**Deuteronomy 4:41-43**

[*https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-4/deuteronomy-441-43/*](https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-4/deuteronomy-441-43/)

*After Israel’s conquest across the Jordan to the east, Moses sets apart three cities there to provide asylum for unintentional homicide.*

Having conquered the cities east of the Jordan river (3:8-17), Moses found it necessary to set aside three of these cities to provide asylum for the man who committed manslaughter accidentally. Hence, after the exhortation in [Deuteronomy 4:1-40](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+4.1-40&t=NASB95), the narrator tells us that *Moses set apart three cities* *across the* *Jordan to the east*, *that a manslayer might flee there, who unintentionally slew his neighbor without having enmity toward him in time past*. So, *by fleeing to one of these cities, the manslayer* *might live* “until he stands before the congregation for trial” ([Numbers 35:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+35.12&t=NASB95)).

Instructions for choosing cities of refuge also appear in [Deuteronomy 19:1-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+19.1-13&t=NASB95) and [Numbers 35:9-34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+35.9-34&t=NASB95). In fact, according to [Numbers 35:9-34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+35.9-34&t=NASB95) (see also [Joshua 20:1-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+20.1-9&t=NASB95)), six cities in total were designated: three on the east side of the Jordan river and three on the west side of the Jordan river. Since the list in [Deuteronomy 4:41-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+4.41-43&t=NASB95) is limited to the east side of Jordan, comments will not be made about the cities on the west side of Jordan here.

In [Deuteronomy 4:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+4.43&t=NASB95), we learn that the first city of refuge in the eastern side of Jordan was *Bezer.* This town was *in the wilderness on the plateau* and was designated specifically *for the Reubenites*. Bezer was later set aside as a Levitical city and was allotted to the Merari family, according to [Joshua 21:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+21.36&t=NASB95) and [1 Chronicles 6:78](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Chronicles+6.78&t=NASB95). The second city of refuge was *Ramoth in Gilead*. It was designated *for the Gadites*. This city is probably identifiable with Tell Ramith today. The third city was *Golan in Bashan* and it was designated *for the Manassites*. Golan was later set aside as a Levitical city and was assigned to the sons of Gershon ([Joshua 21:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Joshua+21.27&t=NASB95); [1 Chronicles 6:56](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Chronicles+6.56&t=NASB95)). These three cities were set aside for the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh in case someone accidentally kills another person.

**Biblical Text:**

**41Then Moses set apart three cities across the Jordan to the east,42that a manslayer might flee there, who unintentionally slew his neighbor without having enmity toward him in time past; and by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: 43Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, and Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.**