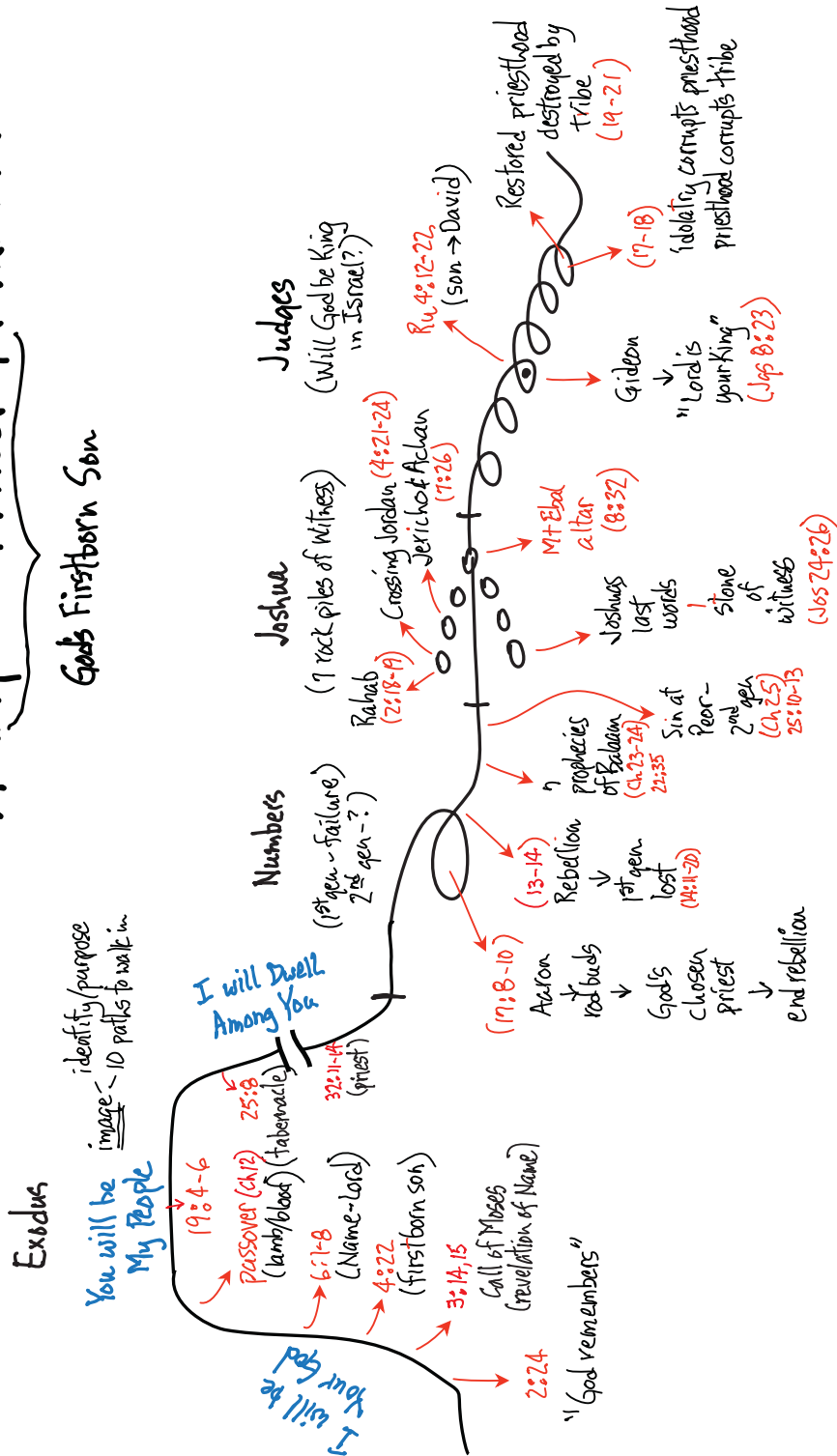


GOD'S FIRSTBORN SON—SEPARATED AND SENT AMONG THE NATIONS

A Kingdom of Priests for the Nations

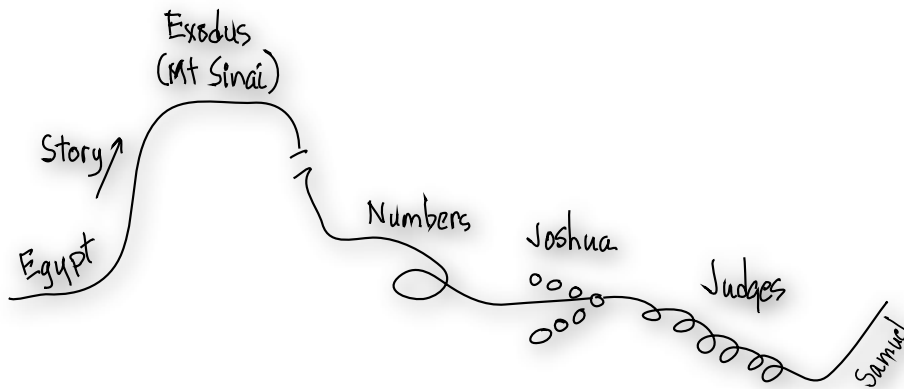
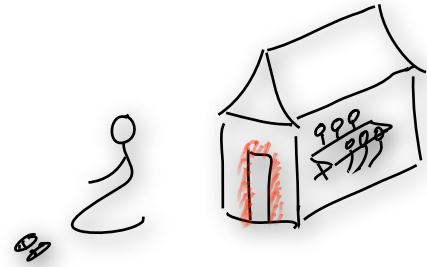


13– I Will Be Your God—the Exodus

(Ex 2:23-12:36)

Draw out existing perspective

1. What are ways your community is oppressed and enslaved? What would it take for your community to be set free from this oppression?
2. Why do you think God brought the Israelites out of Egypt? Was it just to deliver them from slavery?



Introduction and Context

A new beginning for the people of God opens in the early chapters of the Exodus. God raises up his servant to liberate his people from their bondage in Egypt to a greater purpose he has for them among the nations. He will draw them to himself at Mt. Sinai; enter into a special covenant with them, and dwell among them as he brings them into a promised land. They will drive out the evil there that is corrupting the earth.

Jacob's family, in the final story of Genesis, moves to Egypt and becomes exceedingly fruitful in the land. The land is *filled* with Israelites *in fulfillment* of the promise given earlier to Abraham— "I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth... (Gen 13:16)...and "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen 12:3)." Their growing population threatens the Pharaoh of Egypt who knew nothing of Jacob's family. He thought, "if war breaks out, they'll join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." So Pharaoh acts *shrewdly*, forcing the Israelites into bitter, oppressive slave labor. Even so, the Israelites continue to *grow* and *multiply exceedingly*.

Pharaoh took further action and decreed the death of every male child among the Israelites. Ironically, Pharaoh's own daughter rescues one of them. Little did Pharaoh realize this baby

would become God's chosen servant to deliver this people from Egypt for his purpose among the nations.

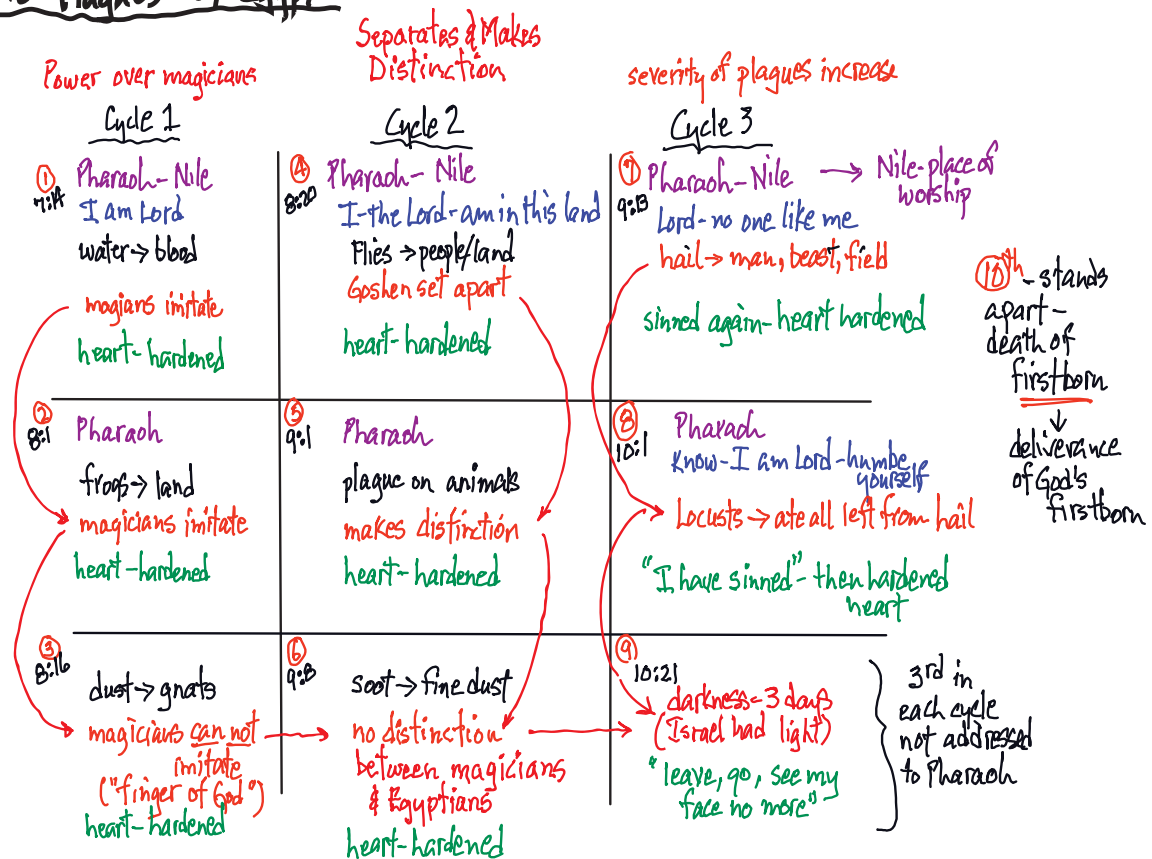
The deliverance begins. The people of Israel cry out to God. God *hears*, God *remembers*, and God *acts*. He *separates out his chosen for a purpose among the nations*. He proves he is their God. He proclaims his Name. It becomes an event they will always be remembered and celebrated.

Step 1: What is God revealing?

 (Read Ex 2:23-12:36)

1. God *remembers* his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex 2:24). What does remembering mean in this context?
2. As you listen carefully to the questions Moses asks God and God's answers, what is God saying to Moses (Ex 3:1-4:17)?
3. What is the significance of God's message (Ex 4:22-23) through Moses to Pharaoh?
4. What is the new dimension to God's name that he will communicate? How will he communicate this name? (Ex 6:1-8)
5. What do the plagues of Egypt reveal about the character and name of God? (Note chart below)

10 Plagues of Egypt



6. The exodus is to be remembered in a ceremony for future generations. The symbols in this ceremony combine a Passover lamb, Unleavened bread and a Firstborn Son? Explain the meaning of this ceremony that will be a testimony among the nations (Ex 11:1-12:36).

[Foundational Revelation]

- This mission is not dependent upon *who* Moses is but *who* God is. The ability to accomplish this mission does not derive from the name or the ability of Moses, but from God.
- God reveals his name **Lord** as the "**I am**"—God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God reveals a new dimension to his name—Lord.
- Bringing a *holy* people into this land will *sanctify* (make holy) the land. "Moses, take off your sandals, the place where you stand is holy...."
- The "outstretched hand" (authority/staff) of God is more powerful than the authority of Pharaoh and his gods.
- God is bringing forth his *firstborn son*, as a people (nation), to fulfill His purpose among the nations.
- The means by which God overcomes evil corrupt rulers and delivers his people from judgment is encapsulated in the Passover celebration.

Step 2: Focus and Reflection

1. What are the new dimensions to God's name being revealed?
2. What can we learn about *the way* God communicates His name?
3. How does God's work (in the exodus) prove that He is Israel's God?

Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight

1. There is a greater purpose in God delivering his people from Egypt. What is he doing in relationship to the nations?
2. *Deeds* or acts communicate a message about the One in whose name the deed or action is done. *Words* explain the meaning of our deeds. *Deeds* open doors to our words. How is this illustrated in the Exodus story?
3. **Power encounter** with false gods is often at the heart of an encounter with kingdoms of darkness. What can we learn about this encounter from the Exodus story?
4. Judgment grows in intensity when the will of God is resisted. How is this illustrated in the sequence of plagues? What does this teach us in confronting difficult corrupt situations?
5. God often uses *symbolic acts* to communicate His word among non-literate peoples. What meaning is associated with all the symbols in this story?
6. What does this teach us about the use of *symbols* and *festivals* in cross-cultural non-literate contexts?

Training Topics in the Story

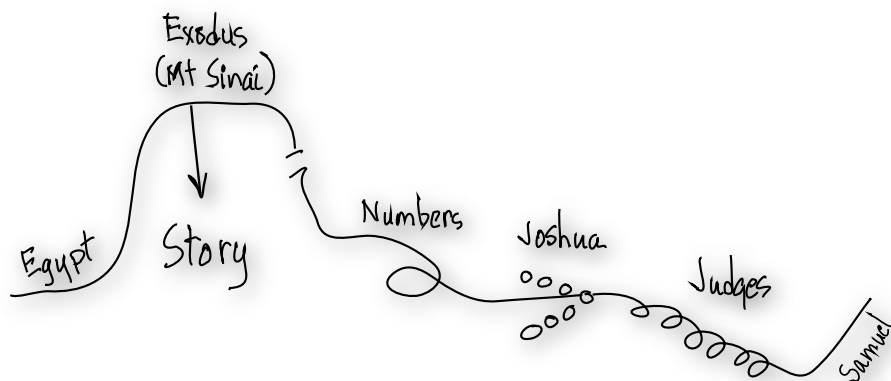
- courage
- authority
- holiness
- power
- judgment
- discipline
- ability
- firstborn son

14– You Will Be My People for My Purpose

(Ex 19:1-20:21; 25:1-9)

Draw out existing perspective

1. What do you think the highest purpose a nation could have on the face of the earth? Why?
2. What do you personally feel is foundational to your identity and purpose in life? Where does it come from?



Introduction and Context

The presence of God (symbolized in a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire) led the people of Israel out of Egypt on pilgrimage to the foot of the mountain where God had originally called Moses. There, God reaffirms his purpose for Israel. *She has been delivered for a purpose.* She is called to be a *separated, sanctified, holy*, people for God among the nations. This purpose and special relationship with the Lord, is sealed in covenant. Obedience to the covenant roots this chosen people in the *character* and *likeness* of God. It gives them capacity to drive out evil and corruption among the peoples of the earth.

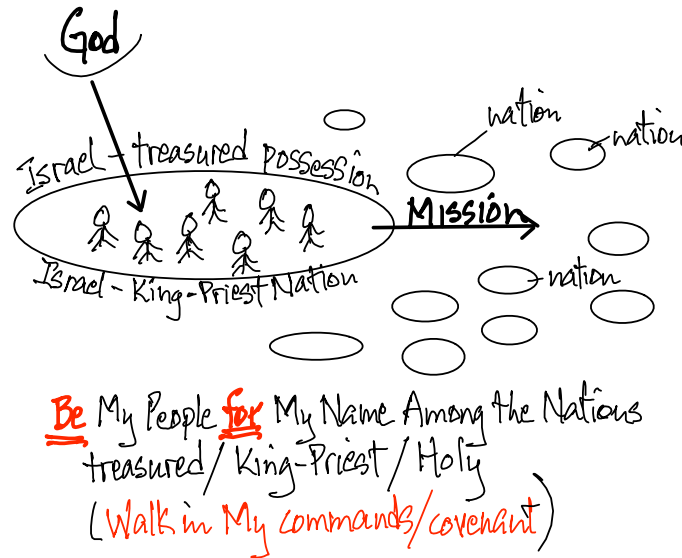
They arrive at the foot of Mt. Sinai and meet with God. Standing at the foot of this mountain was a “sign” to Moses. God had sent him to deliver this people (Ex 3:12). These people belonged to God. God was their Lord. He had proved his name among them. This was all for a purpose greater than their own deliverance (1 Pet 2:9,10). Listen to the greater purpose God has for them. It’s a climactic moment.

Step 1: What is God revealing?

📖 (Read Ex 19:1-20:21; 25:1-9)

1. What had this people seen and heard that had made them witnesses?

2. What was God intending them to be for him? What this a missionary purpose?
3. What is the meaning of the term God uses in Ex 19:14 (“bore you on eagles wings”)?



[Foundational Revelation]

4. This people was to fulfill a particular purpose for God on earth. They were to be God’s own possession (portable possession) to fill a land with his image and drive out evil. They were to be a *kingdom of priests* and a *holy* nation.

Step 2: Focus and Reflection

1. How does the covenant given to Israel (expressed in 10 commands), when believed and obeyed, fulfill the purpose God has for these people?

Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight

1. We become like what we worship (Ps 115). How do the 10 commands help us become more like God—reflecting His image?
2. How does a people walking in the way of the 10 commandments fulfill God’s purpose on earth?
3. What are the images and symbols in this account that carry the message God is wanting to communicate to this people?

Training Topics in the Story

- image
- holiness

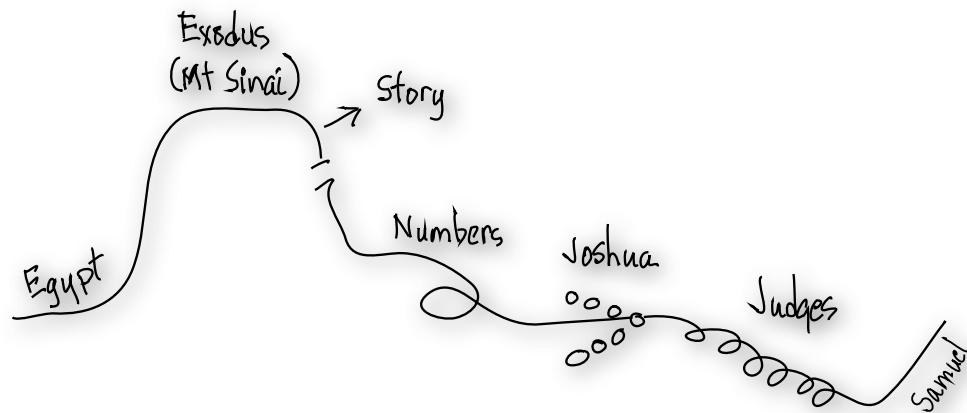
- priesthood
- commandments

15– A Day and Way of At-One-Meant

(Ex 25:1-8/Lev 16)

Draw out existing perspective

1. How do people generally relate to someone they consider holy? Why?
2. What is the purpose of holiness?



Introduction and Context

The book of Exodus can be understood in three parts: 1) what redemption means (Ch 3-18); 2) redeemed man is then called to a new morality among the nations—a morality rooted in the character and likeness of God; 3) this Moral man is called to fill the land with this image that the earth might filled with people doing his will, a reflection of true worship. We now come to this third part of the Exodus story. God not only has a purpose for these people to fulfill earth, he desires to dwell among them in accomplishing this purpose. But how can a holy God dwell among an unholy people?

God says, “Make a sanctuary for me (a holy, set apart place), and ***I will dwell*** (tabernacle) among you” (25:8).

Deuteronomy uses this phrase to describe this dwelling place, “...the favor of him who dwelt in the burning bush” (Deut 33:16); remembering God’s call of Moses from within the burning bush. Maybe that common ordinary bush, where God was dwelling in calling Moses, was a clue to what God now desires to makes explicit in the dwelling in this story. God intends to dwell in the midst of his people—a *common ordinary people*, even as that bush was in the lonely Sinai desert.

It was God’s presence that made that place *holy*. “Moses take off your shoes, for the place where you are standing is *holy*.” It was not that Moses had accidentally stumbled onto “sacred”

ground. There is no sacred or *holy* ground apart from *holy* people and a *holy* God who makes ground *holy*.


The tabernacle they were to construct was to be a *holy* place because God's presence would be there. It was to be made exactly according to the pattern of what was real (in heaven). A picture of the dwelling of God with his people (as in the Garden of Eden?) would be seen through this model-tent. There, in that place, would be communion with God, means for atonement from sin, access into the very presence of God, a place to hear his word and relate with God.

Covenant making ceremonies usually required the covenant making parties to keep a statement of the covenant in a special place or shrine. The tabernacle was to be that place, the place where the testimony of God's covenant (to dwell with man) would be actualized. Hindu temples seem to be almost exact replicas of this tabernacle, although a counterfeit, of this testament of "God with us."

The story is full of symbolic significance. Aaron's two sons have just died after carelessly walking into the presence of God, unprepared to face his holiness. The holiness of God was consuming. So, God, in his grace, because he longed to have communion and fellowship with man, *provided a means* for sinful man to approach him.

Reflect deeply on what this story teaches us about how God wants to dwell among us; what it takes for an unholy people to have a holy God dwelling in their midst.

Step 1: What is God revealing?

 (Read Ex 25:1-8/Lev 16)

1. How was Israel to prepare for the day?
2. Take a map of the tabernacle and see if you can draw on it a step-by-step process of what the high priest did on this day.
3. What symbols do you find in the ritual of this day? What do you think are the intended meanings associated with these symbols?
4. What can we learn about the character of God and how we are to relate to him from the ritual that was to be done on this day?
5. *Why* was God requiring Israel to perform this ritual on this day?
6. What do you think the *main message* of this day was suppose to be for Israel?
7. How does this story relate to the earlier promise of God regarding the promised Son?

[Foundational Revelation]

- ***Dwelling/tabernacling***: The tabernacle is a symbol pointing toward a present reality in heaven and a future reality on earth. Eventually the good news of the Gospel of John will say, the Word "became flesh and tabernacled among us, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). Scripture as well says "he will come again when "the dwelling of God will be with men,

and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things will have passed away.” (Jn 1:14; Phil 2; Heb 2:8; Rev 21:3-4)

- **Holiness:** A holy, righteous, loving God, desiring fellowship with his people, will require his people to be holy, righteous, and loving. “Be holy, because I am Holy.” The book of Leviticus details what it means to be a holy people, rightly worshiping and relating with a holy God who dwells among his people symbolically in the tabernacle.
- **Atonement:** To provide for this intimate relationship of oneness, righteousness and holiness, for a sinful, rebellious people, God provides a day for making atonement—at-one-meant with himself. Jesus death and resurrection are the fulfillment of the atonement foreshadowed here.
- **The ritual** to be done on this day would model a reality in heaven and foreshadow what would one day become reality on earth. It would happen through a sinless high priest (unlike Aaron) who makes perfect sacrifice through his own blood, once for all, so carefully described in Hebrews 9 and 10.

A Fourteen Step Process for the High Priest to follow on the Day of Atonement

- 1) *High Priest goes to basin in courtyard, removes garments, washes, enters holy place to put on priestly garments*
- 2) *sacrifices bull at the altar as sin offering for himself and priests*
- 3) *enters Most Holy Place with bull’s blood, incense, coals*
- 4) *sprinkles bull’s blood in front of the cover of the ark*
- 5) *leaves tabernacle and casts lots for two goats—(sacrificial & escape)*
- 6) *sacrifices goat for people and takes blood into Most Holy Place to sprinkle on atonement cover for sins of the people*
- 7) *sprinkle’s goat blood in Holy Place*
- 8) *goes outside to the altar of burnt offering and sprinkled it with blood of bull (for himself), blood of goat (for people)*
- 9) *lays both hands on goat and sends into wilderness*
- 10) *man who takes goat away, washes himself and his clothes outside the camp*
- 11) *high priest enters the Holy Place to remove his garments*
- 12) *goes out to basin to wash and put on his regular garments*
- 13) *sacrifices a ram for himself and another ram for the people at the altar*
- 14) *removal of sacrifices for sin offerings to a place outside the camp; there he bathes and washes his clothes*

Step 2: Focus and Reflection

1. What are the essential ingredients necessary in making an unholy people at-one with a holy God?
2. Why was this tabernacle a pattern of the true tabernacle in heaven?

3. How did Jesus' death fulfill the meaning of this day?
-

Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight

1. This day and all the ritual and procedures surrounding it illustrates how God communicated his message in appropriate cultural forms. What does this teach us about forms and symbols in communication?
2. Ceremonies and rituals have their place in preserving and communicating biblical faith. What types of ceremonies, or rituals, do you find in the community you are working among? Does this day of atonement teach us anything about how to communicate biblical truth more effectively?
3. What does it really mean for us to be made one with God from what God is teaching us in the ceremony of this day? Why is oneness so crucial to the heart and purpose of God among his people?
4. Is this teaching us something about what incarnational mission is all about?

Training Topics in the Story

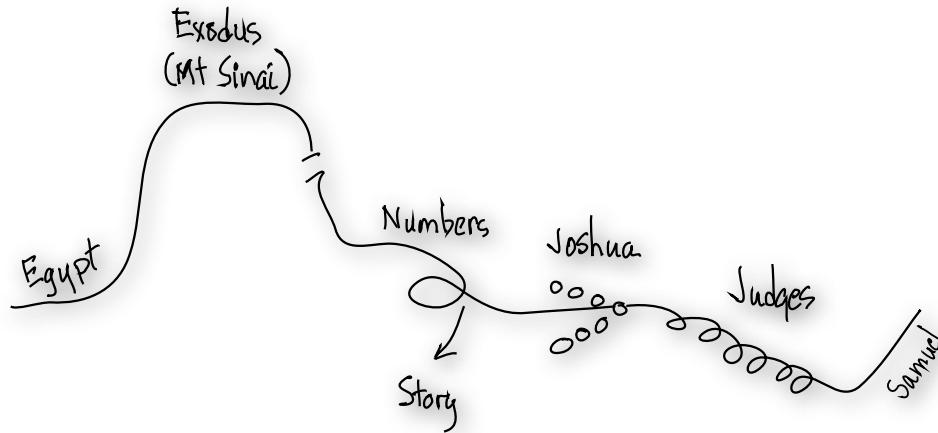
- atonement
- sacrifice
- incarnation
- ceremony
- ritual
- dwelling
- holiness

16– A Generation Lost through Rebellion (Unbelief)

(Num 13-14)

Draw out existing perspective

1. Can you think of a situation in life where the majority was wrong in its conclusion over a particular matter? What can cause this to happen?



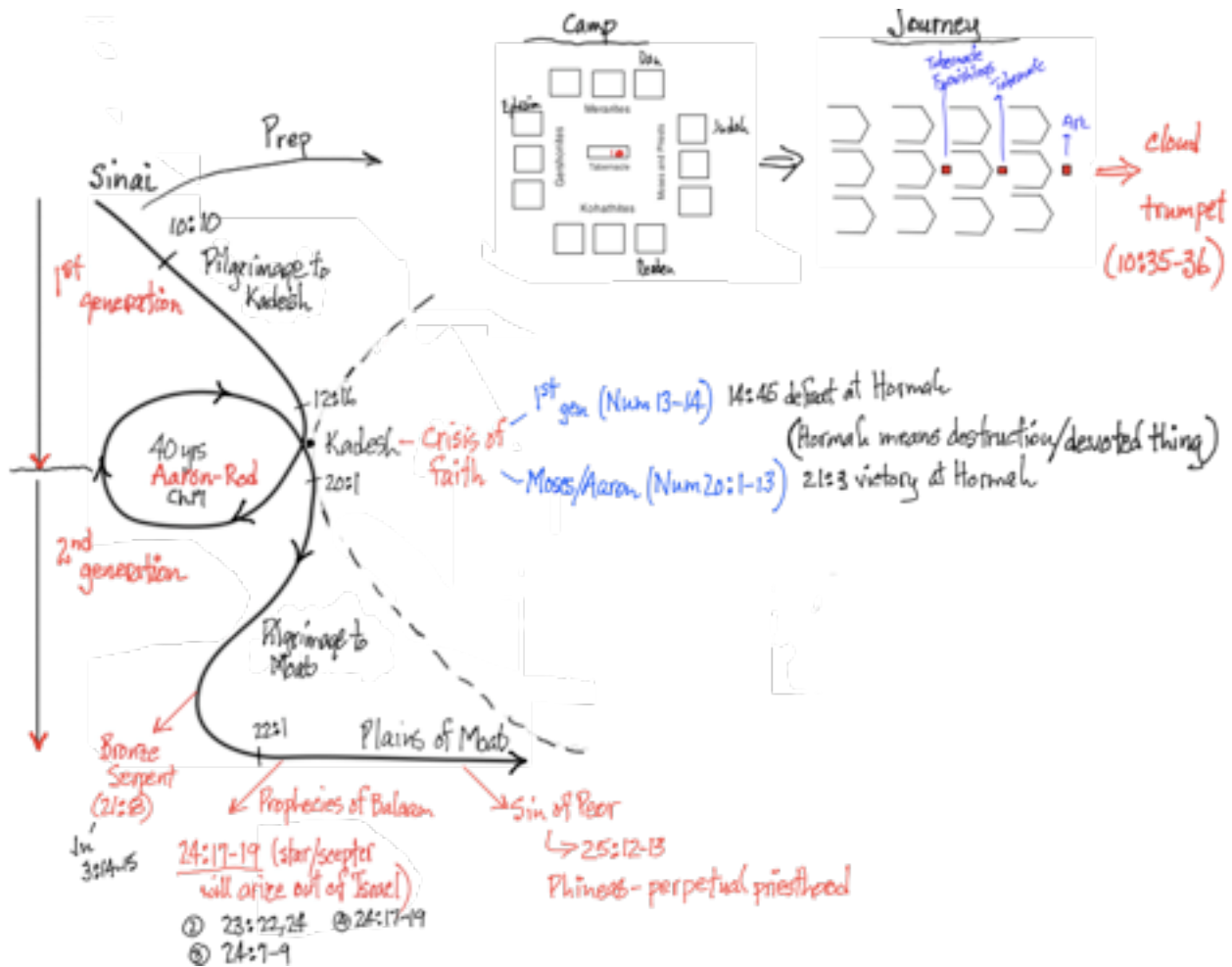
Introduction and Context

After 11 months at Mt. Sinai and the construction of the portable tabernacle, the people of God set out for the Promised Land of Canaan. The pilgrimage climaxes prematurely in a crisis at Kadesh Barnea. The result wipes out a whole generation of Israelites, and delays the fulfillment of God's plan for another generation.

The book of Numbers highlights this pilgrimage. This book is arranged according to two census listings (or generations). These two lists give the interpretive keys to the overarching literary and theological structure of the book, much like what we find in the genealogical lists of Genesis. The first census (for all those 20 years and older) describes the first generation of the Hebrews who left Egypt during the Exodus. The second census describes the second generation (who were under 20 years old when they left Mt Sinai (Num 26:63-65).

Following the first generation listing is a series of accounts describing Israel's rebellion against the Lord and His chosen leaders Moses and Aaron. The second census listing is followed by the account of the second generation, which arrives on the plains of Moab, opposite Jericho, facing the Promised Land.

The first generation fails in faith-obedience. The result is a whole generation unable to enter the Promised Land. This story describes that climactic faith crisis, or rebellion, that takes place in the desert of Paran, on the border of the Promised Land. Have they learned lessons from the first generation or will they repeat the rebellious ways of their fathers.



Remember, this is the nation chosen out of all nations, by God's loving grace, to bring blessing to the nations. This is the nation that has witnessed God's mighty outstretched arm in Egypt. This is the nation that had witnessed God's power and glory revealed at Mt. Sinai. This is the nation that had witnessed God's presence dwelling among them in the tabernacle. The nation moves from Mt Sinai with God in their midst. God's dwelling place (the tabernacle) is at the center of the community when it camps and when it moves. God leads them by cloud in day and by fire at night. They are truly a blessed people, and yet, as this story describes, a sobering, chilling spirit of unbelief grips most of them.

If this can happen to the nation of Israel, can it happen to us? What can we learn from this story?

Step 1: What is God revealing?

📖 (Read Num 13-14)

1. Describe something significant about each person's response to the report in this crisis. What key words describe their response? Was it from faith or unbelief?

2. What evidence is there that belief vs. unbelief can cause people to interpret and respond differently to the same circumstances?
3. Is it really one's people strength against another people's strength that gives victory in the land?
4. How would you define rebellion and unbelief from what you see in this story?

[Foundational Revelation]

- The nations has been chosen to be a King-Priest nation in relation to the nations of the earth. They are called to live under the rule of God and mediate before God like a priest for the nations. They are chosen to bring God's rule into the land and drive out evil.
- But Israel rebels in its allegiance and trust of God. They falter in unbelief in entering the land.
- Moses stands before God on their behalf, functioning as a priest delaying God's judgment of his people.

Step 2: Focus and Reflection

1. What was Joshua and Caleb's response built upon?
2. Describe the role and function of Moses in this crisis. How does it fulfill the role of a King-Priest?
3. What can we learn from God's response to this crisis of faith?

Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight

1. What are some of the greatest obstacles you face in seeing the good news taking root in the hearts of people in your community? Are these obstacle in you or in the people?
2. How have you and others been responding to these obstacles?
3. What do people in your community find most difficult in becoming believers and/or following of Jesus?

Training Topics in the Story

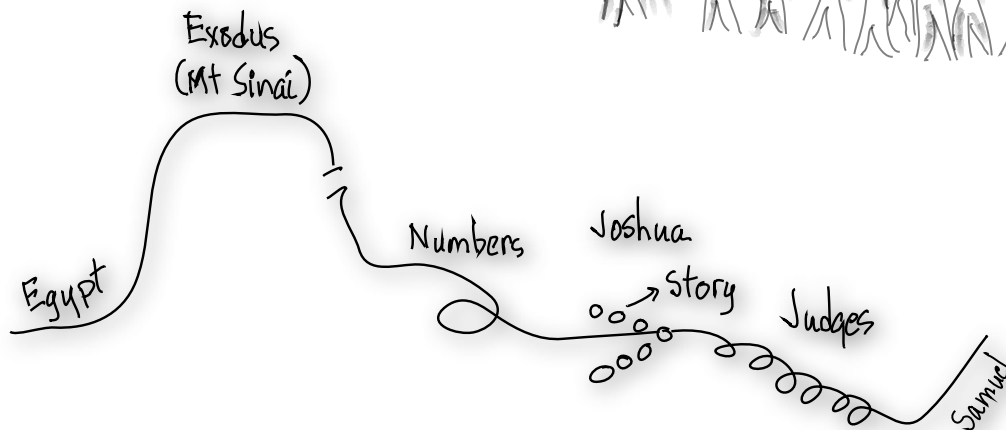
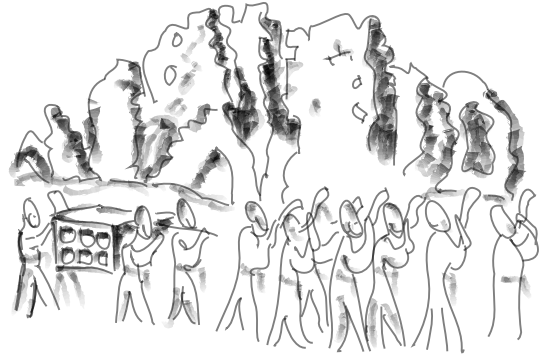
- belief
- unbelief
- priesthood
- faith
- rebellion

17– Victory in the Land–The Lesson of Jericho and Achan

(Jos 5:13-7:26)

Draw out existing perspective

- What do you think are important principles in *how* God gives his people victory over enemies?



Introduction and Context

The second generation of Israelites arrive at the boarder of the promised land forty years after leaving Egypt. God was prepared them during their wilderness journey in a special way. He taught them what a King–Priest nation among nations will mean. Over and over in the midst of their rebellion in the wilderness this priestly role was demonstrated in Moses (Num 14), in Aaron (Num 17), in the Bronze serpent (Num 21:8), in Balaam (Num 23,24), and in Phinehas (Num 25). Likewise they must function among the nations as a priest; standing before God on behalf of the nations. They live under His kingship and demonstrate that rulership in their relationship with God and before peoples in the land which God is entrusting to their care.

They must learn to trust God for provision. They must also believe and obey God to be victorious over their enemies.

How God would lead them would be part of his message among the nations. In crossing the Jordon they were instructed, “*When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests who are Levites carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it.*” (Jos 3:3). *This way pictures a people being lead by a God who dwells among this people. As the people follow His instruction, the Lord does amazing things among them.*

These lessons were memorialized in “rock piles” of testimony throughout the land (4:20; 7:26; 8:29; 8:32; 10:27; 22:27; 24:26). Possibly the whole book is arranged around these rock piles of testimony. At the center of the accounts, in the center of the land, stands a rock pile (12

stones) on which the ten commandments are written. Erected there, they serve as a testimony to future generations of God's purpose in bringing this people, in His image and living under His command, into the land. They will drive out evil and fill the land with His holiness and dominion.

Structure to the Book of Joshua

- > be careful to do all that is written in the book (1:8)
- 1)  12 Stones: "cut off" Jordan before ark of the Covenant (4:5-7); "cut" covenant (5:2) - 4:23,24
[Lord of heaven & earth - in covenant with this people - making way]
 - 2)  Jericho & Achan: acted unfaithfully... Lord's command (7:25-26) - saving Rahab's house (faithfulness)
[Victory - Rest - 7th day must be wholly God's]
 - 3)  King of Ai: victory over Kings--defeat turned into victory (8:29)
[Authority over King/city through obedience to commands]
 - 4)  Altar--uncut stones/Mt Ebal; covenant (read)--Law; ark (8:32,33)
Broke covenant: Gibeonites--did not seek Lord... (8:14-16)
[God's rulership in the land - incomplete]
 - 5)  Five Kings: Victory over Kings (10:24-27)
 --division of land [heavenly administration/rulership begins] - ch 11-21
 - 6)  Altar of Witness: did not act unfaithfully (22:26-31)
[wholly the Lord's - witness stands - "rescued Israelites from Lord's hand"]
 - 7)  Large Stone: "cut off" nations before you (24:27)
 --witness against if break covenant 23:3-13 ; 24:14-15 ; 24:24-27
> Keep & do all that is written in the book (23:6)

So, as they approach Jericho, on the outskirts of the city, Joshua looks up and sees a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword. Joshua asks him "Are you for us or for our enemies?" "Neither", he replies, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." The message this man has for Joshua is full of what this mission is about, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is *holy*." God will give his people victory in the land in order to fill this land with his *holiness, his image and likeness. A holy people will sanctify and make holy the land.* But how will God do it?

Step 1: What is God revealing?

 (Read Jos 5:13-6:27)

1. The instructions the Lord gave Joshua had no inherent value, or power in themselves. No one could “extrapolate” these instructions into a logical rationale for what would cause the walls of Jericho to come down! What was God teaching his people?
2. What did it mean to “devote to the Lord” the city and all that was in it, except Rahab?
3. Why was Rahab the prostitute’s house saved?
4. What was Achan’s sin and how was it uncovered?

[Foundational Revelation]

- The battle the people of Israel faced was not their own. It was the Lord’s.
- Following the instructions God gave his people was the means to victory in this land. This was the Lord’s battle. He was the commander. It was Israel’s role to trust and obey.
- Violating God’s instructions would be defeat for Israel as well (the account of Achan). All peoples in this land were accountable to the Lord.

Step 2: Focus and Reflection

1. What symbolic message is behind the ordering of the camp; the seven days; and the 7th day?
2. What was the meaning and message behind “devoting this city and its people” to the Lord?
3. What was the difference between the heart and action of Rahab and Achan?

Step 3: Application with Missiological Insight

1. What does this story teach us in following the Lord’s lead in bringing his kingdom rule into corrupt, “tightly shut”, humanly impossible situations?
2. How would you describe and practice the type of faith and obedience illustrated in this story?
3. How do we “devote to the Lord” the blessings that come our way in His work?

Training Topics in the Story

- obedience
- remembrance

- witness
- commands
- unfaithfulness
- symbols