

to have cities of refuge in Canaan? Why do they need them? They were camped in the wilderness, all in one central place. If difficulties came up it was easy to appeal to Moses. It was easy to run to the central sanctuary if necessary, to the headquarters where Moses and the leaders were. We can be sure that if a man came running there in fear of his life, the leaders of the people would protect him until they had investigated the case. There was no need of cities of refuge. There would have been no point in telling people, forty years before they would go into Canaan that they were going to have cities of refuge there. When they were going through the wilderness, there was no need to mention it. The first mention of the cities of refuge comes at the very end of the book of Numbers, when the people had finished the wilderness journey and were encamped in the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho. There God gave Moses commands telling how the land was to be divided after it was conquered, and in connection with this division He said that in this land they should set aside six cities of refuge. It is a part of the general direction for the arrangement of the land, given just the year before the conquest begins. In Deuteronomy, when Moses exhorts the people to obey the law, it is then very reasonable for him to explain to them the meaning of the cities of refuge. Their position in the Pentateuch is perfectly reasonable as it stands. There is no such thing here as progress from simple to complex to more complex and to still more complex. There are cities of refuge in D and P and none in JE. Why should there be any in JE?

Student: Why is there one place where it says there are to be three cities of refuge and another place where it says there are to be six?

AAM: The original command in Numbers 35 says, "When you pass over Jordan into the land of Canaan, then shall ye build six cities of refuge." Then in Deuteronomy, Moses says, "When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations whose lands the LORD gives you, you shall separate three cities for you in the midst of the land. Divide your land into three parts. The manslayer may flee hither." How does there come to be three here when previously it said there were to be six? In Numbers 35 it says they are to be six cities of refuge and just before that in Numbers 32 it told how the two and a half tribes asked