

Word Notes Sunday 23/09/2012 Clare Reed
Journeying to the Promised Land

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Ex3:7-10

Like the Israelites we are on a journey:

Start

Israel's journey from slavery starts in Egypt when, after centuries of exile, God determines to set them free – not because of anything they had done but because of compassion (Ex3:7-10). The Israelites had to respond and choose to trust God but the initiative was His.

We too begin in slavery, not to a nation but to sin (Rom 6:20-23), unable to resist and naturally prone. God choose to set us free by His actions – sending Jesus and if we respond to this move we are set free (Jn 3:16).

Destination

The Israelites were led to the Promised Land where they would live under His rule – God will be their king. We as Christians are heading for where – heaven? Well yes if you are saved and you die today you'll be going direct to heaven, but in the future there will be a new heaven and earth and that is the ultimate destination (Rev 21:1-4 & 22-27).

Are we There Yet?

At the beginning of Matthew's gospel John the Baptist declares the Kingdom of Heaven is near, later in Chapter 10 Jesus also proclaimed the same. This would be good news to the Lost Sheep of Israel after centuries of being under foreign rule. The prophecy in Isaiah 9 of a child born to rule on David's throne led them to expect a ruler who would overthrow the Romans but Jesus didn't do that. But that prophecy talks about the Kingdom being established while John the Baptist and Jesus talk about it being "near" and other New Testament writers speak of the Kingdom in the present tense (eg Col 1:12-13) so what is going on?

When Jesus talked of the Kingdom his words were translated in to Greek and could mean more the activity and rule of a King rather than the physical land, Jesus probably used the Aramaic word with that meaning. Phil 3:20 tells us our citizenship is in heaven but we're clearly physically elsewhere – like being British but living in France. If a number of us came together and celebrate our Britishness we're "manifesting" Britain abroad - likewise when we're together as the Kingdom we bring it near on earth! We see glimpses when we worship together and proclaim God as King, when we pray for people and they are healed. In it's fullness the Kingdom of Heaven on earth looks like Acts 2:42-47.

We are on our journey to the Promised Land – the New Heaven and Earth but we don't just sit back and wait, as citizens of the Kingdom of God here and now we can bring something of that kingdom here now. We can show the world what the Kingdom is like and we do that most fully when we live together as church, under God's reign as His Kingdom.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Have you ever lived in a foreign country? Ask one person to share: did they try to retain their national identity or "go native"?

Are you expecting "just" to go to heaven or have you taken on board life to come in a New Earth?

Read Matthew 10:5-8 - are these the things you are doing on the journey? What other commands of Jesus might we include in these "journey tasks"? (See Matt 22:36-40, Matt 28:19,20)

How are these worked out by the early church (Acts 2:42-47)

Which of these are you challenged by – how might you grow?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Matt 28:19,20 Is a commission Where in the world are you going right now, where might you go?