

# Numbers 35:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait,

## Analysis

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**But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity**—the pivotal 'but' (v'im, 'and if') transitions from murder (vv.16-21) to manslaughter. **Suddenly** (בְּפֶתָא, b'feta) means 'unexpectedly, in an instant'—no premeditation, no prior hostility. **Without enmity** (בְּלֹא עִיבָה, b'lo eivah) explicitly contrasts verse 21's 'in enmity.'

**Or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait**—contrasts verse 20's ambush (bitsediyah). This verse legally defines accidental homicide: unintentional, unplanned, arising from circumstances rather than malice. For such cases, the cities of refuge offered asylum—grace for the guilty-but-not-culpable.

## Historical Context

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Accidental deaths were common in ancient agrarian societies: axes flying off handles (Deuteronomy 19:5), construction accidents, animal-related incidents. Without the refuge city provision, blood feuds would spiral endlessly, destabilizing tribal society. The cities balanced justice (vv.16-21) with mercy (vv.22-28).

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. How do the cities of refuge demonstrate that God's justice system distinguishes between moral guilt and tragic accident?
2. What does the sudden/without-enmity distinction teach about the difference between sinning willfully versus being overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1)?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאִם	בְּפֶתַע	בְּלֹא	אֵיבָה	וְהִדֹּפּוּ	אוֹ	הַשֵּׁל יָדְךָ	עַל יָדוֹ
H518	him suddenly H6621	without H3808	enmity H342	But if he thrust H1920	H176	or have cast H7993	H5921
כָּל	כָּל יְ	בְלֹא	צִדָּה:				
H3605	upon him any thing H3627	without H3808	without laying of wait H6660				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Exodus 21:13** (Parallel theme): And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.

**Numbers 35:11** (Parallel theme): Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares.