

Joshua 20:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

Analysis

These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them—Refuge extends beyond ethnic Israel to **the stranger** (ger, גֵּר, 'sojourner/resident alien'). This inclusiveness foreshadows the gospel's universal offer. **That whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.**

The 'whosoever' principle pervades Scripture (John 3:16, Romans 10:13). God's mercy isn't tribal or ethnic but universal. The stranger received equal protection, prefiguring Gentile inclusion in Christ. The condition: coming to the refuge. Christ saves 'whosoever' believes—but they must come.

Historical Context

Including foreigners in Israel's justice system was revolutionary in the ancient Near East. Most legal codes granted rights only to citizens. This egalitarian principle reflected God's character and Israel's own history as strangers in Egypt (Exodus 22:21, 23:9).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the inclusion of 'strangers' in the refuge system reflect the gospel's universal offer?
2. What modern applications exist for treating sojourners and foreigners with equal justice?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| אֵלֶּה | הָיוּ | עָרֵי | הַמֻּעָדָה | לְכָל | בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל |
| H428 | H1961 | These were the cities | appointed | H3605 | for all the children |
| | | H5892 | H4152 | | H1121 |
| לְיִשְׂרָאֵל | וְלַגֵּר | הַגֵּר | בְּתוֹכָם | לָנוֹס | שָׁמָּה |
| of Israel | and for the stranger | that sojourneth | among | might flee | H8033 |
| H3478 | H1616 | H1481 | H8432 | H5127 | |
| כָּל | מִיֵּה | נֶפֶשׁ | בְּשֹׁגֶגָה | וְלֹא | |
| H3605 | them that whosoever killeth | any person | at unawares | H3808 | |
| | H5221 | H5315 | H7684 | | |
| יָמָם וְלַיְלָמָה | בְּיַד | גֹּאֲלָם | הַדָּם | עַד | עָמַד וְ |
| thither and not die | by the hand | of the avenger | of blood | H5704 | until he stood |
| H4191 | H3027 | H1350 | H1818 | | H5975 |
| לִפְנֵי | הָעֵדָה: | | | | |
| before | the congregation | | | | |
| H6440 | H5712 | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 35:15 (References Israel): These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither.

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