

Day 201 - THURSDAY: July 6th

Deuteronomy 19

Deuteronomy 19:1-21 NKJV

"When the LORD your God has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, you shall separate three cities for yourself in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess. You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, that any manslayer may flee there. "And this is the case of the manslayer who flees there, that he may live: Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally, not having hated him in time past— as when a man goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—he shall flee to one of these cities and live; lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he was not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past. Therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall separate three cities for yourself.' "Now if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as He swore to your fathers, and gives you the land which He promised to give to your fathers, and if you keep all these commandments and do them, which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways, then you shall add three more cities for yourself besides these three, lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and thus guilt of bloodshed be upon you. "But if anyone hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes him mortally, so that he dies, and he flees to one of these cities, then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.

Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with you. "You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess. "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states: "Moses commands Israel to set aside three cities of refuge in the land west of the Jordan just as three cities had already been set aside in the land east of the Jordan for any manslayer—one who killed another person accidentally (see Numbers 35:9–29; Deuteronomy 4:41–43). Such a person could flee to any of these cities to escape a possible execution by an avenger of blood (a close relative of the victim), but he had to stay there until the high priest died (Deuteronomy 19:1–13; Numbers 35:25). Further, as Numbers 35:12 shows, the

cities of refuge were established so that the manslayer could flee there in order to be tried fairly.

Several points should be considered here:

The perpetrator was only saved from death if he was a "manslayer," that is, if the death of the victim was caused accidentally (compare Numbers 35:15). Several examples are given throughout scripture to illustrate accidental conduct (which might not be the same as man's understanding of an "accident.") This would include unintentional or ignorant or unknowing conduct (Deuteronomy 19:4; compare margin in King James Version)—for example, the perpetrator kills a person by throwing a stone without *knowing* that the victim is there (compare Numbers 35:23). It would also include unintentional conduct—the perpetrator kills a person without *wanting* to do it (compare Deuteronomy 19:5; Numbers 35:22). On the other hand, if the perpetrator *hated* the victim in the past, he had to be executed (Deuteronomy 19:4, 6, 11; Numbers 35:20–21). Also, if he struck the victim *intentionally* with a stone, an iron implement, or a wooden hand weapon, even though he might *not* have *hated* the victim (Numbers 35:16–18), he was still considered deserving of death.

In addition, the accidental manslayer was not considered innocent, as his conduct, albeit unintentional or unknowing, led to the death of a person. The real sin here appears to be negligence because, with proper precautions, it would seem that such a death could have been avoided. The manslayer still had to flee to a city of refuge and stay there until the high priest died. If he left the city before the death of the high priest, the avenger of blood was permitted to kill him. Thus, the awareness that careless actions could lead to an extended period of confinement within a city would tend to make people more careful. A manslayer would undoubtedly have been given refuge in any of the cities of refuge. However, he would most likely flee to the respective city assigned to the territory in which he happened to be, since it would almost always be the closest one and the most accessible. This is because each city of refuge was located in the center of its respective territory—and, within that territory, roads (with bridges and signs) were built that led to that city (Deuteronomy 19:2–4). Moses next cautions the people not to remove their neighbor's landmarks (Deuteronomy 19:14). This was not a simple matter of moving a rock. Landmarks were stones that marked property boundaries. This law prohibited

manipulating boundaries so as to rob someone of part of his property—his rightful inheritance. Moses next warned against testifying as a false witness (verses 16–17). If a witness was found to have brought up a false accusation, "then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother...life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (verses 18–21)—that is, punishment to fit the *intended* harm. Moreover, the purpose for severe penalties is also given here—to serve as a deterrent to others against committing similar crimes (verse 20). And when rightly administered, such laws do act as a deterrent. Under the New Testament dispensation, a Christian is not to kill or harm anyone (Romans 13:9–10) or seek vengeance in any manner (Matthew 5:38–39; Romans 12:19). This does not mean we must desist from righting a wrong, such as taking disciplinary action or requiring restitution." [END]

I don't have anything additional to add to this chapter.