

Exegesis Summary of Joshua 20.1-9

v. 1

Joshua took the reigns after Moses' death, just outside the promised land. He led Israel across the Jordan, conquered the inhabitants, mostly (but that's another story), has just dividing the land among the people and is setting up civil law.

vv. 2-3

MANSLAUGHTER - The unlawful killing of a human being without malice or premeditation, either express or implied; distinguished from murder, which requires malicious intent. **-lectlaw.com**

US Law adopted the term from the Biblical Text and retains the same Biblical standards for designating a death 'manslaughter'. cf. Numbers 35:15-23, for definition.

v. 4

A 'pre-trial hearing' is required for entrance beyond the gate.

v. 5

God understands human nature and knows that one hurt deeply by the death of a loved one will desire retribution on the one who caused the death. God doesn't condemn this desire for justice, but establishes a system which facilitates due process for all involved.

v. 6

After the official trial, if the individual is found to not have had malice in his heart, he is commanded to live in the city of refuge until the death of the priest. There are consequences for our irresponsibilities. God continues to provide for the one who lost a loved one, protecting them from occasion to a sin which may be more than they can resist.

vv. 7-9

These cities were strategically spaced throughout the land (show map).

Much about the Character of God can be seen in these verses. Two exact same acts-- one intentional, and one not-- are given entirely different judgments and consequences. God is not concerned with any act; He has always been entirely concerned with our heart. We can see this from OT laws, to how He judges our salvation. In all He does, He provides for our weaknesses, from protecting the grieving loved one from sins too tempting to handle, to His provision for our every failure on the Cross He willingly bore for us.