

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, גֶּר, '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

בָּתִים	לְכָל	כְּתָמָעִים	לְכָל	בְּתִים	לְכָל	בְּתִים
H428	H1961	These were the cities	H5892	appointed	H4152	H3605
						for all the children
						H1121
וְיַשְׁבָא	לִילָגָר	בְּתַחַת	מִן	לְבָנָים	בְּתַחַת	מִן
of Israel	and for the stranger	that sojourneth	among	might flee	among	H8033
H3478	H1616	H1481	H8432	H5127		H3605
כָל	מִנְחָה	בְּשִׁנְגַת	הַנִּפְשָׁת	לְאַל		
H3605	them that whosoever killeth	any person	at unawares	H3808		
	H5221	H5315	H7684			
עִמָּד	עַד	בְּפִיד	לְגַא	עַד	בְּפִיד	עִמָּד
תִּימְרוֹת	לְגַא	לְגַא	עַד	בְּפִיד	לְגַא	עִמָּד
thither and not die	by the hand	of the avenger	of blood	H5704	until he stood	
H4191	H3027	H1350	H1818		H5975	
לְפָנֶיהָ	בְּפִיד	לְגַא	עַד			
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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