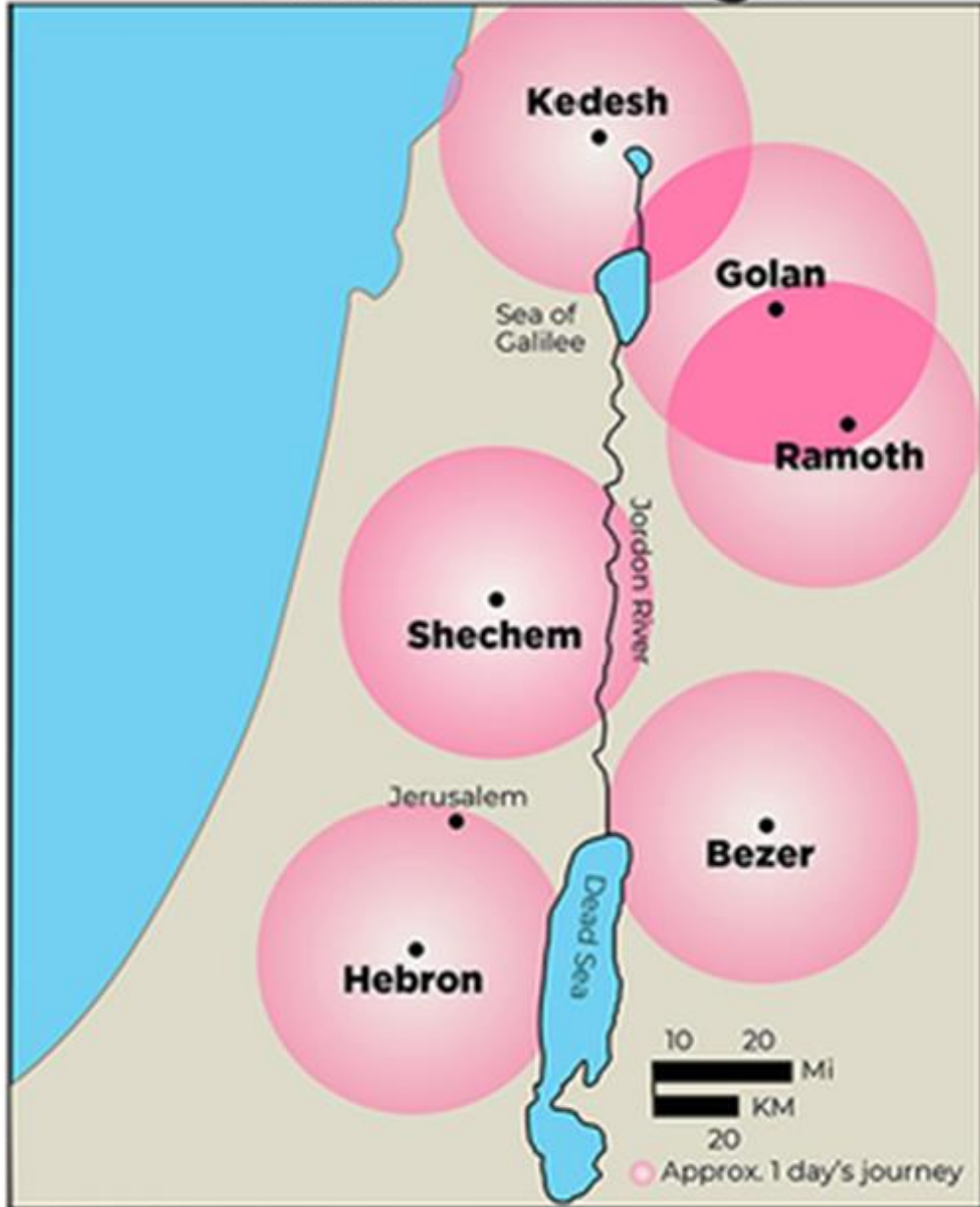


## Cities of Refuge



## Joshua 20

“These cities were designed to typify the relief which the gospel provides for penitent sinners, and their protection from the curse of the law and the wrath of God, in our Lord Jesus, to whom believers flee for refuge.” Matthew Henry

Hebrews 6:18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.

Then the LORD said to Joshua.. Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses, v1-2

God's provision of safe places for life in this fallen world



# Accidents happen!

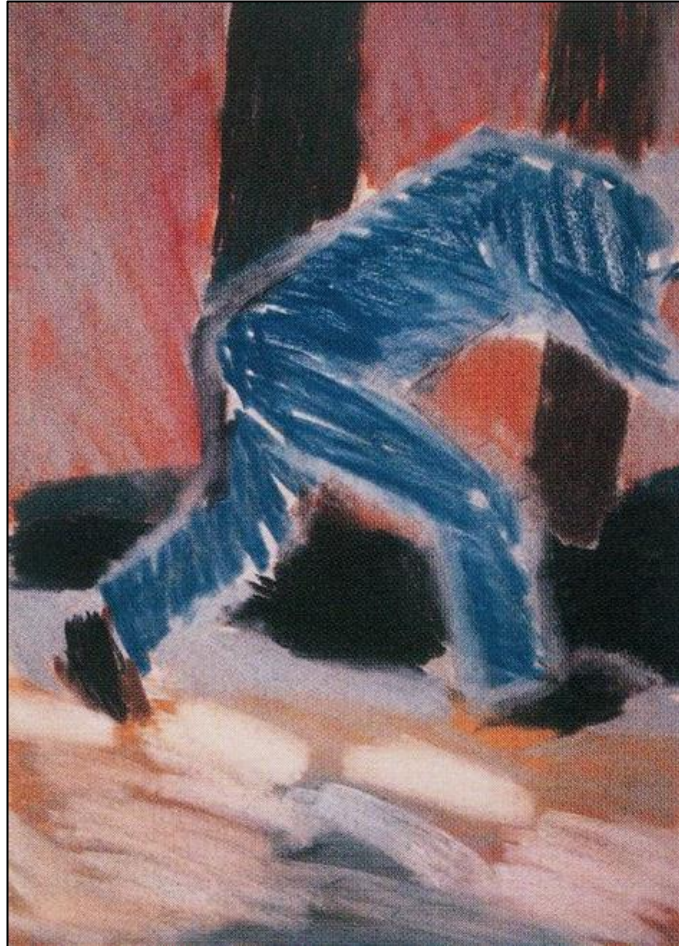
so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there v3



# Criminals will be punished!

so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood. v3

Family 'revenge'





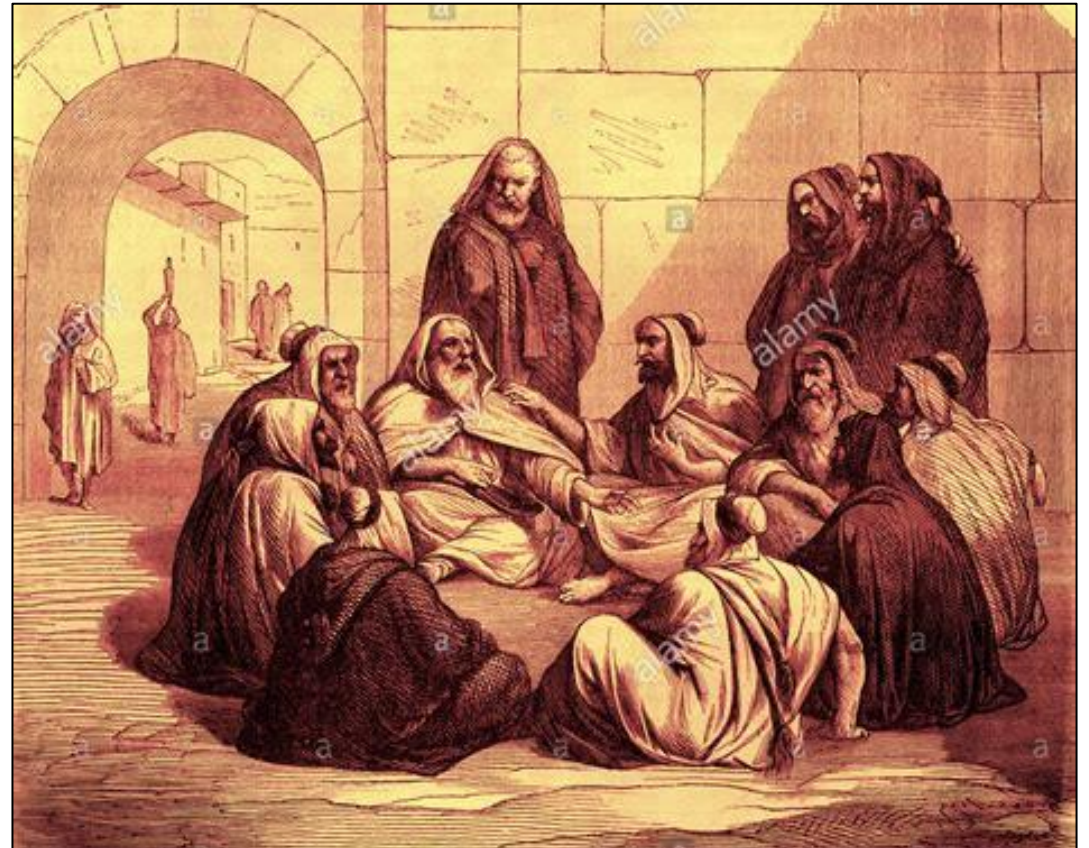
## Where will you run to?

When he flees to one of these cities, he is to stand in the entrance of the city gate and state his case before the elders of that city. v4

They were within reach before being overtaken

Then they could present their case to city elders (judges)

These were Levitical cities – the people well acquainted with the law



Then they are to admit him into their city and give him a place to live with them. v4

Assuming that he is innocent of murder-  
The charge is manslaughter.



If the avenger of blood pursues him, they must not surrender the one accused, because he killed his neighbour unintentionally and without malice aforethought. v5

Protection provided

A society NOT controlled by the 'law of the jungle'



**It's a JUNGLE out there**

He is to stay in that city until he has stood trial before the assembly and until the death of the high priest who is serving at that time. v6

He must stand trial first

Held in 'detention' in the city boundaries

Until the death of high priest



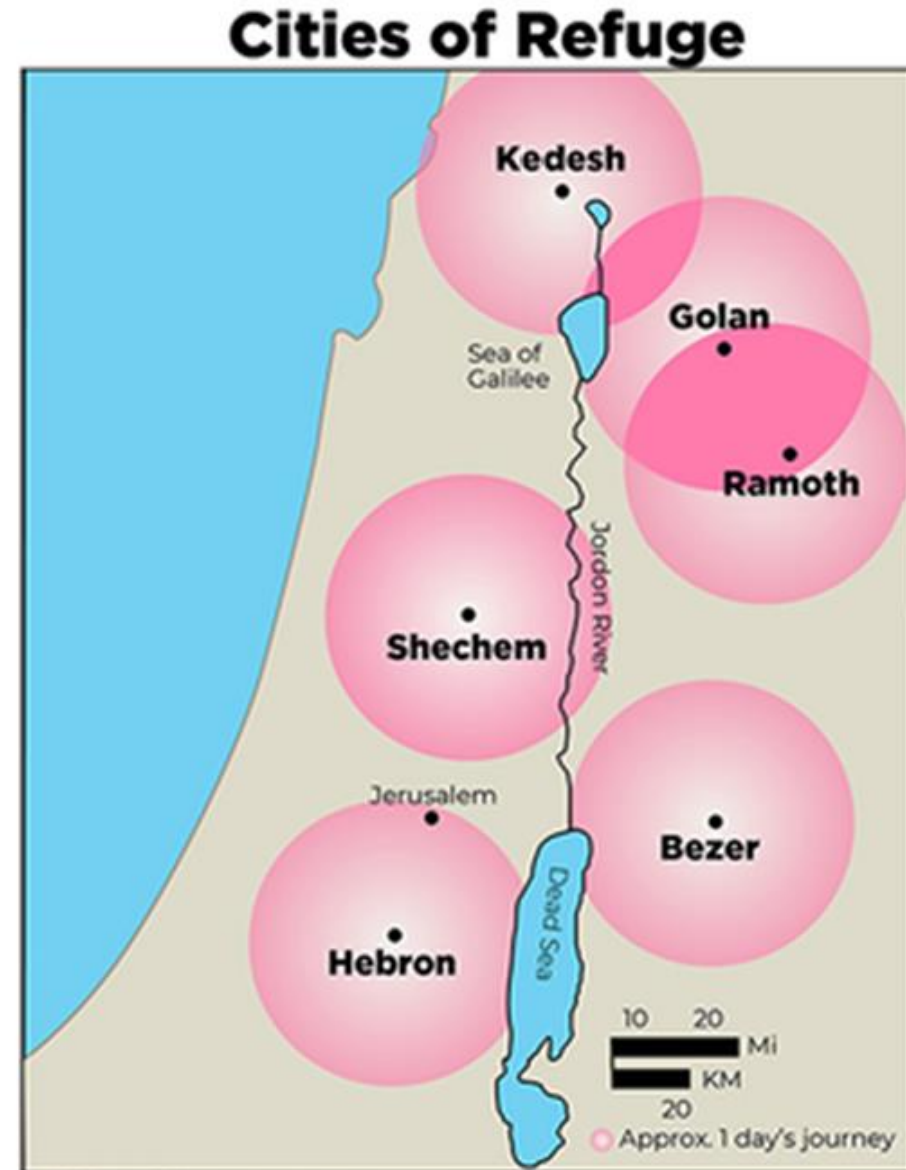


Then he may go back to his own home in the town from which he fled. v6

His sentence is completed at that time



So they set apart **Kedesh** in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, **Shechem** in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba (that is, **Hebron**) in the hill country of Judah. On the east side of the Jordan of Jericho they designated **Bezer** in the desert on the plateau in the tribe of Reuben, **Ramoth** in Gilead in the tribe of Gad, and **Golan** in Bashan in the tribe of Manasseh. v7-8



Any of the Israelites or any alien living among them who killed someone accidentally could flee to these designated cities and not be killed by the avenger of blood prior to standing trial before the assembly. v9

**AVAILABLE**

For Israelite or gentile

# Accidental sin - mistakes

What to do when things go wrong:-

1 John 1:8-9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When you become aware:

**A**dmit

**R**epent

**R**eceive (God's forgiveness )

**R**estore (others affected)



# The Death penalty

Exodus 20 "You shall not murder.

This is one of the 10 commandments.

The first reference to this teaching comes from Noah's time

Genesis 9:5-6 And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

# The Death penalty

Exodus 20 "You shall not murder.

The Primary reason: human life is a reflection of God

Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount show the deeper meaning

Matthew 5:21-22 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.

## A fair trial

The important place of justice  
in a civilised society



Two or three witnesses are essential (not just one) Numbers 35:30  
(There is a commandment against perjury)

Hear the evidence – no jumping to conclusions Proverbs 18:17

No prejudice or favouritism! Leviticus 19:15

Acquitted or the punishment fits the crime. 2 Chronicles 6:23

## Any exceptions?

What about Cain who murdered his brother? - He got a life sentence!

Genesis 4:11-12 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.”





## Any exceptions?

What about David's sin and cover up?  
God knows the heart.

2 Samuel 11:25 David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another.'



2 Samuel 12:10-11 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.' "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you.'

2 Samuel 12:13-14 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die."

## Any exceptions?

John 8:4-5 They said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"

Guilty in a hypocritical society!



John 8:10-11 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Did you know this account is missing in some manuscripts? Why?

## A place of refuge for us

Several different words in the original are translated by our English word 'refuge'

In Psalm 91 it occurs 3 times as "shelter"

Psalm 91:2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."



The eternal God is your refuge,  
And underneath are the  
*everlasting arms.*

Deuteronomy 33:27



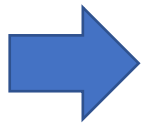
God is my “dwelling place”



## Different words for 'refuge'



Psalm 9:9 The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. **Altitude**



Psalm 25:20 Guard my life and rescue me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you. **Flee to**



Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. **Shelter**



Proverbs 27:12 The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty. **Hide themselves**

# Cover-ups won't do

## Our Refuge must be in God

Isaiah 28:15 You boast, "We have entered into a covenant with death, with the realm of the dead we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place."



# The death of the high priest

He was the one who brought the atonement sacrifice

There would be national sorrow at his death.  
Would thoughts of vengeance be swallowed up  
in the general grief?



## Comparison to Jesus' death

He is our High Priest in the order of Melchizedek

He provided full and eternal atonement by his sacrificial death on the cross.



Acts 10:42-43 *God* commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.



# What's in a Name?

Names of people and places in the Bible often have significant meanings:-

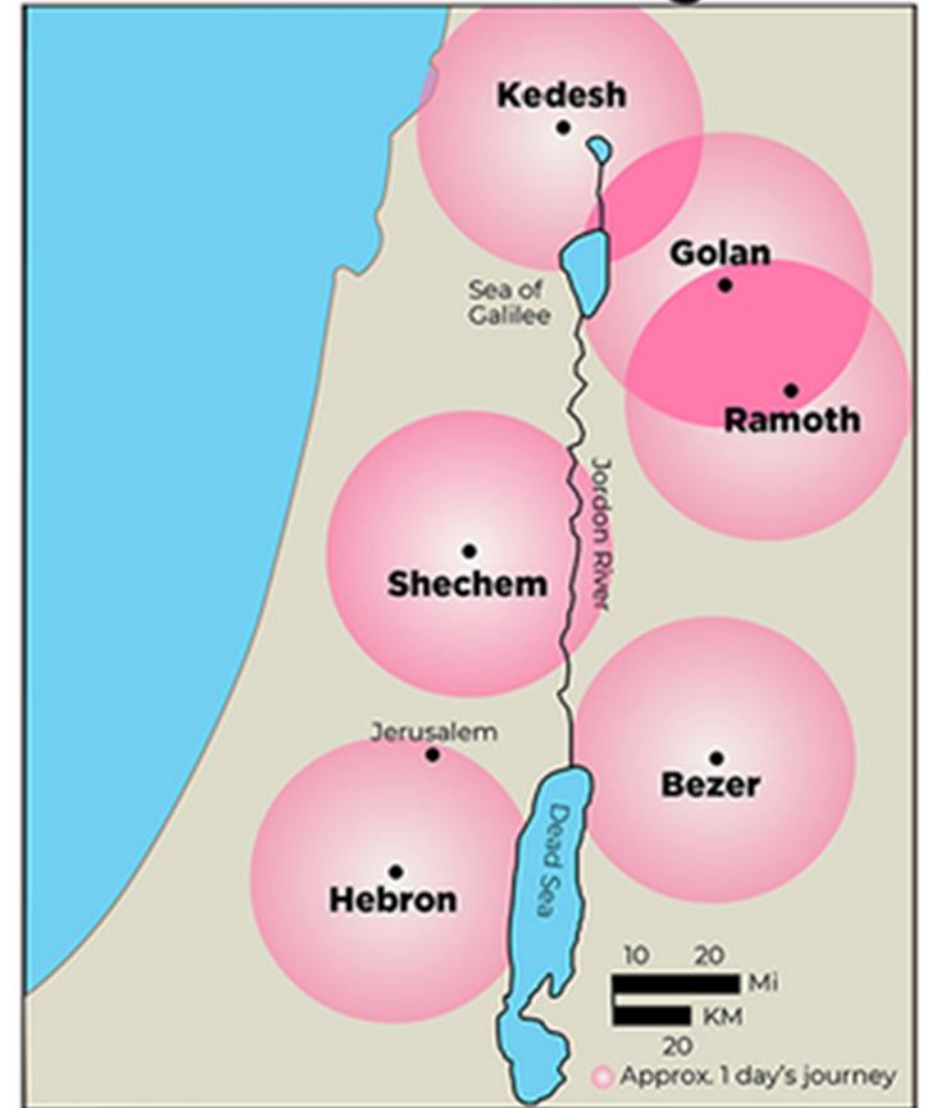
## The Lord Jesus Christ is our Refuge

**Kedesh** signifies **holy**, and our Refuge is the holy Jesus.

**Shechem**, a **shoulder**, and the government is upon his shoulder.

**Hebron**, **fellowship**, and believers are called into the fellowship of Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Cities of Refuge

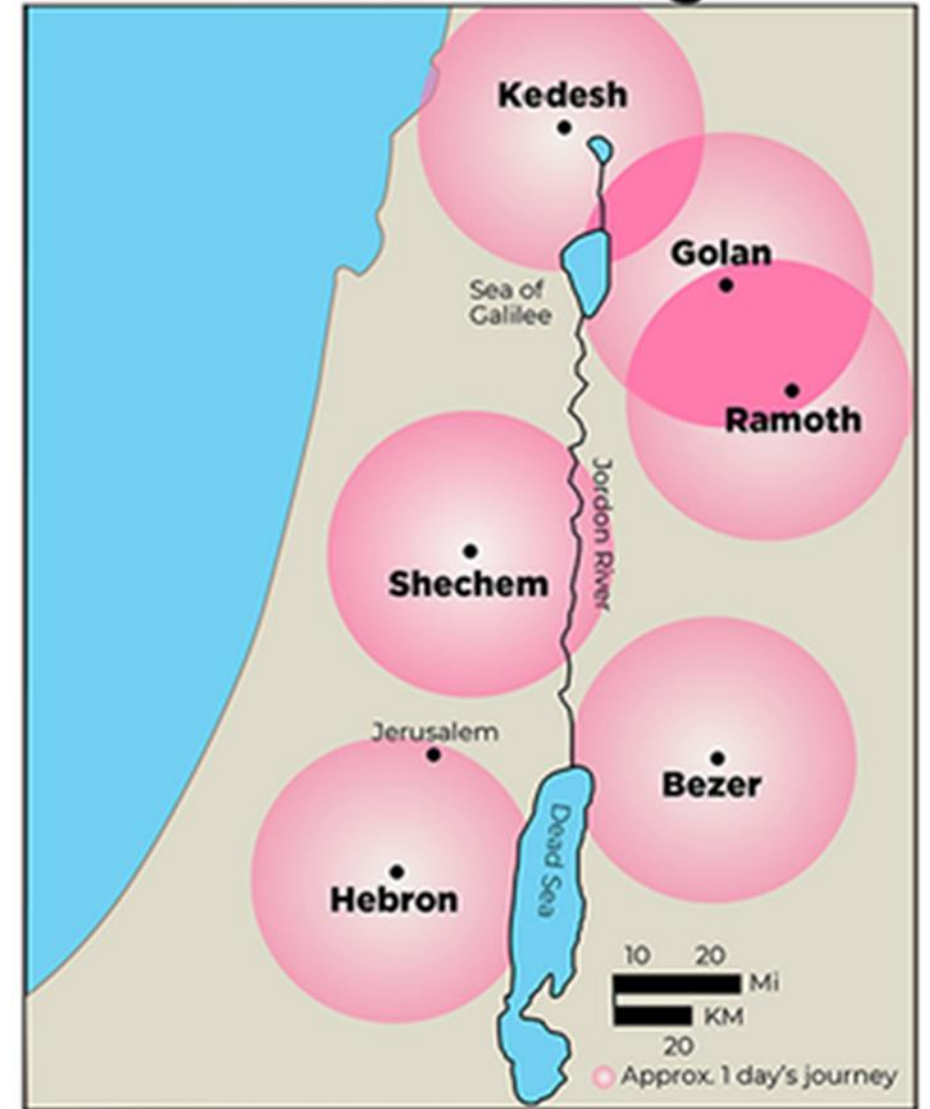


**Bezer, a fortification,** for he is a strong hold to all those that trust in him.

**Ramoth, high** or exalted, for God has exalted him with his own right hand.

**Golan, rejoice,** for in Him all the saints are justified, and shall glory.

## Cities of Refuge



## Psalm 32: Of David.

Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them.

## Psalm 32: Of David.

**You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.**

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.

Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him.

Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!