

It is used for circumstances of deep distress from which persons plead to God for deliverance (Ps 88:4 and 6 [MT Ps 88:5 and 7]; Lam 3:53, 55). Conversely, when Babylon boasts of soaring to the heights (Isa 14:15, 19), Isaiah taunts that they would be cast down into the depths of the pits instead. In Zech 9:11, the proclamation of the ingathering of dispersed Israel was likened to the release of prisoners from dry pits. And Prov 5 admonishes young men to keep away from strange women whose path leads to Sheol; instead, they should satisfy themselves with their wives, who are described metaphorically as cisterns (5:15).

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Lai Ling Ngan

## Citadel

A citadel is an elevated stronghold within a walled city. The compound provides accommodations for members of the ruling class and a secure retreat for warriors and citizens fending off a siege – “a refuge of last resort to which the city’s rulers, and perhaps the whole surviving citizenry, could flee when the city walls had been breached” (Ryken: 880).

Whether a large fortified tower or a complex fortress encompassing palace, temple, treasury, silo, cistern, watercourse, and garrison, a citadel (Ital. *citadella*, “small city”) requires strategic planning and expresses “a political will” (Fritz: 14) to retain control of a region and its resources. Nomadic peoples do not build citadels, which are monuments to centralization and urbanization.

The HB/OT uses varied terminology and characterizes the citadel as formidable but assailable. Moses recounts that the Israelites fought against transjordan “fortress towns with high walls, double gates, and bars” (Deut 3:5), yet no citadel (MT *qiryā*) proved unassailable because YHWH granted victory (2:36b; 3:4). When Abimelech attacked the city of Thebez, inhabitants fled to the citadel (MT *miḡdal-’ōz* [“strong tower”]), and when he approached the tower to burn its entrance, a woman dropped a millstone and crushed Abimelech’s skull, effecting divine retribution (Judg 9:50–57). After witnessing the defeat of his city, a suicidal Zimri fled to the citadel (MT *’armôn*; 1 Kgs 16:18). Gehazi hid riches in the citadel (MT *’ōpel*) in which Elisha took refuge (2 Kgs 5:25). Jehu ordered guards to find and kill all Baal worshippers, and the guards searched the temple citadel (MT *’ir*). Postexilic texts also use the term *bīrā* to indicate a citadel (Esth 1:2 et al.; Neh 7:2; “capital,” Dan 8:2; “temple fortress,” Neh 2:8; “temple,” 1 Chr 29:1, 19; “fortress,” 2 Chr 17:12; 27:4).

The citadel provided and symbolized security (Prov 10:15; 11:10); in the HB/OT, YHWH destroys the citadels of violent nations (Amos 1:4–15), protects the citadels of Jerusalem (Ps 48:4, 14), and is described metaphorically as the citadel in which the righteous find safety (Prov 18:10).

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## Cities, Levitical

→ Levitical Cities

## Cities of Refuge

- I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- II. Judaism

### I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Biblical law designated certain cities of refuge (MT *’ārē miqlāt*) scattered throughout ancient Israel to provide sanctuary or asylum to a person who had unintentionally caused the death of another human being. The unintentional slayer was thereby protected from a vengeance killing by an “avenger of blood” who was typically a close relative of the deceased person.

The earliest biblical form of the law is likely from the Covenant Code in Exod 21:12–14. The law mentions a “place” and an “altar” to which the accidental slayer may flee for sanctuary. Narrative examples of killers seeking refuge by “grasping the horns of the altar” at a designated place of refuge include Adonijah (1 Kgs 1:50–53) and Joab (who wrongfully seeks refuge – 1 Kgs 2:28–34). The implication is that the “place” of refuge originally included a worship sanctuary with an altar.

The Deuteronomic version of the law reinterprets the Covenant Code’s ambiguous “place” of refuge as “cities” of refuge within the promised land (Deut 19:1–13). Deuteronomy allows only one place with an altar in the whole of Israel as part of its program of cult centralization (Deut 12:1–14). Thus, Deuteronomy provides for a total of six cities of refuge scattered throughout Canaan and the Transjordan, none of which would have included an altar as was the case in Exod 21:14. The law also includes additional criteria to determine whether a