

## BEYOND REDEMPTION

### A Devotional Meditation on Eikev (Because)

Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25; Isaiah 49:14-51:3  
Matthew 4:1-11; Galatians 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14; Titus 2:11-14

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A pastor friend of mine recently got me thinking about our future in eternity. He was speaking from Paul's letter to Titus:

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Titus 2:11-14 ESV



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The “blessed hope” is the focal point. Paul is writing about the resurrection every saint from Abraham to now has expectantly awaited. That’s the same hope he addresses in his first letter to the Thessalonians:

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 ESV

Our hope is that this life is not the end for us. It’s the hope that there is something more, and that those who have passed on before us are already experiencing it.

If God is reliable, then this is not just a hope, but a certainty. So how do we know God is reliable? We could point to historical, archaeological, and theological proofs, but the greatest evidence is in the testimonies of God’s providence in our lives and the lives of those we have known. Those testimonies flow from our identity with our Creator, which Paul explains this way:

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 ESV

This is the model God intended all along. He made us humans in his image, as living expressions of himself in his creation. He didn’t make us to be his pets or playthings, nor some kind of museum exhibit to be admired for all eternity. He made us to work, to rule and bring order, and to carry his presence wherever he directs us.

This whole six-thousand-year story of human history is the process by which God is making us ready for this divine purpose. One day we'll know more perfectly why our first ancestors fell to Satan's temptation and bartered away the dominion God gave them, but for now it's enough to know that God started fixing that problem immediately. His redemption process required a vessel of revelation through which he could educate humanity about his ways, and through whom eventually he would rule the world. That's why God called Abraham and Sarah to receive his covenant of redemption and plant the seed of his covenant nation of Israel. In time, that covenant nation produced the Jewish people, to whom God committed his oracles, and through whom he brought the Christ, or Messiah, who would gather all nations and restore the world to what it was created to be.

It has been said that Messiah Yeshua established something new in the church, and that the old ways of Israel are no longer relevant to Christians. Now God is correcting that misconception. Yeshua came to declare God's established Kingdom order, to give it the redemptive power of his blood, and to open it to everyone who would accept his invitation and join the remnant of Israel in the commonwealth that is expanding to include all nations.

The continuity of this divine process is the testimony of scripture. One example of that is in Matthew's account of Messiah's temptation, which begins with this:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:1-4 ESV

Yeshua's answer was not a random Bible verse, but a specific reference to Moses' explanation of Israel's suffering in the wilderness. Moses said:

And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 ESV

As we study this in context, we realize that those forty years in the wilderness were a training program in which God perfected his chosen people of Israel to be the vessels of his established order in the earth. In the same way, Yeshua's forty days in the wilderness were the testing period to ensure he was ready to empower that order and carry it to the next stage. Thus, we could interpret his answer to the devil not merely as a comment on nutrition, but a declaration saying, "God's government has come and is pushing out your corrupt order."

We are now about 4,000 years since God called Abraham into this covenant order. Could it be that there is no coincidence in that number? If the Creator tested his Messiah for 40 days, and his covenant nation for 40 years, could he have been testing all of

humanity these 40 centuries? Only time will tell. What is certain is that our story will continue. That's the hope of resurrection: that we will transcend this present limited reality and become what our Creator envisioned.