

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 (הַכֹּהֵן 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

| | | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------------------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| כִּי | בְּעִיר | מִקְלוֹטוֹ | יֵשׁ ב | עַד | מוֹת | |
| H3588 | in the city | of his refuge | Because he should have remained | H5704 | the death | |
| | H5892 | H4733 | H3427 | | H4194 | |
| הַכֹּהֵן | הַגָּדֹל | וְאַחֲרָיו | מוֹת | הַכֹּהֵן | הַגָּדֹל | יָשׁוּב |
| priest | of the high | but after | the death | priest | of the high | shall return |
| H3548 | H1419 | H310 | H4194 | H3548 | H1419 | H7725 |
| הַרֹצֵחַ | אֶל | אֶרֶץ | אֲחֻזָּתוֹ | | | |
| the slayer | H413 | into the land | of his possession | | | |
| H7523 | | H776 | H272 | | | |