

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Freedom In Christ

(Jerry Fite)

Jesus said, “*and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32).

According to Jesus, knowing the truth will occur if “*ye abide in my word*” (John 8:31). His hearers, apparently never having experienced personal enslavement, failed to understand Jesus’ point. Jesus is speaking of the freedom from sin that knowing His word provides.

Jesus highlights this freedom from two viewpoints: the condition of the sinner, and the nature of their emancipator. “*Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin*” (John 8:34). All who sin find themselves “*under sin*”, a helpless condition before a holy and righteous God (Romans 3:9). But Jesus as “a son” abides forever in the house. A son, who is in the family as heir to the father, enjoys a permanency in the house over a slave who could be sold at any time. The freedom Jesus offers as the Son of God is a freedom in which you can trust. He is not here today and gone tomorrow. His word is not promised now and discarded later. “*If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*” (John 8:36).

Jesus freed us from our sins by His blood through the gospel. The gospel plan of redemption in Christ, revealed through the Spirit, “*made us free from the law of sin and of death*” (Romans 8:2). The message made us aware that our redemption from sin was not paid with

money, but with the precious blood of the sinless Christ (*I Peter 1:18-19*). The preaching of the gospel showed us the way to the redeeming blood of Christ through baptism (*Romans 6:3-4*).

Warnings come with this new freedom from sin. “*For freedom did Christ set you free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in yoke of bondage*” (*Galatians 5:1*). The redeeming gospel is the teaching in which we must stand fast. Any other self-acclaimed “good news” as being from God must be rejected (*cf. Galatians 1:6-9*). Taking freedom’s message deeper inside us, we must not think we are free to do whatever our desires move us to do. “*For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one of another*” (*Galatians 5:13*). Guided by the truth of God, we also humble ourselves to serve others. As reflective servants, we love our neighbors as ourselves (*Galatians 5:14*); instead of biting and devouring one another through thoughtless selfishness (*Galatians 5:15*).

Tomorrow, our country will celebrate its 240th. year of liberty. What joy has filled the hearts of many an immigrant entering New York’s harbor as they awoke at dawn to see the early light shine on the Statue of Liberty. The message of welcoming the “tired”, “poor” and “huddled masses” inspires hope to

the “tempest-tossed” who want to “breathe free”. There she is lifting her “lamp beside the golden door.”

While the Christian can thank God for being in the land of the free, he or she knows that a greater freedom is being offered in Christ. The freedom from sin, not the tyranny of governments, is the liberty enjoyed by the Christian. The message of hope and new beginnings is not etched on a plaque at the foot of a grand statue, but spoken by the living Lord whose welcoming words of freedom dwell within us.

What a contrast to see the Statue of Liberty remain standing as two nearby majestic skyscrapers crumbled to the ground on 9-11-01. There she is welcoming the “wretched refuse” from “teeming” shores as wicked men seek to destroy that for which she symbolizes.

God is still on His heavenly throne seeing His Word disregarded, and even vilified from those within our Country. His defining marriage as being between a man and a woman has been changed by the highest court in our land, apparently no longer relevant for America’s modern culture. Standing fast in God’s word, and condemning homosexual acts is now considered hate. God’s word will continue to abide (*I Peter 1:25*). Loving believers continue to shine the light of a loving Saviour, who continues to offer the freedom from sin. Freedom indeed!