

Numbers 35:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him.

Analysis

The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer (רִאֵל הַדָּם, go'el ha-dam)—the kinsman-redeemer bore responsibility to avenge murder and preserve family honor. This wasn't vigilante justice but divinely sanctioned family obligation (cf. Genesis 9:6). The go'el also redeemed property (Leviticus 25:25) and married childless widows (Ruth 3:12-13)—roles fulfilled supremely in Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer.

When he meeteth him, he shall slay him—outside the city of refuge, the murderer had no protection. Inside, even the go'el could not touch him (v.27). This spatial boundary prefigures being 'in Christ' (2 Corinthians 5:17)—within His refuge, we're safe from divine wrath; outside, we face the just penalty for sin.

Historical Context

The go'el ha-dam institution predates Mosaic law, appearing in patriarchal customs (Genesis 9:5-6). By Moses' era (1446 BC), it was codified to prevent blood feuds from spiraling into tribal warfare, channeling vengeance through legal structures while honoring family duty.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the *go'el ha-dam* (avenger of blood) typologically point to Christ as both our Redeemer and the satisfaction of divine justice?
2. What does the spatial protection of the refuge city teach about the security of those who abide 'in Christ'?

Interlinear Text

לֵגֶגֶל	מִבְּדִיל	הַוְאָה	יְמִתְפֵּה	אֵת	פָּרָץ
The revenger	of blood	him he	himself shall slay	H853	the murderer
H1350	H1818	H1931	H4191		H7523
בְּפָגָעּוֹ	וְבָרֵבּוֹ	הַוְאָה	יְמִתְפֵּה		
when he meeteth	H0	him he	himself shall slay		
H6293		H1931	H4191		

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 19:12 (Blood): Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.

Deuteronomy 19:6 (Blood): Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.

Joshua 20:5 (Blood): And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

Joshua 20:3 (Blood): That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

Numbers 35:21 (Blood): Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him.

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