They say he crossed the platform, Truett did. And the moment he opened his mouth, it was never the same voice. He never had the same voice again. This was written by his son in law, Bohannon James. I read the whole story. You couldn't say he meant any intentional harm to his friend! Do you know why these criminal cases take so long [inaudible] so tired. I do too. But you know why? They have to prove in case of murder intent. And that's hard. You don't know what's going on here. You have to have some kind of word that was spoken, some kind of an act, some kind- getting of certain kind of a lethal weapon. You have to have something outward to prove intention. He says here, it's got to be one who has done it unintentionally. Now watch. I want us to see here now form this point on marvelous truths in this provision that speaks so gloriously so fully satisfyingly comfortingly of our Lord Jesus Christ. I want you to see first of all God's provision of these cities. Although this practice of the avenger of the blood was old (I told you all the way from Cain) God took the initiative to provide these cities of refuge. What does he say here, in verse ten? "When ye are come" (that's the Old English way) Seventeenth century way of saying when you have come, when we sing Joy to the world the Lord is come we don't mean that he is coming, or he's just now come, arrived, no no no. That's the perfect tense. Joy to the world the Lord is come means the Lord has come. That's the seventeenth century way of saying it. Anyone who understands English [inaudible] so here, "when you are come when
you have come over the Jordan into the land of Canaan” it is speaking prospectively. When you get there, anticipatively.

So God takes the initiative. They were not set apart after a long settlement of the land, and they said we're getting so tired of the population being decimated and this one killing another and the thing just mushroomed [inaudible] it's open ended! That's all wrong! No, they didn't say that and then you've got a committee to decide on this, that, and the other. No they didn't. And my dear friends when we think of God's provision of them in every instance in the Bible where redemption is set forth whether it's in illustration or type as the clothing by Adam and Eve by God they tried it themselves. They knew they had to cover their guilt! That part was right, you needed covering. But not through their own works. There had to be bloodshed. And that's why Cain shoulda known that as well as Abel. Their father had told them, the mother had told- how do you know? Hebrews 11 by Faith Abel. And you can't have faith in thin air. Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the word of God, there must have been somewhere of revelation. The father and mother had told them. And Abel went the way of faith. Of revealed truth. And Cain didn't.

So I say whether it's in type or in prophesy, in the temple, the tabernacle before it, actual fulfillment, God is always seen as the moving personality to bring it about. Hear it. Galatians 4:4 in the foulness of time the Sanhedrin decided to talk about sending a messiah, and on and on and on... In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law that he might redeem us who are under the law that we might receive the adoption. Sons, Paul talks in Galatians about son-ship inheritance rights just as John speaks of the family relationship, the [inaudible] ones born into the family of God. The tech non. Yes, and when we read Ephesians two, "you has he made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins where in times past you
walked according to the course of this world." You mean dead people are walking? All around you. They're dead spiritually they're just walking physically that's all. And they were walking according to the course of this world, (there's the first bondage, to the world) and doing the desires of the, lusts of the flesh and of the mind. If you want to see the lusts of the flesh, the first three chapters of Romans. They first uh, the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians the lusts of the mind, and God hates both of them. In bondage to the world, the flesh, and they were actuated and motivated impelled and compelled and propelled by the prince of the power of the air, that's Satan. Children of wrath even as the rest. A threefold bondage to the world, the flesh, and the devil. They've had it. You might as well mark thirty. Finished! Oh no you didn't read the next verse. In the next verse, which is Ephesians 2:4, we read "But God had said" bring God into the picture there's a difference. Oh what a terrifying picture in Romans 1:18-3:20 or 21. But now the righteousness of God not of man, not of the immoral pagan, not of the moral gentile, and not of the non-law keeping Israelite that we had [inaudible] rests in the law you make your boasts and all that.

And you teach someone not to steal, are you a robber of temples? You tell others not to lie, do you make that your regular stock and trade. Oh you're a dismal failure. One sinned against the revelation, in creation; the others sinned against the revelation in conscience and the third one, the worst of all, because more highly privileged sinned against the revelation and commandments. All equally but now a righteous of God has been revealed. Being witnessed by the law and the prophets. It's [inaudible] who believed. Yes, wherever he is, God starts. Do you know that when God takes as much time as Exodus 25, 25th chapter to the 40th on the tabernacle furniture and on the appointments of the priest of peril, and all of that, told them to do it and then it said they did this as Moses said, they did this as the Lord told Moses, they did this. Did you
notice where Exodus 25 begins in the tabernacle, where no priest would ever dare to [inaudible], no Israelite would dare, he'd have to come from the outer gate into the outer court. But God begins with the Ark of the Covenant, that's where redemption beings, always from God out. Did you notice Ephesians, you don't hear about man until the fourth chapter. The first three chapters are to the praise of the glory of the grace of the father, the praise to the glory to grace of the son to the praise to the glory of the grace of the Holy Spirit. And then "I beseech you therefore, that you walk worthy of the calling [inaudible]." That's the first place you're talking about man.

You don't get there until you have God. And that's why I say it lovingly my friends, don't ever tell an unsaved one "of course God will hear if the heart's right" As one of my professors once said, he said even if he recites Mary had a little Lamb if his heart wants Christ, no matter what he said, but let's be scriptural. Let's not say oh God save me! Oh Lord forgive me! It's your move, God's made all the moves. God as it were has turned upside down earth and hell. Ransacked heaven, we may say, in order that he could do it all gloriously. Christ is God's provision just as these cities of refuge. Lord would you please give us some kind of an arrangement. Would you give us a certain set up, would you give us some kind of a judicial process and procedure so we can cut down on this useless loss of life. God says, I'll do this first. I want you to see then God's provision of them. Then I want you to see man's need of them. This isn't some beautiful embroidery work you just put it over your fireplace and you may not look at but once in a week or once in a month, no this was needed. With society constituted as it was then, with this practice ingrained in the people. An individual, if he were to have his life spared would, has to have just this help. That innocent slayer, with him it was a matter of life and death.

As sinners, we stand in dire need of Christ. We can't claim innocence of any kind. We may not be sinners to the same degree, but bless you every son and daughter of Adam and Eve,
every one of them is a sinner of the same kind, yes. We're all guilty, in the deepest sense of the
word; we're told that special prayer was once asked for the conversion of sinners. Made in a
certain church, an evangelical church, gospel loving church, one day a woman came forward,
heart broken. She told what a remarkable sinner she'd been, how God had forgiven her for
Christ's sake and they all knew her life. She said I want to slip into a corner of this church and I
wanna have fellowship with God's people. As I make my way toward heaven. The silence was
oppressive. You coulda cut it with a knife. I 'member finally arose and moved that action of the
application be postponed another got up finally and said, "I guess we made a blunder when we
asked the Lord to save sinners. We didn't specify what kind we wanted. I think we'd better all ask
the Lord to forgive us for not specifying what kind of sinners we want to save. They all saw the
point. The woman was received into fellowship. What a need Christ the refuge filled. God
provides, a man needs him, and there is, let's come and look at what type of protection it was.
Look at the refuge in them. How safe that man slayer was once he entered the gates of the city of
refuge, he could mingle in the city with all the others and feel and know himself to be safe. He
didn't have to go down the street and everybody point and say "you know that old murderer
there" no, the elders in that city had already searched out to see if that man's claim was valid.
And it wasn't just on his say so.

And once that was settled, nobody could point a finger at the man. No harm could come
to him, what a refuge we have in Christ. Glorious words, oh to be written, with a diamond pen
upon the heart there is therefore now no (n-o) there is therefore now no condemnation, no
judgement, no [inaudible] judgement, no coming to judgement, all of it's been done at Calvary.
That's an indignity of infinite proportions to say Christ didn't do it infinitely, perfect. There is
therefore now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus, there it is. sin's been put away.
What's been done? The ransom's paid, the justice of God is satisfied, we're eternally safe, that's why the writer, the sacred writer of Hebrews says, Hebrews 6:18 "We have as an anchor of the soul a [inaudible] anchor on a ship." we have an anchor of the soul, that one who was entered into the veil for us. He's our refuge. You know why Satan can't get at a believer, because we're in Christ and he's beyond the reach of that Devil. He's [inaudible] Devil, yes. But he is not enough for Christ. Greater is he that is in us, says the apostle John, than he that is in the world. Once inside that city, that dear man could know he was safe whether he had any fears or doubts at times or whether he had no [inaudible] in the matter at all.

A lady was once awakened in the morning by a very strange noise of pecking. Wasn't usual and so in her subconscious as she was coming out of her sleep, got more and more insistent she wondered what in heaven's name could that be. When she got up, she saw. It was a butterfly flying backward and forward inside in the room, inside the window plane. In a great fright. Outside there was a sparrow pecking trying to get in. Well that butterfly didn't see the glass (at least we don't think he did) and expected every minute to be caught and that sparrow didn't see the glass and expected a good lunch on that butterfly, any minute to get that butterfly. He [inaudible] that butterfly was just as safe as if it had been a thousand miles away, of course, or millions of miles. Why, because that glass was between it and the sparrow. So are those who take refuge in Christ. Satan can't touch the soul that has the lord Jesus Christ between itself and him. Oh how wisdom comes from the mouths of little ones, like a little girl was once asked how she could live close to the Lord. She says I'll tell you Satan tempts me a lot but when he knocks on my door and I go to the door and find he's there she says "I say wait a minute now and I send the Lord Jesus to take care of him and he does every time." Yeah. You see when Satan sees the Lord Jesus, he gets pale all over. You would think he had [inaudible] you know why? He hasn't
forgotten the beating he got at Calvary. Colossians 2\.
Openly triumphing over these principalities and their ruler, Satan, in it! In the cross. The cross is not a mark of failure it's infinite victory.

So I want you to see, not only the refuge in them you say well it's beautiful. But it's like talking about a hundred thousand dollar house. Is it within my reach? Is it accessible? All the accessibility. They were on both sides of the Jordan, as I said. Equidistant this way and that way. They could be easily reached. They were within reach of a day's journey. They were placed in central areas in each division of the land. Open at all times, day and night. Suppose an avenger of blood got hold of this man, caught up with him at 10 o'clock at night and the gates were closed on union time. No he couldn't get in. No. The rods were kept in good repair, without obstacles. No hindrances to enter into the city. Is there any question in the mind of anybody as to the accessibility of Christ? Wasn't he approachable at all times when on the earth? You know the uh disciples found fault with the Lord Jesus because he was so accessible to the little ones but isn't it interesting that these little children and even the woman of Samaria waited until they went to do their weekend shopping in the city before she came to the Lord Jesus. The little ones, they didn't bother with the others. They didn't come to them, but they knew the attractive one. They knew who was accessible.

You know one of the most characteristic words in the vocabulary of our Lord Jesus was the little word c-o-m-e. In John's writings, "Rabbi where dwellest though?" Come and see! and the last invitation is, the spirit and the bride say come, not one [inaudible] this earth, COME! COME! COME! and when they couldn't take of the tree of life, lest they live forever in that miserable condition, draw them out and put a sword there. Here it says take of the water of life, freely. No flaming sword because Christ has made the way. Oh my friends may I say this; there
are many obstacles in the way of the soul's getting to Christ. But every one of those obstacles, all of them, are self-made man made Satan made. God nor Christ ever made a one of them. They have moved heaven and earth yes and even hell to remove every obstacle to a sinner’s refuge in Christ. We are told that after one of Moody’s meetings in London the crowd was leaving. A gentleman who had been at the meeting was engrossed in what he had heard and he stumbled accidentally against a dear old Scottish lady. Immediately, gentleman that he was, he apologized, earnestly. She looked up into his face, as she heard him speak. Seemed like a hungry sort of face as if it wanted something. She said to him sir, have you found the Lord Jesus Christ? He said well friend I haven't found him but I’m seeking him. And dear soul, she said, if you're seeking him he's seeking you already. And where there [inaudible] seeking there's sure to be a finding.

Yes. He's accessible. Nobody is going to come to the great white throne of judgment, Revelation 20 no sinner's gonna come there from land or sea, the sea is gonna give up its' dead and say "I woulda believed but the savior was busy that day." He was busy saving people and that dear man of God's meetings, Billy Graham's meetings, Grady Wilson's meetings, or other evangelists Harry Appleman's meetings, no. He's never that busy, never. Never. And not only was he accessible. You say accessible but it was for a Jewish provision. Ah that's where you're wrong. Salvation isn't just for Jews. You know how I know God loves the Gentiles? He made so many of them. [audience laughter]. Numbers 35\ Numbers 35\ Look at it. Come on, look here. Do you see what I see in verse 15 numbers 35:15; these six cities shall be for refuge both for the children of Israel. But I'm not through. And for the stranger, that's the Gentile, and for the sojourner among them that everyone who killeth any person unintentionally may flee there. It's for Jew and Gentile, available to all! You're, you're counted in. Nobody can say "I'm excluded because of national difference or condition."
Some people think that when a mother prays the Lord says well, I'll just give her a half of an audience because after all she is a lady. No. No. No. God hears all alike. All alike. Certainly. And my Bible tells me in Hebrews that when he comes to the hall of fame and faith, Sarah is there just as much as Abraham. And Jochebed is there as a parent, the mother of Moses, as much as Amram. His parents were there. In one way, if you're talking about hiding him it was the mother who hid him more than the father. And then three months came along and she had to give him over why? Have you ever seen a child in a home by three months, they get kinda vocal. Hard, hard to hide him any longer. No one could say he was left out. All could avail themselves to this provision. That's the gospel we preach, available for all. The Lord is rich in his grace to all, to both the Jew and Gentile. So that, and he quotes Joel, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; it is the power, not a power. It's the only power; it's the power of God under salvation to everyone that believeth. In the Jewish world and in the Gentile one. Jew first and also the Greek. Since all are sinners without difference Christ is their refuge from sin without difference, Distinction, or discrimination. Isn't that a remarkable verse in 1 Timothy chapter 10 that Christ is the savior of all men?

You say well then all are saved, we don't need to bother uh pouring out our heart's blood in trying to win them. Uh uh uh, you didn't read the rest of the verse. Remember the fellow that really was put in the city jail, stealing chickens and he said he was only doing what the apostle Paul told him to do in Ephesians. The judge said where? "Oh there it is in Ephesians, let him who stole steal." Don't quite your sentences too early. Let him that stole steal! Gave him six weeks in the city jail to learn the two words "no more." Let him that stole steal no more! Here you, what do you find here. 1 Timothy 10, that Christ is the savior of all men, especially. See potentially of
all, especially of them that believe. He is actually of those who trust him, oh no difference. A gentleman in New York had a very, I haven't seen that picture lately, but a very fine copy of Hoffman, the great artist. His picture of Jesus talking to the doctors. That, that uh incident when they came back from Passover. They were on their way, and they usually point that out in your trip to the Holy Land where evidently the family realized the Lord Jesus was not there. With them. And so Jesus, they found our lord Jesus asking them questions, that's the Socratic method. He wasn't trying to find out information but he was trying to get them to answer the truth. So here's the picture of Jesus talking to the doctors, One day a judge in the supreme court of New York came in on business, in this establishment. And he was instantly attracted by that picture on the easel. It is an unusually fine picture though I don't; we don't have any of them in our home because nobody knows how to put deity and humanity together. But he was human and we'll see that blessed face in resurrection glory. But his eyes, the judge's eyes would go back to it as he talked again and again.

Later in that morning he came in and the uh proprietor wondered, well did we leave something out of our discussion? No, he says I want to see that boy, he said reverently. I want to see that boy again. He said take it into my private office. Look at it as long as you want to. Well he was in there fifteen minutes, a half hour, he was there an hour. An hour passed and he came out, put that picture down, tears were streaming down his face. He said the boy has conquered me. And he went out to live as a believer. Those following years showed his devotion, his commitment to the Lord Jesus. Christ is the refuge available for all. To the rich, to the poor, the learned, the ignorant, the famous, the infamous. The moral, the immoral. All of them. Well we've seen all these features, yet I would be so remiss, God help me. I would be so at fault, so negligent, so culpable, so blame worthy if I talked about Christ as our refuge seen, illustrated, in
the cities of refuge if I didn't tell you this final thing. The peril, the peril outside these cities! The innocent man slayer, innocent though he might be, armed with good arguments as he might be, fortified with the best intentions of getting there, he couldn't wait a moment outside the walls of the city of refuge.

And not only that, once he entered it, he didn't dare leave it. If he cared to be saved he was to abide there. Going outside that city meant certain death for him. You say is there any case like that in the Bible? Yes there is. Yes. 2 Samuel 3\.

"In the war, battle of Gibeon, Joab who was the head of David's forces at that time Abner the son of Ner. was the head of the forces of Saul." In that conflict, there was the brother of Joab Asahel (a-s-a-h-e-l) was slain. Slain by whom? Nobody wanted to take that onto themselves. So Joab did that himself. So the third chapter 2 Samuel we read that on government business, on a foray, on a campaign sent out by David, Joab was gone. While he was gone, evidently, you know they had spy systems in those days. Somebody told that to Abner. They said if you want, 'cuz the house of Saul was getting weaker and weaker Scripture says. And the house of David was increasing. He said why do I need to be on the little end of the horn. Said Abner. Why be with something that's going down the drain I'm on the losing side. And he found a good time.

He said Joab's gone. So he came he made negotiated with David and left, in good time. Joab comes back and the first thing they ask him is do you know who’s been here? He said how would I know? They said Abner's been here. Abner's been here, he's consulted with David and he's told him to go well away. he's gone away in good health. Joab said if you ever want to be on good terms with me he says you hurry on and get him back you see he has slain Joab's brother in battle, you couldn't say it was murder. It was manslaughter. But, what happens? Watch with very carefully. He comes back, brought him back, and Joab begins to talk to Abner and he takes him
inside just inside the gate, no into the city, just there. And while Joab is talking with him. I don't know where they learned their lessons in anatomy as you read the Old; they always hit 'em in the fifth rib. He stuck him in the fifth rib, Joab did to Abner and he died. And at the funeral, you have it here in 2 Samuel 3 David is weeping and the scripture says all the people knew that this was not of the conscience of David, that his hands were free of this. Guilt of shedding the blood. But he did say this, died Abner as a fool died. His hands were not in chains his feet were not in stalks and all. He wasn't bound he could have gone where he wanted, and he was right. What was the name of the city? David was at Hebron. that's where he was crowned. Over two tribes. Later on he was there for six and a half, er seven and a half years. And later on he was 33 years in Jerusalem over all Israel. Do you know what Abner did? Abner stood right in the gate of the city and possibly Joab saw to it that he didn't get any farther. If he had gone inside the city, Joab couldn't have touched him because he was in Hebron. That, in Judah in the old country of Judah was one of the six cities of refuge. All fool to be so close and yet to be gone.

To miss the way of the cross, the way of the cross leads home. To miss it by an inch. To miss it by a mile. You'd missed it by an eternity. You don't have to miss it. Oh died Abner as a fool died. He certainly did. To be so close. to be so close. He leaves that city slain in the very gate of a place of refuge. Knowing all the time he knew whose brother he had killed. He knew he was the slayer of Asahel. What about you friend, what about you? Are you so close this Labor Day weekend? Oh what a beautiful way to start the Fall. First Lord's day in September. September the 4th. You can always remember here's where life truly began for me. Passed out of death into life, I’m not coming into Judgement. John 5:24, will you trust him, our father. In the quiet of this moment we thank thee for this God blessed land. Where we have the open door to a sanctuary. Here we have the open book, the willing spirit of God. We trust that the ears of our
heart, not just the ears of our physical body but he ears of our hearts are open and our wills as they have been ruled by the spirit of God we pray that they be inclined to say nothing in my hand I bring simply to they cross I bring. All the refuge have I none hangs my helpless soul on thee.

Bless the conference. Bless every heart. Lord, that some may enter into life. Some may catch a new vision of Christ. Oh the amplitude, the fullness of his provision. Blessed be he. What a refuge, how often David sang of God as refuge. He needed it. He was chased from [inaudible]. Driven as a partridge up in the mountains by Saul when he'd already been anointed in his father's home down there in Bethlehem. Oh in Christ we have such wonderful provision. Bless the administration of the conference. Those who labor for our physical wellbeing and especially to provide the things of our spiritual life. Bless those who sing may they sing not only with a voice and with a mind but with a spirit and heart as well. And we're [inaudible] our eye, the eye of our hearts they're lifted up to millions around the world, in this country, elsewhere. Christ is magnified. May this be the day of utter defeat for the strongholds of Satan. May it be the birthday for multitudes into the kingdom of God. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.