

Safe At Last!

Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 4:41–43; Joshua 20;
Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 515–517

Maria was in trouble. Big trouble. She had accidentally dropped a whole box of eggs. What a mess! Well, there was nothing else to do. She had to tell her mother—and clean up the floor.

“It was an accident, Mom,” she began. “I didn’t mean to drop the eggs. Honest, I didn’t.”

“I know that, Maria,” responded her mother. “I’m just glad it happened in the kitchen where the floor can be cleaned easily.”

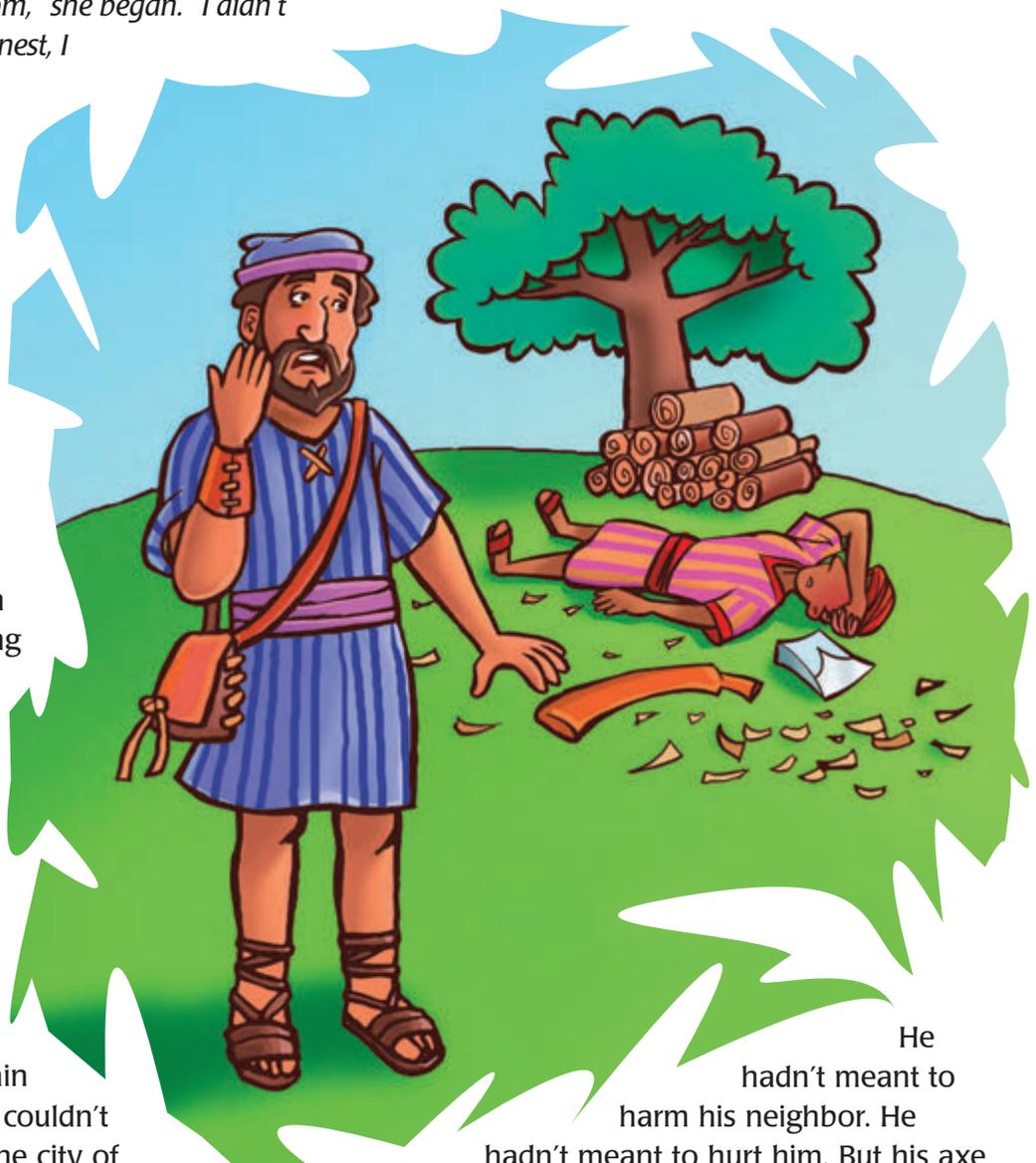
Sometimes accidents just happen, but people don’t always understand. That’s what happened in our story today.

He staggered down the road, breathing in short gasps. The stabbing pain in his side made him stumble. He looked back over his shoulder in terror. There was no one behind him that he could see. But he knew someone would be coming.

He faced forward again and tried to run faster. It couldn’t be very far away now. The city of Shechem. The city of refuge.

The road down which he ran was in good condition. And all the crossroads had signposts

that marked the way. “Refuge!” they read. “Refuge!” At least he wouldn’t get lost. The only question was, would he make it to the city in time?



He hadn’t meant to harm his neighbor. He hadn’t meant to hurt him. But his axe head had flown off and struck his neighbor’s face. It was true. He had accidentally killed a man.

The Message

*Church is a place of refuge
where we worship together.*

Memory Verse

*“In my Father’s house
are many rooms; if it
were not so, I would
have told you. I am going
there to prepare a place
for you”*

(John 14:2, NIV).

Yes, he had done it. But it had been an accident. An unfortunate, unplanned accident. Even so, his neighbor’s family would come after him. A life for a life. That was the law. But if he could get to the city of refuge, he would be safe. He would explain it all to the elders, everything that had happened. And they would keep him safe until a trial could be held.

He looked back again. Someone was running along the road behind him—far back in the distance. He sobbed and turned and tried to run even faster. He had to make it to Shechem!

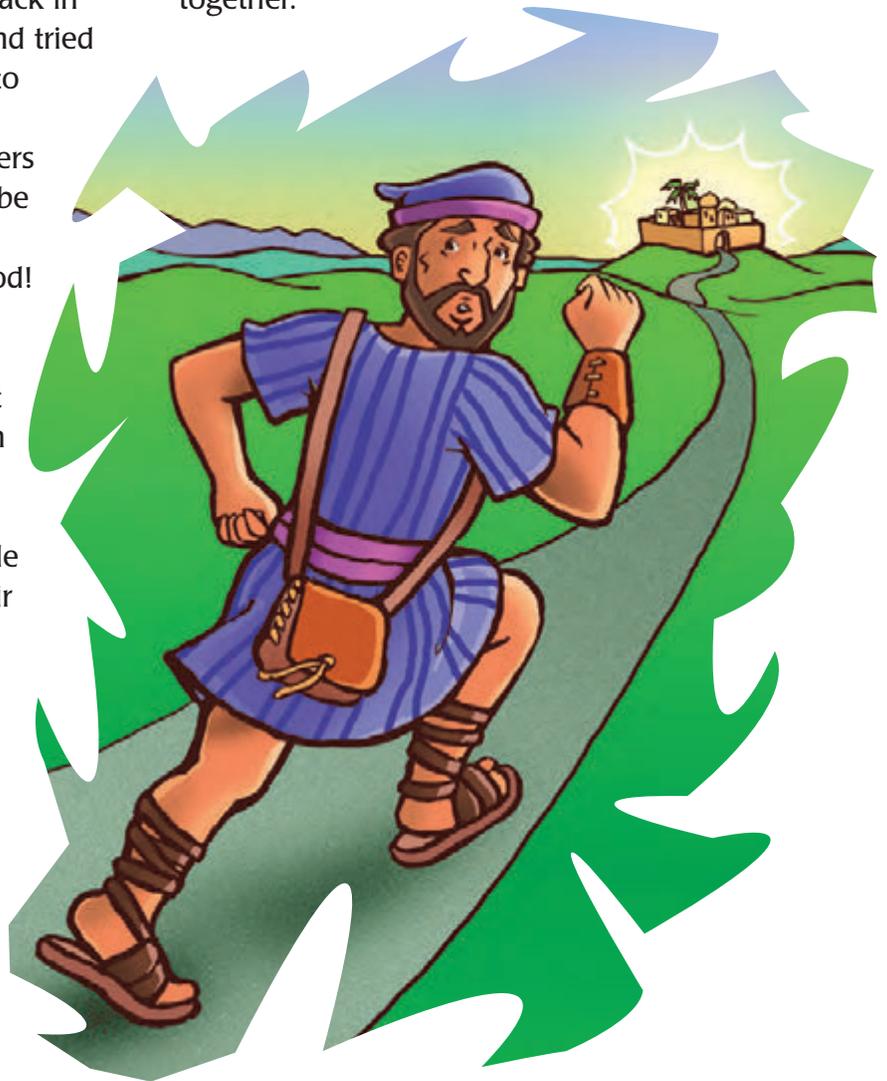
The city gates were just ahead. Elders were waiting there to see if he would be permitted in. He ran faster. He would make it! He had made it! God was good!

Having cities of refuge was God’s idea. He knew that sometimes people get accused of something they did not do. And sometimes bad things happen by accident. So God told Moses to set aside cities here and there throughout the nation of Israel. Cities where people could run for safety and be given a fair trial.

But the cities of refuge could only keep people safe if they stayed inside the city. If they went outside the city walls, they could be caught and hurt. Sometimes the people seeking safety had to live there the rest of their lives unless the high priest died. If that happened, all was forgiven and they could go free.

We need a place of refuge today too. And God has provided one for us.

Church is a place of refuge where we worship together.



S A B B A T H

DO With your family, take a walk and look for places of refuge for God's creatures. For example, holes in tree trunks, ant hills, a turtle's own shell. Read your lesson story together. Now look up to the sky. Read John 14:2 to learn about God's great refuge in the sky. Imagine your "safe place" there.

SING Sing "Anywhere With Jesus" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 45).

S U N D A Y

READ During family worship, read about the cities of refuge in Deuteronomy 4:41-43. Tell in your own words what "refuge" means.

DO Make two simple tents—one of strong cardboard and the other of soft newspaper. Sit in each tent and tell your family which is stronger and safer as a refuge. Write about or draw examples of a refuge from Satan in your life (prayer, God, reading the Bible, going to church). Attach what you wrote or drew to the strong tent.

DO Teach the memory verse to your family.

M O N D A Y

READ During worship, read together Psalm 61:1-4. From where does God send help? See Psalm 20:1, 2. "Sanctuary" is another word for church. God invites you to meet Him there.

DRAW Draw a picture of you and your family in your church.

SING Sing a song about church—"What Joy It Is to Worship Here" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 142). Then thank God for your church.

T U E S D A Y

READ Together with your family, read Joshua 20:1-6. Choose somewhere nearby to be your refuge. Ask a family member to run to the refuge while you chase them. Then have that person chase you. How does it feel to make it safely to the refuge? How is your church like a refuge? Tell three ways that you can help make it a safe place.

DO Use sign language as you say your memory verse.

W E D N E S D A Y

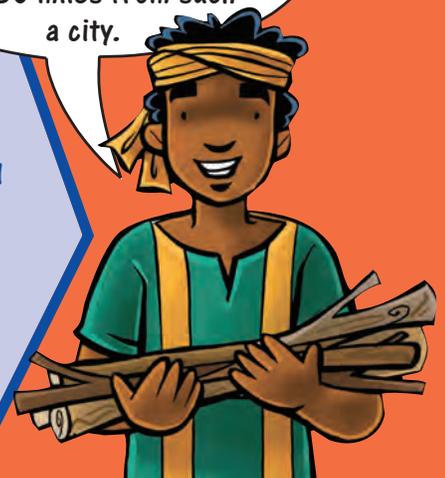
READ During worship today, read Proverbs 18:10. What strong refuge is mentioned in this text? Who is the Refuge who saves us from sin? We worship Jesus at church to thank Him for rescuing us from Satan.

DO Build a "city of refuge" with blocks, and have a toy "person" running toward it.

THINK Because of war, some people have to leave their homes. What are these people called? What does your country do to help them? What can your family do?

PRAY Pray for people who worship in countries where they are persecuted.

God had the Israelites name six cities places of refuge or safety. No Israelite lived more than 30 miles from such a city.





THURSDAY

READ With your family, read Joshua 20:6. When could the accused leave the city of refuge?

DO Because of Jesus' death, we will go someday to the place He has prepared—the safest place of all. Tell Jesus how you feel about the refuge He offers.

DO Use sign language as you say your memory verse from memory.

FRIDAY

READ During sunset worship tonight, tell your family about cities of refuge. Read Psalm 95:6 together.

DRAW Make a picture of the heavenly city of refuge.

SING Sing "I Was Glad" (Sing for Joy, No. 144).

DO Recite John 14:1-3 to your family, then ask them to say it with you. Thank God for the Sabbath and the refuge it gives from everyday life.

God Is Our Refuge Maze

PUZZLE

Directions: Sin is all around us and causes pain and suffering. Through prayer and Bible study we can know Jesus as our Saviour and claim eternal life. Find the path from the wilderness to safety with Jesus.



WILDERNESS OF SIN, PAIN, & LONELINESS



SAFETY WITH JESUS, OUR SAVIOUR