

Life-Study of Numbers Summaries - Messages 47—51

The Cities Given to the Levites and the Cities of Refuge

Forty-eight cities from the inheritance of the possession of the sons of Israel were to be given to the Levites for them to dwell in. **The forty-eight cities given signify the natural man, who became fallen, being brought into resurrection through the Levitical service.** The Levitical service was a service to the priesthood, and the goal of the priesthood was to bring fallen man back to God in resurrection.

Out of forty-eight cities given to the Levites, six were to be the cities of refuge. The cities of refuge were to be not only for the sons of Israel but also for the strangers and sojourners among them. Today we all, **both Jews and Gentiles alike, have a refuge in the Triune God.** The cities of refuge were not for those who killed with an intent. **In the sight of God, we are those who sin without intent, and He considers our sinning as being without intent.** The rescued killer was to remain in the city of refuge and live in it until the death of the high priest. Since Christ, our High Priest, has died, He is our refuge, not in the Old Testament sense but in the New Testament sense. This refuge is a matter of direct salvation. Christ is both the refuge and the direct salvation.

In the Old Testament age, the refuge cities were places in which to hide and to wait for the death of the high priest. **Those who enter into Christ today may do so with the assurance that He has already died and that their sins have already been forgiven.**

A Vital Sketch of the Divine Revelation in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers Concerning God's Economy with His Chosen and Redeemed People

We may use four slogans to summarize certain crucial aspects of this sketch:

- “Purchased, redeemed, and saved from the bondage of the fall.”
- “Enjoying Christ, receiving revelation, and being built up in the Triune God.”
- “Formed into a priestly army to fight for God and to journey with God.”
- “Possessed by God to possess the all-inclusive Christ as the good land.”

These four slogans apply to the saints in both the Old Testament and New Testament. The saints have been chosen, redeemed, and saved from the bondage of the fall. Like the children of Israel at Mount Sinai, we have also received the divine revelation and are being built up with the processed Triune God. We are being built up with the Son as the embodiment of the Father and with the Spirit as the realization of the Son. Furthermore, we are being formed into a priestly army. While we are fighting for God and for His kingdom, we are journeying with Him. Finally, we have been prepared by God in every way to possess the all-inclusive Christ as the good land.

God's chosen and redeemed people need to receive the divine revelation concerning God Himself and His economy for their training and building up as His testimony. God's chosen people receive the divine revelation after their participation in God's initial salvation as realized in the Passover. At Mount Sinai God's people received the revelation concerning God Himself that they might be separated unto the holy God as His sanctified people. In addition to receiving the divine revelation concerning God Himself, the children of Israel received the divine revelation concerning God's economy that they might be built up together with God in His divine Trinity as His dwelling place on earth for His testimony.

The book of Numbers as a whole reveals the need of God's chosen and redeemed people to be formed into an army to carry out the holy war. Frustrations occur and in a sense, actually are needed. All the frustrations suffered by God's chosen and redeemed people should be considered as means to humble God's people by afflictions and to test them on their journey in the wilderness. This is our situation today. **The different kinds of frustrations are used by God to humble us and to test us.** As we make our journey through the great and terrible wilderness, we will suffer frustrations again and again.

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