

Lesson V.

THE CITIES OF REFUGE

November 3, 1907

BETWEEN THE LESSONS—Chapters 15 to 19 describe the division of Canaan amongst the various tribes. Joshua and Eleazar the high priest (ch. 14 : 1) conducted the division, which was made by lot. Two urns, say the Jewish rabbis, were chosen, in one of which were placed little tablets with the names of the tribes, and in the other, similar tablets with the names of districts, and one tablet was drawn from each at the same time. As soon as the tribes had received their inheritance, the Lord directed Joshua to set apart Cities of Refuge (see Num. 35 : 9-34 ; Deut. 19 : 1-13).

GOLDEN TEXT—My refuge is in God.—Psalm 62 : 7.

Memorize vs. 2, 3. **THE LESSON PASSAGE**—Joshua 20 : 1-9. Read Numbers 35 : 6-34.

1 ¹ The Lord also spake unto Josh'ua, saying,
2 Speak to the children of Is'rael, saying, ² Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Mo'ses :

3 That the ³ slayer that killeth any person ⁴ unawares and unwittingly may flee thither : and they shall be ⁵ your refuge from the avenger of blood.

4 And ⁶ when he that doth flee unto one of those cities ⁷ shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and ⁸ shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, ⁷ they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

5 And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver ⁹ the slayer up into his hand ; because he smote his neighbour ¹⁰ unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

6 And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, ¹¹ and until the

Revised Version—And the Lord spake : ² Assign you the ; ³ manslayer ; ⁴ unwittingly and unawares ; ⁵ unto you for a ; ⁶ he shall flee ; ⁷ and ; ⁸ Omit shall ; ⁹ up the manslayer ; ¹⁰ unawares ; ¹¹ Omit and ; ¹² set apart ; ¹³ the hill country of ; ¹⁴ Kir'ath-ar'ba (the same is Hebron) ; ¹⁵ beyond the ; ¹⁶ at ; ¹⁷ in ; ¹⁸ appointed cities ; ¹⁹ unwittingly.

Daily Readings—(Courtesy, I. B. R. A.)—M.—The cities of refuge, Joshua 20 : 1-9. T.—The previous command, Deut. 19 : 1-10. W.—Cities of the Levites, Numbers 35 : 1-15. Th.—Refuge in God, Psalm 18 : 1-19. F.—Sure and steadfast, Heb. 6 : 11-20. S.—My Refuge, Psalm 91. S.—The only Refuge, Psalm 62.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. THE MANSLAYER'S PERIL.—1, 2. The Lord . . . spake unto Joshua ; as soon as the twelve tribes had received their respective portions of the Promised Land. Speak to . . . Israel. The Lord was the supreme Ruler of the people, and Joshua His representative. Assign you the cities of refuge (Rev. Ver.) ; namely, those referred to in the Lord's instructions to Moses, Num. 35 : 6-15. They were to be selected (Num. 35 : 6) from among the cities given by the other tribes to the tribe of Levi, to whom, since they had special charge of the Tabernacle and its services, and were therefore to be supported by the whole nation, no inheritance was allotted in the divisions of the land. (See ch. 21 : 1-3, 13, 27, 32, 36, 38.)

3. Manslayer . . . unwittingly and unawares (Rev. Ver.) ; by mistake or accident. Num. 35 : 16-23 describes a number of cases of killing without intention. Unto you for a refuge (Rev. Ver.) ; not for the wilful murderer, who was to be punished with death (Num. 35 : 31, 32), but only for any one who had slain a person without meaning to do so. From the avenger of blood ; the nearest of kin to the slain man, who was required, by the custom of the time, to take vengeance by killing the slayer in turn.

II. THE MANSLAYER'S PROTECTION.—4. He shall flee (Rev. Ver.) ; with the avenger, it may be, in hot pursuit. Deut. 19 : 3 required that roads should be built to the Cities of Refuge, and probably there were sign posts to show the way (see Oriental Sidelight). Stand at . . . the gate ; in the public square near the city gate, where courts were com-

monly held, Ruth 4 : 1, 2. Declare his cause ; state his case—the manslayer's preliminary examination. He must give the elders, or rulers of the city, good reason to believe that the killing had been unin-

death of the high priest that shall be in those days : then shall the ³ slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled.

7 And they ¹² appointed Ke'desh in Gal'ilee in ¹³ mount Naph'tali, and She'chem in ¹³ mount E'phraim, and ¹⁴ Kir'jath-ar'ba, which is He'bron, in ¹⁵ the mountain of Ju'dah.

8 And ¹⁶ on the other side Jor'dan ¹⁶ by Jer'icho eastward, they assigned Be'zer in the wilderness ¹⁷ upon the plain out of the tribe of Reu'ben, and Ra'moth in Gil'ead out of the tribe of Gad, and Go'lan in Ba'shan out of the tribe of Ma'nas'seh.

9 These were the ¹⁸ cities appointed for all the children of Is'rael, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person ¹⁹ at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

3 Assign you the ; 3 manslayer ; 4 unwittingly and unawares ; 5 up the manslayer ; 10 unawares ; 11 Omit and ; 12 set apart ; 13 the hill country of ; 14 Kir'ath-ar'ba (the same is Hebron) ; 15 beyond the ; 16 at ; 17 in ; 18 appointed



AT THE GATE OF AN EASTERN CITY

tentional. Give him a place ; receive him into the protection of the city, and permit him to reside there. This protection and permission were only for the time being, until the manslayer could be formally tried, in the presence of the pursuer. While waiting for this formal trial, the fugitive is to have a safe