



# freedom

1 Corinthians 8-11

SCPC term 3 2008

**sunday 17th august 2008**

study 4 FREE TO STAND 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

KEY VERSE FOR SERIES: "nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others" 1 Corinthians 10:24

At first glance Paul seems to go off on a bit of a tangent at this point in the letter—a history lesson of sorts—but what exactly is the lesson that the Corinthians are supposed to learn? In order to answer that question we first need to see that this is no tangent—the history lesson springs directly from the last verse of chapter 9: "I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize." Paul's mind turns to Israel's history—the Exodus in particular—as an example of Israel's failure to live appropriately in the freedom that God had won for them and thus be disqualified from reaching the promised land. Paul urges the Corinthians to be different—to set their hearts on their heavenly home and to stand up under temptation with the help that God provides.

## some notes on questions

Q1. It seems that having been saved from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites took their salvation for granted—failing to live obediently under the covenant—and thus fell short of entering the promised land. They presumed upon God's grace, failing to see that they had been saved from slavery to sin and set free to live under God's rule. Their circumstances had changed but their attitude towards God their saviour was totally inadequate.

Q2-3. Israel's behaviour after their rescue (outlined in verses 7-10) showed that their hearts were not devoted to God but to evil things—they had been rescued from physical slavery but were still slaves to sin.

Note that Paul is not saying that these things occurred ONLY as examples for us (God was not manipulating the Israelites actions just so that WE could learn a lesson). Rather, in God's sovereignty, Israel's sin and God's response serve well as examples to us not to make the same mistakes.

Q4. Israel's problem was complacency. Having been rescued, they thought that how they treated God didn't matter. They didn't reckon with how seriously God treats sin. God's grace is not a license to sin, it is a license, a freedom to obey God. Paul warns the Corinthian's against the same sort of complacency, implicitly comparing the Israelites' experience between Egypt and the promised land with our (those upon whom the fulfillment of the ages has come) experience between the cross and the new creation.

Q5. We live this life in the face of constant temptation to "wanna go back to Egypt" - to the slavery of sin. But God's Spirit (along with his word and his people) are God's generous provision and all that we need to stand up under this temptation.

Q6. As soon as we take our eyes off God and his faithfulness, and try instead to "stand" on our own two feet we will fall.

Q7-9. These questions ask us to talk about our own sin, even if only in general terms. Please model what this looks like for your group and try to avoid superficial generalizations that keep the discussion at the theoretical level. I know, it's not comfortable—it's not meant to be.