

119

MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Massei – The Death of the High Priest

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Massei, and it goes from Numbers 33:1 to Numbers 36:13.

This Torah portion discusses the stages of Israel’s journey from Egypt, instructions for taking the land of Israel, laws concerning the cities for the Levites and the cities of refuge, and the laws concerning the marriage of female heirs.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today, we’re going to look at the laws concerning the cities of refuge and how they connect to the Messiah.

Throughout the Torah there are prophetic hints about the Messiah who is later revealed in the New Testament as Yeshua of Nazareth. Yeshua said:

John 5:46

[For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for He wrote of me.](#)

The Messiah’s identity and work are foreshadowed throughout the Torah. In this week’s Torah Portion, for instance, God is giving us a hint about how Messiah will bring about atonement—that is, reconciliation between God and man.

In Numbers 35, we learn about various instructions concerning manslaughter. If someone commits murder, according to Numbers 35:33, the land becomes polluted, and therefore the death of the manslayer is required in order to set things right—or in other words, to make atonement. However, if the manslayer had no ill intent but his negligence somehow led to someone getting killed, he is permitted to flee to a city of refuge where he will be kept safe from the “avenger of blood” (Numbers 25:9-12).

According to Torah, the manslayer must remain in the city of refuge until he dies. After all, atonement for negligent homicide requires the death of the manslayer. However, there is a condition whereby the manslayer doesn’t have to die but can be released and can return home—that is, if someone dies in his

place. But not just *anyone*! Torah says that only the death of the High Priest makes this possible:

Numbers 35:28

For he must remain in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest, but after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession.

So, how does this reveal Yeshua? Well, the New Testament teaches us that the earthly priesthood is a shadow of the heavenly priesthood. Just as the death of the Levitical High Priest made atonement for the manslayer—releasing him so that he would not have to be executed but could return home to his inheritance—the death of Yeshua, who is revealed in the New Testament as our heavenly High Priest, makes atonement for all of us!

Even though Yeshua did not technically step into His role as heavenly High Priest until after His resurrection—thus it's not a perfect analogy—the picture is still there.

The point is that we all have sinned, and our sin has “polluted the land,” if you will. It has broken our relationship with God and has exiled us from our home. A payment is required for sin, and that payment is clearly outlined in the very beginning of the Bible:

Genesis 2:16-17

And the Lord God [YHWH Elohim] commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die.**”

Yeshua's death paid the price by dying in our place. He made atonement so that our relationship with the Father can be restored. If you confess your sins and receive the mercy and new life afforded to you through the work of the Messiah, you can be forgiven. Receive His love and forgiveness today. Come home.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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