

# FREE at LAST and FREED FOREVER!

1 Cor 8:1-13; Acts 15:19-20; Gal 5:1; Jn 8:31-36

## I. PERENNIAL TENSION: individual freedom vs corporate order

- A. Family: dictatorship; anarchy; aristocracy
- B. Society: various governments with different solutions

## II. SLAVERY PERSISTENT & UBIQUITOUS

- A. Political: Egyptians & Israelites; Aztecs & Incas, African kings & slave trade
- B. Religious organizations often deny individual freedom
  - 1. Judaism (in hyper-legalistic modes)
  - 2. Islam means “surrender” & Islamic states generally dictatorial
  - 3. Aztecs & thousands of sacrifices, mainly captives from wars
  - 4. Christian examples
    - a. Judaism threat in N.T. times—cf. Galatians
    - b. Monastic orders too often majored in minors
    - c. Reformed excesses in Geneva—theaters, dances, dress, Sabbath observance
    - d. Puritan excesses in 17th century—Civil War & Oliver Cromwell
    - e. Perfectionistic sects (Shakers et al)
    - f. Sectarian evangelicals emergent during Second Great Awakening
  - 5. Cults (some quasi-Christian).
    - a. Jim Jones: Peoples Temple in San Francisco; utopian community in British Guinea
    - b. David Berg & Children of God
    - c. Scientology
    - d. Jehovah’s Witnesses
  - 6. Dostoevsky’s “Grand Inquisitor”

## III. FREEDOM’S WINGS

- A. Free From (“free at last”) bondage, oppressions
  - 1. Political oppression (biblical as well as philosophical concern)
    - a. Innate desire—“man is born free but everywhere. Is in chains” (J.J. Rousseau); “every man wants to be free” (Edwin Hawkins Singers); “free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty” (M.L. King)
    - b. Natural right—noted by ancient thinkers such as Aristotle & Cicero; fundamental to Declaration of Independence; mentioned in Gn 2:16
    - c. Exodus theme in O.T.; Lv 25:10 celebrated throughout Psalms
    - d. European developments—Magna Charta, Glorious Revelation, French Revolution
    - e. American Independence—Liberty Bell in Lev 25:10
    - f. American republic early troubled by extremes
      - 1. Daniel Shays rebellion—Luke Day said: “My boys, you are going to fight for liberty. If you wish to know what liberty is, I will tell you. It is for every man to do what he pleases, to make other folks do as you please to have them, and to keep folks from serving the devil.”
      - 2. Federalist architects of Alien & Sedition Acts,
      - 3. Jefferson vs. Hamilton
    - g. Currently evident in libertarians (Rand Paul) & socialists (Bernie Sanders)
  - 2. Spiritual bondage
    - a. Sin’s oppression—Don Juan; Marquis de Sade (wrote pornographic plays & novels, including “120 Days of Sodom”); Ted Bundy
    - b. Jesus delivers, fetters broken—H. Lilleness: “Once I was bound”; George Foreman autobiography
    - c. Paul’s emphasis: yes, we’re free in Christ, but love limits us
- B. Free To (“forever freed”)
  - 1. Truth liberates
    - a. Diagnosing disease enables surgeon to remove deadly cancer
    - b. Piano masters only free to perform, after having learned how to play
    - c. George Washington’s 110 Maxims
  - 2. Jesus frees us to live well