

# Deuteronomy 19:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee.

## Analysis

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**Wherefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt separate three cities for thee**, **על-ך אָנֹכִי מְצַבֵּ לְאָמֵר שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים תִּבְדִּיל לְךָ** al-ken anochi metzavvecha lemor shalosh arim tavdel lach)—badal (separate) means to set apart, consecrate for a specific purpose. These cities were holy in function, not in cultic sense—set apart to preserve innocent life.

The command for three cities (in Canaan proper; three more existed in Trans-Jordan, Numbers 35:14) ensured geographical accessibility. No Israelite should be more than 30 miles from refuge. Deuteronomy 19:3 commands making roads and dividing the land into districts to facilitate quick access. Talmudic tradition says signposts reading 'Refuge' marked the way. This practical infrastructure demonstrated God's concern that justice be accessible, not merely theoretical. Christ is our ultimate city of refuge—'God is our refuge and strength' (Psalm 46:1); we 'have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us' (Hebrews 6:18).

## Historical Context

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Joshua 20:7-8 identifies the six cities of refuge: Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron (western side); Bezer, Ramoth, Golan (eastern side). All were Levitical cities (Joshua 21), placing them under priestly oversight. Strategic placement ensured that anyone in Israel could reach refuge quickly. The system functioned throughout Israel's history and was still recognized in Jesus's time, though by then Roman law had superseded it.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How does the accessibility of the cities of refuge illustrate that God's mercy is readily available to all who flee to Him?
2. In what ways is Christ our ultimate 'city of refuge' from the judgment we deserve?

## Interlinear Text

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עַל	כֵּן	אָנֹכִ	מִצְבָּה	לְאַמְרָת	שְׁלֹשָׁ	עָרִים
H5921	H3651	H595	<b>Wherefore I command</b>	<b>thee saying</b>	<b>three</b>	<b>cities</b>
			H6680	H559	H7969	H5892
לְתַדְּ�ֵךְ	לְתַדְּךְ					
<b>Thou shalt separate</b>						
			H0			

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