

Counting Pentecost, Economics, Sacrifices

Michael Heiss—October 18, 2011

Counting to Pentecost:

Fred had asked me to explain about counting Pentecost. This is an interesting incident that I had when I was attending the University of Judaism in 1974. I was talking to Rabbi Israel Sharoot. He was giving a series of lectures and one of them was in counting to Pentecost. He was really a character, had a sense of humor. He went to Leviticus and talked about the 'morrow after the Sabbath'—'ha Shabbat'—he says: 'What does that mean? Every place where the term 'ha Shabbat' is used it means *the weekly Sabbath*. Here we say it doesn't mean it. Of course, it means the weekly Sabbath, it doesn't mean the first day of the week.'

We were all taken aback, because in Judaism you translate that as the first Holy Day. Therefore, Pentecost always comes out on the sixth of Sivan, a single day of the year. Why is that? Go back in history and you find out very clearly why that is so. You had the Pharisees vs the Sadducees. The Sadducees controlled the temple. If you had it done on a particular day of the week, you all went to the priests. But if you made it an annual day, then it was a national holiday on an annual day, that the Pharisees dominated there.

How do you arrest control away from the Sadducees? *Simple! You translate that 'the first Holy Day'!* You start counting 'the morrow after the 15th, which would be the 16th. Start counting that way and you're always going to wind up on the sixth of Sivan. The Pharisees would say, 'Come to us!' and we will explain the meaning of the day, you don't need the priests.' This is one of the main reasons that they translated it that way—and they've been doing it ever since.

It's amazing, there are still some rabbis who understand that the term 'ha Shabbat'—not just 'Shabbat'... You'll find many times where in Leviticus it talks many times about the Day of Atonement. This is how you shall count your 'Shabbat.' The term 'Shabbat' can mean a Holy Day, but when you have the definite article, 'ha Shabbat' it's always the weekly Sabbath—no exceptions! Rabbi Sharoot was simply being honest—period! That's what it means, but, of course, we don't interpret it that way. That's the story there.

Secondly, Fred talked about translating the Old Testament. I want to emphasize something: *There's no such thing as a perfect English translation of the Hebrew!* Impossible! Even though we've done the best we could with this, you can't

get it right a hundred percent. Time and time again I would read what the great rabbis said—different ones down through the ages—and do you know what their comments would be? *Hebrew obscure! Not clear! Opaque!* Then they would say, 'Well, it seems to me this...' If the most brilliant of Hebrew scholars don't even understand the Hebrew, how are we supposed to understand it?

When all is said and done, what I want to emphasize is this, and even what we're going to discuss today, all you need to know for salvation is ***Jesus Christ and Him crucified!*** If you know that, it's enough! Obviously, if you know more, it's better. You get to understand the mind of God more. But when all is said and done, Jesus Christ and Him crucified, that's enough for salvation.

We're going to try and learn more, but I wanted to emphasize that in terms of this Old Testament. You can see Hebrew words with several different meanings. How do you know what meaning God is putting primarily on this word? *You don't!* It could have three or four different meanings, and God means all three of them. What's He emphasizing? *We're not sure!*

In fact, Hebrew was meant to be read. We don't do that. We read this in the English and you read it allowed in the English and you can't get it as you would in the Hebrews. I'm sure the same thing is true in Greek. I don't know Greek as well—as I tell Fred, Greek is Greek to me; going back the William Shakespeare and Julius Caesar. Yes, I can think of a few words: 'theos' I can recognize, I really can, but that's about it.

Hebrew is different and the alliteration is in the Hebrew; the pentameter is in the Hebrew. It's like this: My favorite poem is *The Destruction of Sennacherib* by George Gordon (Lord) Byron and the melodic note.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on
the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple
and gold;

Da ta da, da ta da da! You try translating that into Russian or German and see what you get. Trust me, it does not work!

Hebrew is the same way. It's all meant to be read. The Levites, when they were going on the steps singing the Hallel in the temple, would be singing those songs and the words, the phraseology, the alliteration, the pentameter, the meter would all

have meaning. We don't have that today. We do the best we can with what we've got.

Economy in Ancient Israel:

With that let's begin our topic. We're going to be in a classroom, I'll do my best. We're covering the Economy in Ancient Israel along with part of the criminal justice system. You'll see something very fascinating about the criminal justice system that we're going to talk about. We could be here the next week for an hour a day and not even cover the whole subject, it is that vast.

To start with, we've got to realize that we're dealing with law. In the Old Testament there are three broad categories of law:

First, *the moral law*—the Ten Commandments of God. Yes, we know technically they're not the Ten Commandments, they're the ten words, the ten sayings, the ten principles. They're given in the form of commandments, so there's nothing wrong with calling them the Ten Commandments of God. These are applicable to every human being at all times, no exceptions.

At the other extreme, **the laws of purity, of ritual**. If you want to read a lot of those, read the book of Leviticus. You will get your fill of ritual and uncleanness and trespass offerings, guilt offerings, all kinds of offerings. These are not in force today. No Levitical priesthood; Aaron's not around; the temple is not there. In the world tomorrow some of those laws will be brought back, but not today.

In the middle were *the national statutes*—that's what we're going to deal with. The national statutes, as they were given to the people of Israel to be observed *in the land*. I want to emphasize that!

Deuteronomy 12:1: "These *are* the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to do **in the land** which the LORD God of your fathers gives you to possess it, all the days that you live upon the earth." Here come the statutes to be observed by Israel *in the land*.

We're going to cover two principles that will help us understand what we're about the read. One of those principles was taught to me when I first set foot on the Ambassador College campus, by one of the kindest, caring, dedicated servants of God I ever had the privilege of meeting. He was intelligent, smart, he got his own doctorate degree—Fred knows him very well—Charles B. Dorothy. A remarkable man; a sweet man; humble, never put on airs; never thought of himself as being better than anybody else; and he taught me a fundamental lesson:

He said, 'Mike, the Bible is a book of addition—not subtraction—*addition!* Meaning

you've got to add. You see a Scripture, you read it, it's Truth, but that may not be all the Truth on that subject.' You've got to read all the Scriptures, add them together, such as we're told in Isaiah 28:13: "So then the Word of the LORD was to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little..." You've got to *add* to it.

The second thing is, the Bible—the Old Testament—is a book of law; it's written as a law book. Understand what that means. In my business I deal with the Internal Revenue code—I'm a tax preparer, a tax consultant. You can take the Internal Revenue code and you can honestly handle it in one hand. It's not as big as you might think, but they do have a vast array of regulations. Then you have the Internal Revenue Service writing their revenue ruling, applying it specifically to certain cases. If you want to change from one way to another you have what you call *revenue procedures*. The problem is when you read, how do you know whether you're reading something from the code or from the regulations or revenue ruling.

The code is broad, it doesn't give you exceptions; it doesn't give you full explanations; it just gives you the broad principle. Some of what we're going to read gives you *broad principles*. Then you're going to read another section and you're going to say, 'Wait a minute, this is not what the other one says.' It is, it's just expanding upon it; it's giving you exceptions or additions.

Example: In the Internal Revenue code, all income is subject to tax—*all* income! That's the code. Wait a minute, not true. Except for—the exceptions: you give your child an allowance, not taxable. Uncle Max dies and leaves you a million dollars—inheritance, not taxable. But the code says, 'all income is taxable.' That's the general rule, then come the exceptions.

Now we're going to start in with the economic system in ancient Israel. We'll start with the tithe, we'll see the general statements and then we'll see some exceptions to it. You might think, 'Wait a minute, we have to understand the mind of God to figure that out.'

Let's start in Leviticus—If ever there were a book of rules and regulations, ablutions and oblations it is the book of Leviticus. But there are also some very, very important rules here—good explanations.

Leviticus 27:30: "And all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD'S. *It is* Holy to the LORD. And if a man will at all redeem anything of his tithes, he shall add to it the fifth *part* of it. And all the tithe of the herd,

or of the flock, all that passes under the rod, a tenth shall be Holy to the LORD. He shall not search whether it is good or bad; neither shall he change it. And if he changes it at all, then both it and the change of it shall be Holy....” (vs 30-33).

Now we’re going to see something else. When we get to the firstborn, God says something completely different. On the firstborn there are exceptions. We will see a rule that says ‘all the firstborn is Mine.’ But then God also says, ‘Not necessarily.’

But first we’re talking about the tithe. What do you know from this? Do you know to whom to give the tithe? *No!* Do you know where it is to be delivered? *No!* All we know—this is like the code—all the tithe of the herd and all the tithe of the land shall be Holy. This includes everything the land produces: your crops, your grain, your wine, your oil, your flocks, your herd. That much we know. It’s also your fruits and vegetables. A couple of things I know that Fred and I’ve talked about: copper, fish.

Let’s look at the book of Deuteronomy for just a minute and we’re going to take a look at a particular section here—Deuteronomy 8—here we have it’s talking about the land, that it’s a beautiful land that God’s going to give to the people of Israel; land of wheat, barley, vines, fig trees and pomegranates (v 8).

Deuteronomy 8:9: “A land in which you shall eat bread without scarceness. You shall not lack any *thing* in it. *It is* a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig copper.”

The Bible doesn’t say how to tithe on copper. Doesn’t talk about fish. How can you measure the copper? How can you measure iron? Maybe King Solomon, in his palace and the walled city of Jerusalem, could mine iron and put it on the battlement. But how’s he going to tithe on the iron? How’s he going to tithe on the copper? Is he going to do it by the weight? Is he going to do it by the foot? The Bible doesn’t tell us.

Obviously, if you have a mining consortium—the king isn’t going to do this all himself. If he’s doing this, he’s going to have a group doing it *for* him. If they go and do it and then sell the copper or sell the brass, sell the iron—ah ha! we have a profit. That you can tithe on, but how many people would be doing this. You wouldn’t; I wouldn’t. If you’re part of the land, you’ve got your grains, you’ve got your trees, your wine, your oil. How many of you would have copper? How many of you would be rich enough to go do this?

The Bible doesn’t tell us much about it. But the principle is, if you can mine and have a profit

then you could tithe because you’d have the money. But that’s all it says. Even the Encyclopedia Judaica says that this isn’t all that was tithed upon, but it was the basics. God’s interested in the basics!

How about fish? Did you know that in the Talmud there’s not one word about anybody ever tithing on fish; for a reason. We know that God says ‘fins and scales’ so He knew that we were going to eat fish. Why? Who grew the fish? Who planted the fish? *Nobody!*

If you were a commercial fisherman, such as the sons of Zebedee—James and John on the Sea of Galilee—or on the Mediterranean coast—different story. Come on, how many of us on our farms, our ranches are going to be commercial fishermen. Besides that, I want to go fishing; I got 20 fish. What do I do with two of them? Where am I going to go? How long is going to take me? What was it, two days to get to the nearest Levite in the hot sun—what’s my fish going to smell like? It isn’t practical. It isn’t that God says, ‘I don’t want you to tithe on it’; it’s that you didn’t grow the fish. Who owned the Sea of Galilee? It’s silent on it.

Now, the sons of Zebedee, on the other hand, were catching fish and they were selling the fish and they got shekels of silver or copper or gold—whatever it is—*yes!* *You could tithe on it*, but not the fish itself. God’s practical; that’s all I’m trying to say.

We know it’s the grain; we know it’s the wine and the oil. That’s the first thing, yet, we’re now going to see some exceptions. You just took ten percent; that was it. No! No! No! Let us take a look. We’re going to start with the firstfruits.

Exodus 23:19 & 34:26—the wording is exactly the same: “The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring *into* the house of the LORD your God...”—the law of the firstfruits. The firstfruits in general would be a section of your field. You would go as the crop was getting ready to be harvested—not quite yet—and you’re going to map out a small section of it, and you’re going to bring this to the priests.

How big? *We don’t know how big!* But I tell you, it wasn’t only one ear of corn, I’ll guarantee you that. It was the firstfruits. Generally it was understood to be a 50th, 60th, 70th of the crop. This is before the tithe. You went and got the firstfruits and God is saying that ‘the firstfruits belong to the Lord.’ We’ll see where they deposited those firstfruits. We find that the firstfruits are an exception. They are given to the priest.

Numbers 18:8: “And the LORD spoke to Aaron... [You’ll notice that God is bypassing

Moses; God is not talking to Moses here; Moses was not the high priest. As great as Moses was—and he *was* great—he was the leader, but he could not go into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement; that was reserved for Aaron. This is a priestly function as such.] ...‘Behold, I have also given you the charge of My heave offerings of all the Holy things of the children of Israel. I have given them to you by reason of the anointing, and to your sons, by an ordinance forever. This shall be yours of the most Holy things...’ (vs 8-9).

Verse 11: “And this *is* yours, the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel. I have given them to you and to your sons and to your daughters...”

Verse 12: “All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer to the LORD...”

These went to the priests. They didn’t necessarily go to the priests in Jerusalem or in Shiloh. We’re going to find that there were 48 Levitical cities saturated throughout the land of Israel. Remember that Levi had no inheritance in the land. All the other tribes had a section of land which was theirs, but not Levi. They were scattered through Israel—48 cities; 13 of them belonged to the priests and 6 of them were cities of refuge.

We’re going to zero in on those 6 cities of refuge in the criminal justice system; we’re going to see that the concept of those cities and the blood avenger, and what that means, and that is going to explain to us why God is going to do what He is going to do as described in the book of Revelation. How He is going to tear this earth apart; how He’s going to annihilate the *beast system*—because of those Hebrew words and His functioning, His office and His title. You’ll never get it in the English. For two decades I’ve read over that and never saw it, until one day I was challenged to read it in the Hebrew. There it is, it just jumps out at you. We’ll get to that!

That was the firstfruits and we’re not quite through with the firstfruits. Deuteronomy 18:1—you’ll see essentially the same thing: “The priests, the Levites, all the tribe of Levi, *shall have* no part nor inheritance with Israel.... [that’s what we just talked about] ...They shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his rightful dues. Therefore, they shall have no inheritance among their brethren. The LORD *is* their inheritance as He has said to them. And this shall be the priest’s due from the people, from those that offer a sacrifice, whether ox or sheep. And they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks, and the maw. You shall give him the firstfruit of your grain, of

your wine, and of your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep” (vs 1-4). So clearly, the firstfruits went to the priests.

Let’s look at the tithe; let’s look at specific exception to the tithe. We’re told that you’re supposed to give ten percent of what the land produced—right? *Not so fast!* I mentioned to you that the book of Leviticus was a book of offerings and ceremony, uncleanness. A lot of it is dull, dry reading—important reading.

Leviticus 19 is one of those that are gems in terms of understanding the statutes. Leviticus 19:9: “And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field. And you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest.... [Those are two separate things.] ...And you shall not glean your vineyard. And you shall not gather the *fallen grapes* of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. I *am* the LORD your God” (vs 9-10). Here we are, I’m farming, I’ve got my land. I don’t know if it’s the biggest, but I’ve got my square area. God says, ‘Mike, you see those corners, don’t you harvest those corners. You round them.’ *If I don’t, how am I going to give you the tenth?* God says, ‘I’m not interested in that tenth’—exception! God’s a God of social justice. He says there are poor people.

In another section, He says ‘there should be no poor among you.’ Here again, we’re looking at the code; we’re looking at the application. There’s not supposed to be any poor, but because of sin, mistakes, poor judgment—whatever it might be—some people, even today financially, get into deep ‘do-do.’ You read \$30-40-thousand credit card debt! Mind-boggling! It’s not God’s fault, but nevertheless, God said to ‘leave it to them.’ They didn’t tithe on 100% of what they produced.

Here’s another exception: gleaning the vineyard; gleaning the harvest—what was that all about? When it came time to harvest my crop, I couldn’t get all of it, parts of it would fall down. My vineyard, part of the grapes would fall to the ground. Maybe pears, peaches, whatever I had, they might fall to the ground. God says to ‘leave them.’ *But, Lord, I can’t give you ten...* ‘Do as I say; that’s for the poor.’ God put the poor, in a sense, ahead of Himself. Tells you something about the mind of God. He’s very concerned about people, so He’s reserving that for others. Therefore, they didn’t tithe 100% of their gross, because this is part of God’s system.

They didn’t have all the social security, the taxes, the welfare programs; this is how God set it up. This is what He did. The greatest example we have of that is Ruth. Remember Ruth, the

Moabitess? The story of Naomi and her husband—let’s look at it a little bit.

This is where Naomi and her husband go to Moab because there’s famine in the land. The two sons go with them; they marry. The husband dies and the sons die—tragic story. Naomi hears that the famine is over. She’s going to go back to Israel, and her two daughters-in-law want to go with her. Naomi says, ‘No don’t, I don’t have any more sons for you. Go back to your own people and Orpah does, but Ruth is something else. I’m very moved, always have been, by Ruth.’

Ruth 1:14: “And they lifted up their voice and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law. But Ruth clung to her. And she said, ‘Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and **to her gods**.... [Interesting!] ...Return back *with* your sister-in-law.’ And Ruth said, ‘Do not beg me to leave you, to return from following after you. For where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if anything* but death parts you and me” (vs 14-17). You talk about steadfast loyalty! You talk about conversion! You talk about *wholehearted* steadfast loyalty! Nothing is like it.

Fred explained to me something that I didn’t quite get for many years: *Many are called but few are chosen!* I could never fully get that. If God is calling many, why is He only choosing a few? *Because the calling is not sometimes what we think is a calling!* If you hear the Word of God, if you hear the Truth, it’s a general calling. The problem is only a few respond. If only a few respond, God can call only the few who respond. Ruth was one of those who responded.

In fact, Ruth 2:11—she’s in the field back with Naomi: “And Boaz answered and said to her, ‘It has been fully shown to me all that you have done to your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before now. May the LORD repay your work, and may a full reward be given you from the LORD God of Israel, under Whose wings you have come to seek refuge” (vs 11-12). Did God choose her? *She became the ancestor of David and the ancestor of Christ Himself! If that isn’t being chosen, I don’t know what is!*

If you read the whole chapter, you’ll read of the gleanings. You’ll read how the people who were doing the harvesting and they had burlap sacks or whatever they had to put in the grain and some of it fell to the ground. God said to leave it. Not only am

I not harvesting the corners of my field, even though I am harvesting, I can’t even pick up what falls to the ground there. God said to leave it for the poor.

Here are two exceptions on tithing. Our scope today is to understand this system as it worked in Israel, not to figure out what it’s going to be like in the world tomorrow; not to figure how we should do it today, because we could really run wild. So, we’re going to take a look further at that system.

Leviticus 27 is going to tell us something about those animals that God said were Holy to Him. We’re going to talk about the tithe of the herd and the flock, ‘all that passes under the rod.’ The way they did that was to corral their animals. Each rancher or farmer would have his animals in a corral and they did this three times during the year, before each Holy Day. There would be set times and they would start the animals going through a shoot.

The owner would be with his rod and he’d be counting a 1, a 2, a 3...and when the tenth one came, you marked it with a red dye. The interesting thing is, what about going to the Feast. There was no second tithe on animals. It was different. We, today, have a monetary system. Therefore, I make \$50,000 a year, \$10,000 a year, \$100,000 a year, however much God has blessed me, and I can figure out ten percent and so forth. But that’s not how it was done in ancient Israel. They didn’t take a second ten percent of their animals—*no they didn’t!* It was the firstlings of the flock.

I want to emphasize something that I didn’t bring out, Leviticus 27:33: “He shall not search whether it is good or bad; neither shall he change it. And if he changes it at all, then both it and the change of it shall be Holy. It shall not be redeemed.” God said, ‘I don’t care if it’s the runt; I don’t care if there’s a blemish on it, **don’t change that animal! That’s Mine!**’ But He didn’t say that with the firstborn. That is most interesting!

That we need to take a look at, because I want to compare that with the firstborn. We’re going to start in Exodus 13. Keep in mind about the tithe of the animal and look at the difference that God has. Exodus 13:11: “And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and shall give it to you, you shall set apart to the LORD all that opens the womb, and every firstborn that comes of any animal which you have; the males *shall be* the LORD’S” (vs 11-12). We would call that *reading the regulation*.

Look at v 2: “Sanctify all the firstborn to Me, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, of man and of beast. It *is* Mine.” That’s not complete. That’s not true in a way. It is true, but

that's the code. Down below it says *the males*.

What do we know? *Not every firstborn that came out of the womb was sacrificed to God!* The males were. So, when we get to the firstling of the flocks that you're going to bring to the Feast, guess which ones you brought? *The females!* Remember, this is a book of law, and it's written as a code book. If you don't realize that—for years I didn't realize that—and I'm scratching my head, 'What is this?' It dawned on me one day, of course, it's written as a law book, so why don't I read it as a law book. Once I did that it made sense.

Let's look at Deuteronomy 15, and this is what is so interesting. Once again, we're talking about the firstborn. Deuteronomy 15:19: "All the firstborn males that come from your herd and from your flock, you shall set apart to the LORD your God. You shall do no work with the firstborn of your bull, nor shear the firstborn of your sheep. You shall eat before the LORD your God year by year in the place which the LORD shall choose, you and your household" (vs 19-20).

This is very interesting. What does this mean? That I am going to eat the firstborn male. The rabbis will tell you that when you see that "...You shall eat before the Lord year by year..." they say—I'm not so sure they're right—this means the people who are legally entitled to do it, which would be the priests. But the context doesn't tell me that. It could also mean—and I don't know how this was done either—when you offered up the firstborn did it all go to the priests? *We're not told!* Or, did some of it go back to you that you could eat? *Possibility!*

Regardless of how we look at that, it doesn't specifically say that you shall eat it; it's just a statement: "...You shall eat before the Lord year by year..." We're kind of at a loss here exactly how to understand that. But the key is:

Verse 21: "And if there is a blemish in it, lame, or blindness, or any ill blemish, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God." Didn't we read where *every male* animal, firstborn, 'is Holy, is Mine.' Here God's saying, 'Hold it! If there's a blemish in it, don't bring it! I don't want it! I will not accept it!' WHY? And there is a reason:

Verse 22: "You shall eat it inside your gates. The *one who is* unclean...[ceremonial; not an unclean person, but one who is ceremonially unclean] ...and the *one who is* clean shall eat it alike, as the gazelle, and as the deer."

Why does God say that? {speculation}: I can't prove this to you in black and white, but I will tell you this—my opinion, for what it's worth—who or what is the ultimate firstborn sacrifice? Did not

John the Baptist say in John 1, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world'? When God caused this to be written, He knew 14-1500 years later a firstborn Son would be born to Him—Who would be *perfect!*

2-Corinthians 5:21: "For He made Him Who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, so that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him." A perfect sacrifice, *spiritually!*

Psalms 34:20: "He keeps all his bones; **not one of them is broken.**" In other words, this sacrifice is to be perfect, *physically* and *spiritually*. And the type is also to be perfect; it was a type of the great firstborn sacrifice to come down the road. I can't prove it to you, but I believe that. This firstborn was a type of the firstborn Son of God Himself.

That is a difference between the animal of the tithe and the firstborn—both Holy. But God says there's an exception. If you read the Bible and you see a statement that seems to be a contradiction, *it's not a contradiction*. It's just a different aspect of God's Law.

God's Justice System:

I'm going to whet your appetite. We're going to talk about God's criminal justice system. I'll be able to conclude with my best southern phraseology: *Ya'll come back!*

Numbers 35—this is beginning God's Criminal Justice System with the Levitical cities. Remember where you gave your tithes to the priests? Where were the priests located? Where were the Levites located? *They were located throughout Israel!* You could go to a Levite near you. You don't have to go down to Jerusalem—you had 48 cities to choose from. Of course, if it were close to the time of a festival and you wanted to bring it to Jerusalem or Shiloh, of course, you could—but you didn't have to; it wasn't required.

Numbers 35:1: "And the LORD spoke to Moses on the plains of Moab beside Jordan, at Jericho, saying, 'Command the children of Israel that they give to the Levites cities to live...' " (vs 1-2)—and it describes the cities.

Verse 6: "And among the cities which you shall give to the Levites, there *shall be* six cities for refuge, which you shall appoint for the manslayer, so that he may flee there. And you shall add forty-two cities to them. All the cities which you shall give to the Levites *shall be* forty-eight cities..." (vs 6-7). These cities were scattered throughout Israel. Three were east of the Jordan and three were west of the Jordan.

Why would you go there? *You went there in case of a homicide that was not premeditated murder!* We're going to find that the 'blood avenger' is very significant, and blood is very significant. I never realized this until I saw it in the Hebrew and realized how important blood is to God throughout. Not just that 'the life of the flesh is in the blood'; but when you think about that and you realize what *spilling the blood* means to God—Whoa! That's big time sin!

Verse 13: "And the cities which you shall choose shall be six cities for refuge. You shall give three cities on this side *of the* Jordan, and you shall give three cities in the land of Canaan to be cities of refuge. These six cities shall be a refuge for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for anyone who stays among them, so that everyone who kills any person through error may flee there. And if he strikes him with an instrument of iron so that he dies, he *is* a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death. And if he strikes him by throwing a stone with which he may die, and if he dies, he *is* a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death. Or *if* he strikes him with a hand weapon of wood with which he may die, and if he dies, he is a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death. **The revenger of blood himself** shall kill the murderer. When he meets him, he shall kill him" (vs 13-19).

No police force. There was no police force. If a crime were committed and your child was killed, or your brother, or sister, then you—the uncle, the father, the brother, the son—were obligated to go after this man and kill him. On the other hand, the perpetrator could flee to a city of refuge and make his case before the elders of that city, which would be primarily Levites and priest, and explain the situation. They could bring him in and there would be a tribunal held. Meantime, trust me, the 'blood avenger' is hot on the trail! He is going to come and he is going to make his case. There will be a tribunal and they will decide whether he's a murderer or whether it was by accident—not premeditated; involuntary manslaughter—whatever legal term you want to use.

If it were determined that it was involuntary manslaughter... 'Hold it, blood avenger, back you go to your city' and that individual who committed the unfortunate deed had to stay in that city until the death of the high priest. So, we a sense of imprisonment with possibility of parole. Of course, if the high priest was long, long lived it may be a life imprisonment. On the other hand, if the high priest didn't live that long, you might only be there for 5-10 years—it just depended on the system.

The reason for us is the *mind of God!* I

thought, come on, if he committed a crime that way, that you were so negligent, you could be free to move around in the city? *Yes!* What was God's point of view? What was God's objective? *He didn't want revenge!* He didn't want someone to be killed unnecessarily. He knew He was dealing with 'hot blooded' human beings, filled with human nature:

- vanity
- jealousy
- lust
- greed

—and He tried His best using an imperfect people to try and avoid that. On the other hand, how did you know if he were worthy of being put to death? In today's criminal justice system so many people have been found to be innocent. Why? *They didn't follow God's instructions!*

What did God say? *At the mouth of two or more witnesses!* IF you didn't have two or more witnesses, sorry, no death penalty—period! You mean, if 'I saw him kill somebody, I actually saw him do it.' Sorry! God says no death penalty.

1. God knows He's dealing with defective human beings; flawed human beings
2. it could be a misguided witness; maybe he thought he saw what he saw; maybe he didn't really see what he saw, but he thought he saw it

God says, 'I'm not going to let the land just flow with blood. In that case, we'll overlook it.' Besides, he still has to be imprisoned within the city anyway. God said that 'in the mouth of two or more witnesses'—you had to have two.

Maybe today with DNA, with camcorders, we could actually see it done and there could be a hundred witnesses that way, maybe. But that's today. We're not talking about today. We're talking about the system God setup back then.

We're going to see this word 'blood avenger' and we're going to see the word 'redeemer.' We're going to see the connection between those two words and what they mean. By using those words, God has a title, which is 'blood avenger.' In essence, God is duty-bound to avenge the blood of His people, His children. As a the 'blood avenger' did that, we're going to see what those Hebrew words mean and what God does to the *beast power*; what He does to the *satanic system* will be to *avenge the blood* of His people from righteous Abel clear on down. He's doing it! He's obligated to do it! We'll see it in Hebrew.

We'll complete this and show you from Scriptures in Revelation and elsewhere the connection of blood and God being the 'Blood

Avenger'—He does it legally! Not with wanton disregard. His emotions don't run away with Him. He does it specifically.

Scriptural References:

Count to Pentecost:

Referenced: *The Destruction of Sennacherib* by George Gordon (Lord) Byron (poetry-archive.com)

Economy:

- 1) Deuteronomy 12:1
- 2) Isaiah 28:13
- 3) Leviticus 27:30-33
- 4) Deuteronomy 8:9
- 5) Exodus 23:19
- 6) Numbers 18:8-9, 11-12
- 7) Deuteronomy 18:1-4
- 8) Leviticus 19:9-10
- 9) Ruth 1:14-17
- 10) Ruth 2:11-12
- 11) Leviticus 27:33
- 12) Exodus 13:11-12, 2
- 13) Deuteronomy 15:19-22
- 14) 2 Corinthians 5:21
- 15) Psalm 34:20

Scriptures reference, not quoted:

- Deuteronomy 8:8
- Exodus 34:26
- John 1

God's Justice System: Numbers 35:1-2, 6-7, 13-19

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