

Numbers 35:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.

Analysis

Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest (הַכֹּהן הַגָּדוֹל, ha-kohen ha-gadol)—the high priest's death liberated the manslayer. Why? The high priest bore the nation's guilt annually on Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16); his death symbolically atoned for the manslayer's bloodguilt, allowing restoration.

This profoundly foreshadows Christ, our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14), whose death liberates us from sin's exile. **But after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession**—full restoration followed priestly death. Christ's death on Calvary didn't merely offer escape; it secured our inheritance (Ephesians 1:11-14), returning us to our 'possession' in God's kingdom.

Historical Context

High priests served for life, sometimes decades (Aaron 40+ years, Eli 40 years, 1 Samuel 4:18). Manslayers might spend their entire adult lives in refuge cities, making the high priest's death a momentous liberation. This waiting period emphasized both justice (exile for bloodshed) and mercy (eventual freedom).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the high priest's death securing the manslayer's freedom typologically point to Christ's death liberating us from sin's penalty?
2. What does the manslayer's restoration to his 'possession' after priestly death teach about the full inheritance believers receive through Christ's atonement?

Interlinear Text

מִתְּחִלָּתוֹ בְּעֵד יְמִינָה יִשְׁבֶּן עַד מִתְּהִלָּתְו
H3588 in the city H5892 of his refuge H4733 Because he should have remained H3427 H5704 the death H4194

בֶּן-הָעֹדָה לְבֶן-הָעֹדָה מִתְּהִלָּתְו
priest of the high but after the death priest of the high shall return H3548 H1419 H310 H4194 H3548 H1419 H7725

בָּרָץ בְּאַל-אֶרְזָה אֶחָתָתוֹ
the slayer H413 into the land of his possession H7523 H776 H272

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