068 thy God H430 giveth H5414 thee for an inheritance H5159 H1961  
H5921 and so blood H1818

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 59:7** (Blood): Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

**Proverbs 6:17** (Blood): A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,