



Deuteronomy 19

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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Deuteronomy 19.

(A brief overview of the main topics).

INTRODUCTION: this is a continuation of the previous chapter; Israel is soon to cross over the River Jordan and enter into the Promised Land. The primary focus of all the following chapters is upon Moses re-telling to the new generation about to cross the River Jordan all the covenant laws the LORD originally gave to Israel at Mount Sinai so that the new generation would renew the covenant with the LORD before they enter the Promised Land. The final chapter finishes with the LORD burying Moses and Joshua being ready to lead Israel over the River Jordan and into the Promised Land (see also the introduction to chapter one).

NOTE: for information of people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

DEUTERONOMY 19 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)

- **Deuteronomy 19:21** “When the LORD your God cuts 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, ² you shall set apart three cities for yourselves in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess. ³ You shall measure the distances and divide into three parts the area of the land that the LORD your God gives you as a possession, so that any manslayer can flee to them. ⁴ “This is the provision for the manslayer, who by fleeing there may save his life. If anyone kills his neighbor unintentionally without having hated him in the past— ⁵ as when someone goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and his hand swings the axe to cut down a tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—he may flee to one of these cities and live, ⁶ lest the avenger of blood in hot anger pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and strike him fatally, though the man did not deserve to die, since he had not hated his neighbor in the past. ⁷ Therefore I command you, You shall set apart three cities. ⁸ And if the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he has sworn to your fathers, and gives you all the land that he promised to give to your fathers— ⁹ provided you are careful to keep all this commandment, which I command you today, by loving the LORD your God and by walking ever in his ways—then you shall add three other cities to these three, ¹⁰ lest innocent blood be shed in your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance, and so the guilt of bloodshed be upon you. ¹¹ “But if anyone hates his neighbor and lies in wait for him and attacks him and strikes him fatally so that he dies, and he flees into one of these cities, ¹² then the elders of his city shall send and take him from there, and hand him over to the avenger of blood, so that he may die. ¹³ Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, so that it may be well with you. ¹⁴ “You shall not move your neighbor’s landmark, which the men of old have set, in the inheritance that you will hold in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess. ¹⁵ “A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. ¹⁶ If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, ¹⁷ then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. ¹⁸ The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, ¹⁹ then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. ²⁰ And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. ²¹ Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Cities of refuge

Israel was to set apart three cities for refuge and measure the land and divide it into three parts then choose one city in each part so that any manslayer could flee to them. Provided Israel was careful to keep all the commandments Moses was giving them, the LORD would enlarge Israel's

territory and give Israel all the land that he promised to give to their fathers then Israel was to add three other cities of refuge to the previous three.

The purpose of the cities of refuge

Cities of refuge were provided for the manslayer to escape to and save his life because he did not deserve to die, since he had not hated his neighbour in the past. The cities were a protection against the avenger seeking to kill them. The six cities of refuge were to be equal distances apart in the Promised Land. They were so that innocent blood would not be shed in Israel and so that the guilt of bloodshed would not be upon Israel.

The description of the manslayer

A manslayer was anyone who had killed their neighbour unintentionally without having hated them in the past. Following is an example of a manslayer, when someone swings his axe to cut down a tree and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbour so that they die that person was considered a manslayer and could flee to one of the cities of refuge and live.

The description of a murderer

If anyone hates his neighbour and lies in wait for them and strikes them so that they die they are a murderer, if they flee into a city of refuge the elders of the city the murder lived in was to send and take the murderer from the city of refuge then hand the murder over to the avenger of blood so that he would be put to death. The people were not pity him, they were to purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel by putting the murder to death. Providing they put the murderer to death all would be well with Israel.

Boundaries of land

Israel was not allowed to move their neighbour's landmark (boundary) which the men of old have set. This was because the boundaries and landmarks determined the inheritance of land that the LORD was giving Israel.

Witnesses

A single witness could not suffice against a person for any crime in connection with any offence, only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses was a charge to be established.

Solving disputes

If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, then both parties of the dispute were to appear before the LORD before the priests and the judges who were in office. The judges were to inquire diligently to discover if the witness was a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, but if the accused person was found guilty, Israel was to do to the false witness what he had meant to do to his brother so they would purge

the evil from among them by doing to the false witness what he had meant to do to his brother. They were not to pity the false witness, it was to be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot and the rest of the people of Israel would hear of it and fear to commit any such evil among Israel.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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