

BOOK OF NUMBERS

Lesson 7: Wilderness of Paran

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God's Response

Read Numbers 14:28-38.

- The rebellious generation gets their wish – to die in the wilderness
- God gives the kingdom to the little children
- The children will be victims of their parents' infidelity. They will wander in the wilderness with their parents for 40 years.
- Those who believed the Land would devour them are going to be consumed by the wilderness.
 - Caleb and Joshua will bury 625,550 kinsmen.

The Physical Consequences

- The camp divided into three categories:
 - Caleb and Joshua who are assured of entering the Land
 - The first generation who are assured of never entering the Land.
 - The second generation (the children) for whom it will be determined whether they enter the Land or not.
- We will learn how to experience God and glorious living in the midst of our **desolation**.
- Learning how to be **others-focused**
- Testing the parents' **faithfulness** to God in preparing their children to enter the Land.
- We will experience **defeat** at the hands of enemies
- We will encounter additional **enemies**, roadblocks and setbacks that we might have avoided.

Standing in Caleb and Joshua's shoes

What these consequences mean for us

- We are not exempt from the journey.
- Our role as co-laborers
 - Suffer with them in their defeats
 - Share in their grief.
 - Rejoice with them in victories.
 - Struggle with them.
 - Tested with them to see if we persevere in our faith.
- Our role as leadership in training
 - Observe Moses and take lessons from leadership
 - To learn something about the people we are going to be leading.
 - Learning some lessons with the second generation that we did not experience with our own generation.

Entering the Land: What is this a picture of, spiritually?

Read Hebrews 3:7 – 4:11

- Begins with the Psalm of David talking about how we hardened our hearts in the days of the rebellion – the wilderness journey from when we left Egypt to when we enter the Land
- As punishment for **disobedience** and **unbelief**, some did not enter the land.
- In David's psalm, there is the additional punishment of not entering in the Lord's **rest**.
- The reasons for not entering the rest include:
 - They could not enter in because of unbelief (those who believe can enter in)
 - Unbelief in departing from the Lord (you were once with the Lord but now have departed)
 - Disobedience

Many scholars teach that the writer of Hebrews is talking about salvation, even losing your salvation on this journey as a result of disobedience and unbelief. (True or false?)

~~Not entering the land = not entering the Lord's rest = losing one's salvation on the journey~~

Entering the Land: What is this a picture of, spiritually?

Entering the land is somehow connected with this idea of entering the Lord's rest

Sorting out the picture:

- What it means to enter the land, spiritually
- How it relates to the greater goal of entering the Lord's rest
- How salvation does/does not fit into the picture

The writer of Hebrews points us to two pictures:

- The Wilderness Journey and our failing to enter the Land
- The Sabbath

We are going to examine these two pictures, mesh them together to see the picture they make and then apply that picture to the Hebrews passage

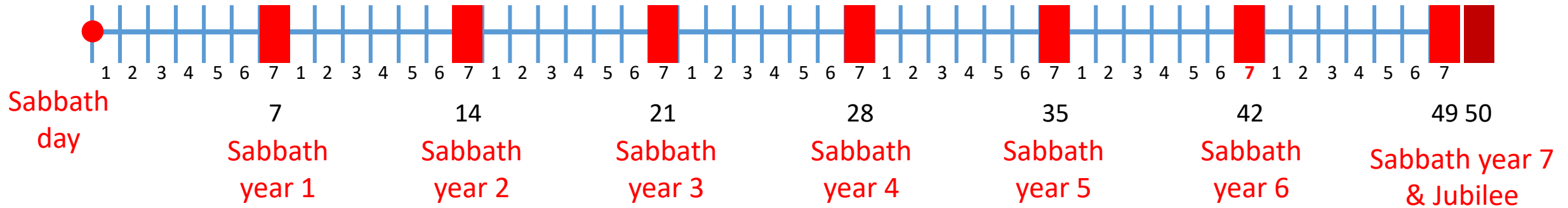
The Sabbath

- A picture of God's glorious living
- This journey is sort of an extended Sabbath for us
- It is a break between the work we did in Egypt as slaves and the work we will do for God in the Land.
- The Sabbath theme runs in the background of the Numbers' journey

When we study the Sabbath, we are not just studying the Sabbath day

- There are three levels of Sabbath
- Each is experientially different from the other

Three levels of Sabbath



Sabbath Day Experience

One day of rest from work

How this plays out in the journey:

Every day we will get manna for that day. On the sixth day God will give us enough manna to carry us through the Sabbath rest.

Base level relationship with God

Least level of commitment to God
Least level of trust in God
Least glorious experience

Sabbath Year Experience

One year of rest for the land (not man)

Only happens once you enter the Land

Work the land for 6 years
In the 6th year, the land yields extra provision to carry us thru the Sabbath year
Fruitfulness gifted to us apart from works
Becomes the seed for future harvests

Next level of relationship with God

Increasing commitment to God
Increasing trust in God
More glorious experience

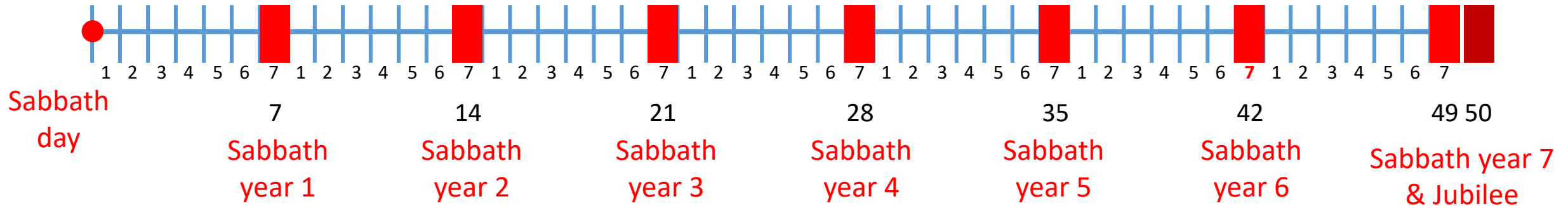
Jubilee Year Experience

Additional year of rest added to Sabbath year – rest for man and land
Extra extra portion of fruitfulness
Complete rest from work / enemies
Release of captives / debts
Claiming the inheritance

Final level of relationship with God

– oneness with Him
Full commitment to God
Full trust in God
Most glorious experience

Three levels of Sabbath experience



The Sabbaths represent a spiritual growth chart.

- Each level represents a point of growth in our trust of the Lord and commitment to Him.
- Each is a new and distinct level of experience.
- Each level represents a step toward glorification and increased oneness with God.

The writer of Hebrews is referencing the Sabbath model. It is an experiential model.

The difference from one state to the next is not in your spiritual status (saved or unsaved).

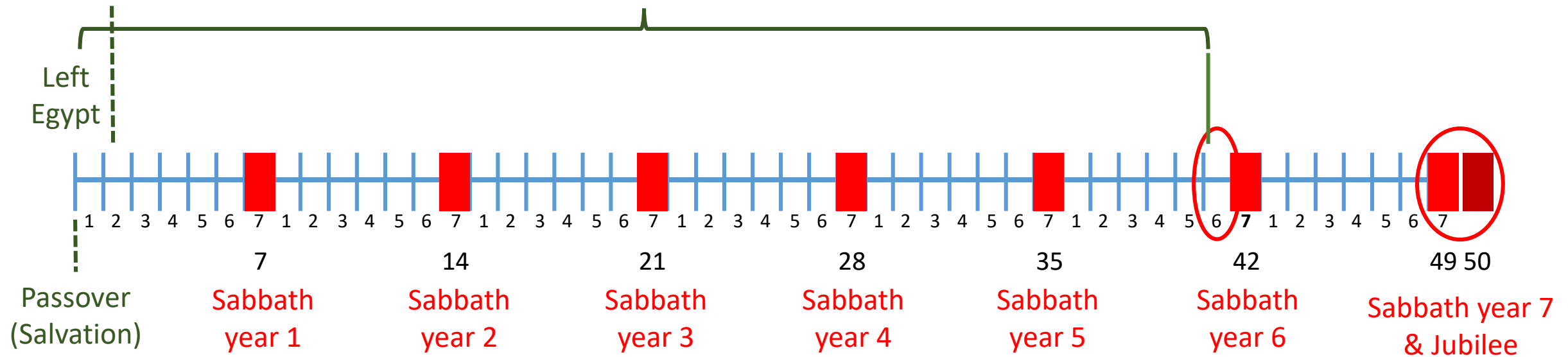
The difference from one level to the next is your spiritual experience of God's glory.

We are all saved on this journey, but some will only achieve a basic relationship (Sabbath day level) where others will experience a Jubilee-level blessing.

The goal is to reach the Jubilee level of experience.

1st Generation should have entered the land

2nd Generation enters the Land with Joshua



We should have entered the land in the 2nd year.

In the 3rd year, we would tithe the first fruit of the land to the Levites (Numbers 18, Deuteronomy 14:28, 26:12)

Then we would have followed the Sabbath year schedule and reached the Jubilee

Reckoning from the day we left Egypt, we will enter the land on the 10th day of the 1st month in the **41st year** (Joshua 4:19)

In the Sabbath schedule, this is the 6th year – the year of increasing fruitfulness

A year of rest for the land, not the man – we will be engaged in warfare

Joshua did not give them rest (Hebrews 4:8)

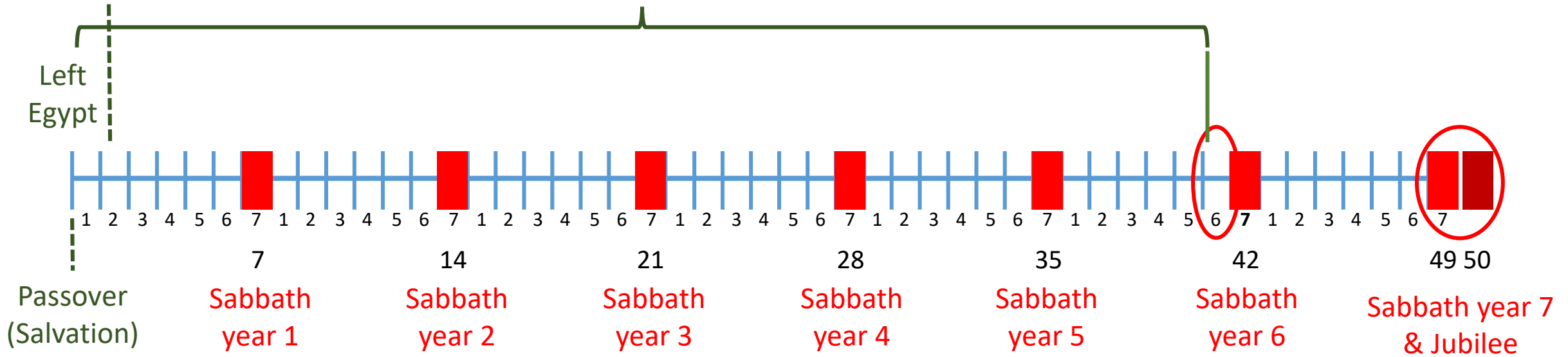
The Jubilee rest is The Lord's rest

Where on the timeline does salvation happen?

1st Generation should have entered the land

40 years of wandering

2nd Generation enters the Land with Joshua

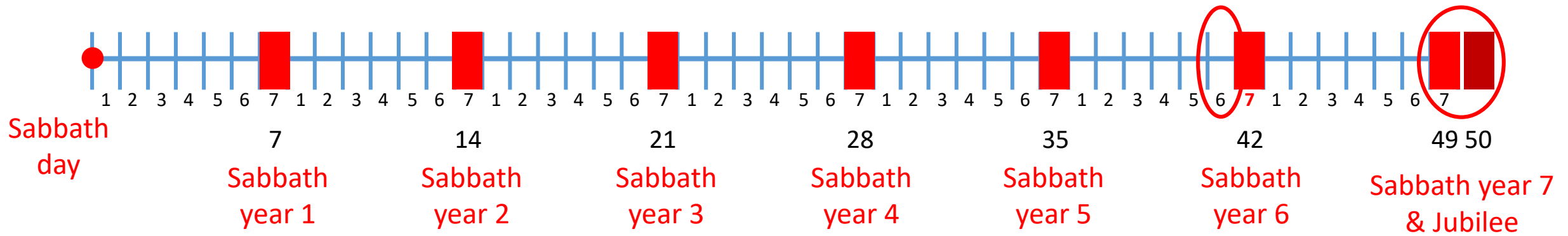


Everyone must celebrate the Passover before beginning the journey
(Passover = Christ's Death = Salvation)

Entering the land happens somewhere in the middle of the journey.
Entering the land doesn't mean receiving our salvation.
Failing to enter the land doesn't mean losing our salvation.

Entering the rest happens at the end of the journey.
Entering the rest doesn't mean receiving our salvation.
Failing to enter the rest doesn't mean losing our salvation.

~~Not entering the land = not entering the Lord's rest = losing one's salvation on the journey~~



Sabbath Day Experience

Paired with the wilderness wandering

Base level relationship with God

Least level of commitment to God
 Least level of trust in God
 Least glorious experience

Unprofitable servants/Outer darkness with wailing and gnashing of teeth

Sabbath Year Experience

Paired with entering the Land under Joshua, but the kingdom still unclaimed

Next level of relationship with God

Increasing commitment to God
 Increasing trust in God
 More glorious experience

Profitable servants entering the kingdom with various levels of reward
 Receiving crowns – sitting at the wedding feast table

Jubilee Year Experience

Inheriting the kingdom and having rest from enemies

Final level of oneness with God

Full commitment to God
 Full trust in God
 Most glorious experience

Doctrine of Rewards

Based on our faithfulness in this journey, whatever level of experience we achieve (and its corresponding place) is going to translate into the level of experience we will have in the Kingdom of Christ (and its corresponding place).

Entering the Land, in terms of fruitfulness

Entering the land has nothing to do with salvation.

Entering the land does not mean entering rest.

Entering the land is a new level of relationship with God and experiencing **fruitfulness**.

Fruitfulness is the key difference in this level of relationship.

Fruitfulness is a reward for faithfulness.
(Camp Rule 2)

We are going to watch the first generation begin to waste away and become unfruitful

Physical fruitfulness

- Physical fruitfulness provided by the Lord through the land.
- Fruitfulness beyond our own cultivation effort
- Builds trust for the future – we don't have to rely on our own work for the Sabbath year
- Becomes the seed we plant for future years.

Spiritual fruitfulness

- Spiritual fruitfulness provided by the Lord through the Spirit.
- Gifted to us apart from works.
- Builds trust for the future – we don't have to rely on our own works.
- Becomes the new seed we cultivate and increase in our life.

The Peril of Not Progressing

Read Hebrews 6:4-8.

We have a proven history of God's faithfulness behind us in this physical journey.

Now we have come to the place where witnesses have shown us the fruit and we may have tasted it for ourselves.

The experience is real. The proof is tangible.

If we refuse to believe and turn back to Egypt at this point, it will be in denial of the reality of all that has happened.

This generation has opted to remain in the least level of Sabbath experience.

God will not let us go back to Egypt.

- If we return to Egypt, the sacrifice of those firstborn sons will be worthless. He will not allow those firstborn sons to die again to redeem us a second time.
- If we return to Egypt, it will reflect on the Lord's glory – the nation's will say He was unable to redeem His people. It will put Him to open shame.

Unfaithfulness results in permanent unfruitfulness.

- We are like the land that the Lord has cultivated for His use.
- As a result we were meant to receive a blessing of fruitfulness.
- Despite His cultivation, some have produced thorn and briers. They are not cursed but near to it.

New Camp Rules, Chapter 15

Camp Rule #5: Be others-focused.

Camp Rule #6: Laws of unintentional and presumptuous sin. (Numbers 15:22-31).

- Learning to discern the difference between them.
Executing judgment accordingly.

Unintentional sin

- Breaking the commandments without meaning to or realizing you have done so. Not a deliberate act.
- The penalty is to offer sacrifices (burnt offering, a sin offering, and a grain or drink offering)
- There is forgiveness for unintentional sin.

Intentional or presumptuous sin

- Deliberate breaking of the Laws.
- The penalty is being cut off from the congregation.
- There is no forgiveness for presumptuous sin.

We have now moved into a new level of relationship.

- We are responsible for judging each other.
- We are responsible for carrying out penalties – even death penalties.

New Camp Rules, Chapter 15

Let's practice...

Read Numbers 15:32-36. A man is found gathering sticks on the Sabbath.

- **What class of sin is it?**
- **What is the punishment?**
- **Who carries out the punishment?**

This is the first time in this entire journey we execute the death penalty on someone for breaking the Law. Up to now, the Lord and Moses have been the one dealing out death penalties.

If we are going to judge rightly, we better remember the standard God has given us for judging.

In the Old Testament, God caused Israel to remember this by commanding them to wear the tassels.