

A Celebration of Freedom

Open your Bibles to Galatians chapter 5 and v.1.

Today marks the 245th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, 1776. Here are a few facts I found on this holiday.

“The Fourth of July—also known as Independence Day or July 4th—has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1941, but the tradition of Independence Day celebrations goes back to the 18th century and the [American Revolution](#). On July 2nd, 1776, the [Continental Congress](#) voted in favor of independence, and two days later delegates from the [13 colonies](#) adopted the Declaration of Independence, a historic document drafted by [Thomas Jefferson](#). From 1776 to the present day, July 4th has been celebrated as the birth of American independence.”

But did you know that John Adams believed that July 2nd was the correct date on which to celebrate the birth of American independence, and would reportedly turn down invitations to appear at July 4th events in protest. “John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail that July 2 “will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival” and that the celebration should include “Pomp and Parade... Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other.” Well, his idea went over about as well as Franklin’s suggestion that our national bird be the turkey. I’m glad the American Eagle won out.

One more historical trivia, Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on July 4, 1826—the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.”

From that we have a nation that is founded on the principle at least, that all men are free.

But if we aren’t diligent and watchful, if we do not stand as sentinels guarding our freedoms, we could see our freedoms coming to an end under the ideologies of the present liberal/Socialist administration. The liberties we have as Americans and Christians are being slowly eroded by hate groups such as Cancel Culture and Critical Race Theory and Black Lives Matter, Islam, the antichrist spirit that has

gotten its foot in the door of our nation's Capital, and the liberal/Socialists in government. Our government as it stands right now is winking and nodding at these law-breakers and turning a blind eye to their egregious sins.

“But, Pastor Johnny, aren't we supposed to submit to those who have the rule over us?” Yes, until. Read this with me: I want to acknowledge Dr. John MacArthur for the following thoughts. **Romans 13:1** *Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.* ² *Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.*

³ *For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;*

⁴ *for it is a minister of God to you for good.* (Rom. 13:1-4 NAU)

And this from the apostle Peter: 1 Peter chapter 2, and verses 13 and 14 will suffice, I think: “*Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him*”—*by the Lord*—“*for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.*” There again we are to submit for the Lord's sake. “What do you mean ‘the Lord's sake’?” When the government is doing what the Lord designed it to do we honor Him by submitting to it.

This from Dr. John MacArthur:

“When government turns the divine design on its head and protects those who do evil and makes those who do good afraid, it forfeits its divine purpose. In our world today rulers are designing a culture that protects the immoral. It even has reached the point where it desires to protect criminals, and makes those who do good afraid. When the criminals are unrestrained because they don't fear the consequences, but the police are restrained because they fear the consequences of stopping criminals, you know everything is turned on its head. Our government is

the source of lies and the protector of liars, and the enemy of those who speak the truth. It praises the evil and persecutes the good.

So God's design for government has been entirely corrupted."

Beloved, America is not God, the Constitution is not the Bible, and Washington, DC is not heaven.

The freedom we have as Americans ends upon our deaths, but the freedom and liberty given us by the death and resurrection of Christ goes on forever. I honor my country, but I worship my Lord and Savior Jesus. Really, there is no true freedom apart from life in Christ.

Galatians 5:1 *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. (Gal. 5:1 NAU)*

Do you hear in that verse a call to defend the freedom we have in Christ? I certainly do. Listen to it again, *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

Yesterday while I was studying this verse, I got the picture in my mind of our soldiers during the American Revolution standing and fighting the British Red Coats in close quarter combat. Our founding fathers and mothers had to fight, sometimes to the death, for the freedoms we enjoy today.

But think about the apostles in Paul's day and how they had to fight, often to the death, to protect and defend the gospel's enemies. Eleven of the twelve original apostles were martyred for their faith by the government. But their greatest enemies were the religious leaders they encountered who despised Jesus, the gospel and them. *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

Listen to this or read it along with me where Paul and Titus stood and fought to defend the gospel. **Galatians 2:1** *Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.*

² *It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.*

³ *But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.*

⁴ *But it was because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.*

⁵ ***But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.*** (Gal. 2:1-5 NAU)

With the thousands of false prophets and false teachers our world is saturated with these days, I and other men and women of God must stand and preach the gospel without compromise and regardless of how scary doing so can be at times. The visible church is yielding to these false leaders and cheering them on as they preach another gospel and another Jesus.

Human beings are vulnerable and ignorant creatures apart from the presence of the Holy Spirit and the gospel is always just a hair's breath away from disappearing from view. That's why we preach the gospel. That's why we preach the word. The Spirit and the gospel are God's means for opening the eyes of the blind.

Our founding fathers' purpose in writing the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution was to open the eyes of the colonists to see just how abusive King George III was, and the only remedy to his abuses was revolution. Our King George is "the god of this world" who has blinded the minds of the unbelievers.

Now notice again our verse for this morning, "*It was for freedom that Christ set us free.*" That's a little odd, isn't it? "It was for freedom that Christ set us free." It's kinda like saying, "I painted the barn red so that it would be red." But what Paul is telling us is Christ didn't set us free so that we could choose to put ourselves back under the law if we want to.

And that was the problem in Galatia. A group of itinerant Jews was trying to sell another gospel and another Jesus to the disciples in Galatia. These Jews remind me of an ex-wife who is trying to get her ex-husband to take her back and promises that it would be best for everyone concerned. The husband resists for a while but then gives in and it's only after he's back with his ex that he really realizes his mistake. It's like the old joke, "I didn't know what happiness was until I got married. And then it was too late."

We are blessed to live in the United States of America, the greatest nation on the face of the earth. But we are more blessed to be alive in Christ, the Son of the living God.

Have a happy fourth.