



DUDLEY'S MONTHLY MESSAGE

1 CORINTHIANS 10

JUNE 2017

Living in God's Story

How does the story of Israel's journey from Egypt to the promised land relate to us? In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 10, he uses their experiences in the wilderness as a warning for Christians to reject idolatry, moral impurity, and grumbling.

But there is much more that we miss if we only value their journey as a lesson in morality. God isn't just saying, "They really messed up in these areas, and the consequences were dire. You had better learn from their mistakes, or you will end up with people being bitten by snakes and worse." Of course warnings against disobedience are there in that text, but Paul is making the point that *that* story is our story. Though he is writing to mostly Gentile converts, he says that "our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea . . ." Now at the end of the ages (vs11) we are walking the same journey they walked, but we are the final

people of God on earth whereas the Jews were forerunners. The people of God are those defined by inclusion into Christ. The Jewish fathers are our fathers.

For the apostle, this new people called the church was the central goal of the story. This is God's solution to the sin problem instigated in the Garden of Eden. There, God had his people (Adam and Eve) who were designed to enjoy him and partner with him in subduing creation. They were under God's authority and over the rest of creation as managers. When sin invaded creation, things went awry. But from the beginning, there was the plan to have a people on earth that accomplished

(continued next page)

what they were designed to do. The church is the fulfillment of that plan. In the present age, the church as God's restored people have the privilege and responsibility to do what humans were put on earth to do.

The temple had been vacated by the glory of God and then destroyed. **They desperately needed a Savior.**

Paul recognized the newness of the new creation in that a new way of knowing and deciding was emphasized. The Jews had been given the Torah. It was pretty clear cut. Instructions about every aspect of life were codified, and the people were expected to simply obey. There were more than 600 laws and statutes written down for them. However, with the new people there is a need for each person to be a theologian. No, they do not need to be seminary trained scholars. Instead they are people who meditate on what God has accomplished in history, especially regarding Jesus and what happened at the cross and resurrection. The new law is about loving God and each other, and the ethical applications are determined by how

that works out in specific situations. A new way of thinking is featured. It is not just dutiful obedience to instructions anymore. We must think through with a new mindset. Such phrases as, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus . . ." (Philippians 2:5), or "Set your minds on things that are above . . ." (Colossians 3:2), or "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . ." (Romans 12:2) are examples of the new kind of knowledge we have been given.

Sadly, some Christians would rather have a set of instructions. They don't want to think through the ramifications of the glorious freedom we have been given. They resist becoming thoughtful theologians and end up as moralists or legalists.

It is a grand story that we are a part of. It can be told many different ways. One of those ways is seeing that it started with creation and climaxes with re-creation. There was Adam's race that failed to live out true humanity, and there is the new people that resulted from Jesus being the firstborn from the dead. Resurrection is the beginning of a whole new creation with new creators. In the middle of that story is the story of Israel. When God made a covenant with Abraham, he

promised to solve the sin problem that came through Adam by giving a Seed of Abraham to start over. Abraham and his descendants lived out the journey of deliverance from Egyptian bondage, through the wilderness testing, to the covenant at Sinai, then to David's kingdom, and finally to exile. Israel's vocation was to bless the nations (same as Adam and Eve). They ended up out of their land and under the rule of a foreign authority. The temple had been vacated by the glory of God and then destroyed. They desperately needed a Savior. God sent Jesus as their new king bringing a new kingdom. He was the glory of God returning as the temple of God, and through his death and resurrection he began the promised new creation.

We are now **forgiven of our sins**, and our enemies have been defeated by Christ.

If we read Paul's letter to the Romans as loosely following Israel's journey we can see chapter 5 explaining the origin of sin and death through Adam, chapter 6 describing the baptism into death (Israel's Red Sea experience), chapter 7 describing

life under the Law (Sinai and following), chapter 8 describing the victory over sin and death by the new life in the Spirit (the promised land), chapters 9–11 explaining how God has made two entities one, bringing a unity that only he could accomplish (Israel is restored by the inclusion of the Gentiles), chapters 12–16 showing how the new people live by applying the unique love of God to life's situations.

It should also be noted that God takes our partnership **seriously**. We are to pray, and when we don't know how, the Spirit helps us.

The question arises, where are we in the story now? Paul's explanation in Romans 8 is instructive. We have been given the Spirit who leads us as the cloud and pillar of fire led Israel. We have been made sons of God who cry out from our inner being, "Abba." God has become our Father in both a legal and relational way. We are new creations but still living in a world that suffers decay. God could have immediately restored everything at the moment of resurrection, but his plan is for his chosen people to subdue

the earth in partnership with him. We are now forgiven of our sins, and our enemies have been defeated by Christ. We are equipped to confront the darkness with light and bless the nations as humans were called to do.

We can **reflect the image** of our God to the far reaches of the earth. We are playing our part in the **great story of God**.

We live now as the future has invaded the present. Our justification is that God has moved the final verdict on us to the present. We are declared righteous based on the Son's eternal sacrifice. Our new status is enjoying the benefits of the future now. The power that we now possess is the power that will rule in all eternity—the love of God. As we encounter that part of creation that is not yet renewed we have the assurance that even when we do not know how to pray, the Spirit who knows the hearts will intercede for us with groaning we don't fully understand. It should be noted that prayer is our main weapon. We pray based on the work Jesus has done for us and our status in him. It should also be

noted that God takes our partnership seriously. We are to pray, and when we don't know how, the Spirit helps us.

What purpose we have in living! We are not just saved people waiting to go to heaven and trying to be good while we wait. We are God's chosen people on earth carrying out the purpose he designed before creation. Death holds no sway over us because of the resurrection and judgment creates no fear. We have been declared righteous. We can reflect the image of our God to the far reaches of the earth. We are playing our part in the great story of God.



P.O. Box 2022
Colleyville, TX 76034
(817) 267-9224
Fax: (817) 354-5522
Email: Mail@KerygmaVentures.com
www.KerygmaVentures.com