

The Wednesday Word, September 15, 2021: Cities of Refuge Part 6 – Golan

As you remember, in previous weeks we've seen that six places were appointed as cities of refuge in Israel ... Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth and Golan (Numbers 35:11; Joshua 20:7-8). The reason for there being six cities and not merely one was that anyone who had unintentionally committed manslaughter would have no more than a day's journey to reach the nearest sanctuary.

The names of these cities tell us a great deal about the Saviour. Our final city in this mini-series then is that of Golan.

So, what does the name 'Golan' tell us about Jesus?

Golan literally means **Joy**. This name once more points us to the Saviour for He is our chief joy. We may have other minor joys, but Jesus is our "chief joy!"

The gospel contains great joy. When the angels arrived in Bethlehem, what did they announce? They announced good tidings of great joy! Because of Jesus, our Golan, ours is a message of joy. But some believers are afraid to let their joy show!

A preacher, Malcolm Duncan, from Belfast, tells of how he was preaching one Sunday on the 'Joy of the Lord.' Afterwards he was greeting the people on the way out of the building. At the end of the line was a very somber man with a stern face. So, Brother Duncan in his brightest voice said to him, "Good Morning". The man mumbled back in a gruff tone, "Good morning." The preacher cheerfully stuck out his hand and said, "Thank you for being here with us this morning"

The man looked grimly at Brother Duncan and said again with a bleak voice, "Thank you for being here."

The preacher felt some pastoral concern rising and said, "Excuse me sir but are you alright?"

"Yes, I'm fine" came the curt reply, "Why are you asking?"

"Well, I'm just seeing if you are alright"

"Yes, I'm alright, thank you for your word this morning."

"You're very welcome sir, I'm glad you came to worship. I trust you have a great day."

The man announced with a somber voice, "The joy of the Lord is my strength."

"Yes, indeed said Brother Duncan and my strength also."

Then the man looked at the preacher and said, "Do you want to know why I'm not smiling and talking?"

"Well yes, if you'd like to, please tell me"

"You said it this morning ...you said it's ... 'Joy unspeakable.'"

That's funny but talk about mis-applying scripture! Of course we'll speak about the joy we have in Christ.

The truth is, as we soak ourselves in the gospel, we'll realize the joy we already have. Our Master promised, "*These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full*" (John 15:11).

If you know that Jesus died for your sins ... it will bring you great joy!

If you know that you were once condemned and sentenced to death but all charges against you have been dropped ... it will bring you great joy!

If you know your sentence has already been carried out because Christ took your penalty at the cross. ... it will bring you great joy!

If you know that He is coming back for you ... it will bring you great joy!

Joy is a characteristic of the gospel. When the lost sheep was found there was great joy (Luke 15:5-6). When the prodigal came home there was great joy (Luke 15:23-24). When the gospel reached Samaria "There was great joy" (Acts 8:8).

When Jesus faced the cross, He did so with joy (Hebrews 12:2)

When we trust that Christ has saved us without any contribution from us it brings joy. However, there is no joy for those who are adding works to the salvation equation. Through Christ alone we receive full acquittal for our sins and knowing this brings joy.

Jesus is our city of Joy.

And that's the Gospel Truth!