

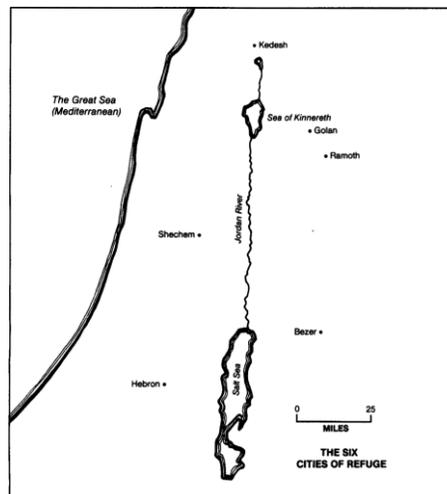
“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

March 31, 2016

- ✓ Numbers 35:1-36:13 – The Levitical Cities and cities of refuge.
- ✓ 1 Corinthians 16:1-24 – Final messages and greetings.
- ✓ Psalm 30:1-12 – Prayer for deliverance from divine discipline.

REFLECTIONS:

Numbers 35:1-36:13. The tribe of Levi, whose inheritance was the Lord and ministry was in the tabernacle, did not receive a tribal allotment. However, God provided some land and goods for them so they could live among the other tribes. The solution was the appointment of towns throughout the land where the Levites could be distributed and from which they could serve the Lord and Israel. These towns would also incorporate surrounding pasturelands. The total number of towns allocated to the tribe of Levi was 48. Six of these would be cities of refuge for those who accidentally committed homicide, a place where they could escape vengeance and thus live to stand trial. However, if a person was considered a murderer by virtue of the implementation he used, he would have no recourse to a city of refuge but might be hunted down by a member of the victim’s family, who had the responsibility to act for society by taking the murderer’s life. The same fate awaited anyone who murdered another with premeditation (Num. 35:20-21). We are also told that in the case of homicide, there needed to be witnesses to the act in order for guilt to be established—one witness was not enough. Moreover, a murderer could not merely pay a fine, he must die (Num. 35:31).



1 Corinthians 16:1-24. In the first four verses Paul gives counsel concerning giving. Although many churches today practice tithing, giving a tenth of their income to the church, Paul never use the word “tithing” even though he speaks more of giving than any other New Testament writer. As far as free will offerings, Paul advises that it is to be done on Sunday when the church meets together. Giving was also to be proportionate, in keeping with one’s income (Acts 11:29). What was important was that giving be a unified ministry with each one participating regardless of his income. In this manner there would be no need for last-minute collections and the gift could be sent gladly, no grudgingly (2 Cor. 9:5), or by emotional appeals or personal pressure. Paul’s practice in money matters was always aboveboard. He never asked money for himself and always avoided direct involvement in handling the church’s money. The bottom line is that money should never be an issue in the local church. The local church is to be primarily a place where believers come together to learn the Word of God and encourage one another. I would add that one of the qualifications of the pastor-teacher is that he not be a lover of money (1 Tim. 3:3). As I attempted to stress in last evening’s Bible class, the focus for every believer must be on seeking and putting our minds on the things above, which is only possible by living the resurrection life with the Risen Lord (Col. 3:1-4), which then motivates one to store up treasures

for the next life (Matt. 6:20) rather than being enslaved to the things of this world (Matt. 6:24). Paul closes this chapter with five exhortations: be on guard, stand firm in the faith, be men of

courage, be strong, and make sure that everything is done in love (16:13-14). Note, as per our recent studies on love how love really is the root, hinge, and fruit of all virtue: *1*

Corinthians 16:14 Let all that you do be done with love. A good look at our “issues” in life would no doubt come down to the fact that most of our problems are related to fact that we fail to love the Lord and others as we should because we are too busy loving ourselves far too much, which is why it hurts when our pride is pricked or wounded, resulting in sins of anger, bitterness, feeling sorry for self, entitlement attitude, and the like.



Psalm 30:1-12. In this psalm David describes his experience of being delivered from God’s chastening for sin and evil. Verse 6 indicates that the discipline was due to David’s pride: *Now in my prosperity I said, "I shall never be moved."* Pride is our favorite sin. We love to do our own thing. We

want things to go our way. We love our independence. We love it when people like us. We love to be thought of as being great believers. We love to think we are so great. It is any wonder when someone does not appreciate us or slanders us that we get so upset? God has powerful ways to deal with our sense of independence and power to “never be moved.” We all are proud people, without exception. May we follow the example of David in this psalm in turning to the Lord and praising Him. May we find hope in the promise that even if we find ourselves in the throes of divine discipline, it only lasts for a short time considering that God’s grace is for a lifetime (30:5), indeed forever. Each day is an opportunity to live by and grow in His marvelous and matchless grace. Each day offers new hope and joy: *His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning* (30:5).



All because of Christ,

Pastor Don