

Revelation 16

8/16/2020 Pastor Martin Saine

Department of Corrections:

Cities of Refuge; See Numbers 35

6 cities, 3 on each side of the Jordan

Cities provide a place of trial and judgment for the person guilty of manslaughter, NOT pre-meditated murder. If granted asylum, the manslayer can stay in the city of refuge free from the avenger of blood UNTIL THE HIGH PRIEST DIES, at which point he may leave. If he leaves before the High Priest dies, and the avenger of blood meets him, the avenger can kill him because he should have stayed in the city of refuge.

TAKE NOTE of the closing verses in Numbers 35:

Num 35:31-34 Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. Therefore, do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.' "

Who is our refuge?

Heb 6:17-20 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Who is our High Priest?

Heb 6:20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

When did our High Priest die? At Calvary.

What happened for those who seek refuge in Him after His death?

Rom 8:1-4 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made

me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Joh 8:36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

There is one technicality that is required for man to be set free:

Luke 23:34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

His death had to be declared manslaughter, not pre-meditated murder!

In Numbers 35, if someone kills another with intent to kill, with iron implements, stones, or beating, they were considered what we would consider first degree murders, and no refuge would be granted them; the avenger of blood was to strike them down.

But Jesus declared His death as manslaughter and asked the Father to forgive those who killed Him, even as they were doing it! This left the door open to ANY who would come to Him in repentance and faith to be safely hidden from the avenger of blood, in the permanent city of refuge, which is Jesus Christ, the High Priest.

1Co 2:4-8 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known; they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

This is the ultimate example of Grace in action!

If Jesus had not asked the Father to forgive them (and pronounced his death as manslaughter), there would be no forgiveness for anyone.

Many consider the God of the OT to be vengeful and violent, while the God of the NT is loving and gentle, ushering in grace through the cross.

This is not accurate!

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

God has ALWAYS been a God of Grace!
He has also ALWAYS been a God of Judgment,
And a God of mercy,
And a God of vengeance,
And a God of Love,
And a God of forgiveness.

Grace began in the Garden of Eden.

Gen 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

"Dying you shall die"

Hints at a two-phase process: Immediate Spiritual death, lingering physical death.

If the God of the OT (and what could be more OT than the very beginning of man's actions after his creation!) was vengeful and without grace, mercy, and love, He would have immediately killed them spiritually AND physically! But He did not!

The lingering physical death gave man time to repent and return to Him, in faith that God HIMSELF would save them from the eternal consequences of their failure to choose Him.

Gen 3:21-24 Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin and clothed them. Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So, He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

In this passage we also see God's grace and mercy at work in not allowing Adam and Eve to have access to the tree of life, which would have made them eternally lost with no possibility of redemption.

So, to reiterate our earlier statement:

God has ALWAYS been a God of Grace!

He has also ALWAYS been a God of Judgment,

And a God of mercy,

And a God of vengeance,

And a God of Love,

And a God of forgiveness.

It was through the incarnation of Jesus- God the Son, becoming our Kinsman redeemer, living a sinless life, sacrificing Himself on our behalf, suffering HIMSELF the penalty due man for sin, demonstrating faith that the Father would raise Him from the dead, and living forever as our High Priest, that all of the attributes of God were resolved so that God remained true to Himself and yet provided a way whereby we could be saved!

Reminder from Chapter 15.

Rev 15:1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

Rev 15:5-8 After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls (think saucer) full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

God's temple is the point of contact between Him and His creation. It is a literal, physical location. At the onset of the pouring out of the seven last plagues, the heavenly temple is filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter it until the seven plagues are complete.

At this point we see a glimpse of Rev 22:11. Decisions have been made; allegiances fully forged. Those who have decided for Christ no matter the cost have made their decision, and "those who dwell on the earth" STILL refuse to allow Jesus to rule over them and have therefore made their choice. The heavenly temple is closed as God's wrath is kindled full force and the results are to follow.

Rev 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

Rev 16:2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

Notice this judgment is reserved for those who have taken the mark and worshiped his image.

"Foul and loathsome sore" is the same Greek word used for the boils that afflicted the Egyptians in Exodus 9:9-11, and the boils Job experienced in Job 2:7, and the sores that plagued Lazarus the beggar in Luke 16:21. These are foul, open, oozing, painful sores that do not heal....

Remember, the whole world, every tribe, nation, and tongue, were warned in Chap 14:9-11 by an Angel flying through the heavens NOT TO TAKE THE MARK or worship the beast!!!

Rev 16:3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.

This is reminiscent of the first plague against Egypt in Exodus 7:20-25, and of the Second Trumpet judgment in Rev 8:8-9, but the previous judgments were partial, still giving men time to repent. This time, it is a total global judgment!

Most of the life on planet Earth is contained in the seas. Imagine the entire sea system of the Earth turning to blood, and EVERY LIVING THING in the oceans dying!

Rev 16:4-7 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And now we come to the fresh water....And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."