Freedom Can Only Be Found From God

(Kent Heaton)

Thomas Jefferson wrote, “*And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but by his wrath? Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever*” (Notes on Virginia, 1784). The nature of freedom is relative to what men want to be free from. Our country was founded upon the principles of the knowledge of a Creator and from His hand life is sustained. Belief in God was not ridiculed as in our day. Prayer was not banished nor service to the one true God abandoned. Freedom celebrated in this generation is freedom from the restraints of a loving Creator.

 The irony of our freedom is the enslaving power of self. Karl Barth said, “*What was called freedom in the European age now past collapsed, and was bound to collapse, because for a long time and at an amazingly deep level it had degenerated into a freedom for godlessness and inhumanity*” (Community, Church and State, 1946). The Psalmist declared: “***Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord***” (Psalm 33:12). When a nation turns away from the foundational belief that man is to serve the Creator, society falls headlong into a godless, immoral and self-serving avalanche of destruction.

 Paul shows the course of man’s enslavement to self in Romans 1. First he shows how man chose not to glorify the Creator. “***For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened***” (Romans 1:21). In the darkness of their hearts, men “***exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever***” (Romans 1:25). Falling headlong into godless acts of homosexuality (vv 26-27) they “***did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave then over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper***” (Romans 1:28). When you take a moment to read Romans 1:29-32 you will see the freedom man has found in serving the creature (himself) rather than the Creator (Jehovah God).

 All nations exist by the power of the Creator. “***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***” (Romans 13:1). In Hannah’s prayer of 1 Samuel 2, she declares the majesty of God’s power over all mankind: “***The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, and inherit a seat of honor; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and He set the world on them. He keeps the feet of His godly ones, but the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; for not by might shall a man prevail. Those who contend with the Lord will be shattered; against them He will thunder in the heavens, The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; and He will give strength to His king, and will exalt the horn of His anointed***” (1 Samuel 2:6-10).

 For man to enjoy freedom he must submit to the Creator of the world. This submission is not oppressive (1 John 5:3) but filled with love and grace. The Lord protects us and cares for us. The Creator of the world gave His only begotten Son to give us freedom (Romans 6:23; Galatians 5:1). Celebrate freedom in the willingness to abide by His care and His rule. True freedom can only come from Jehovah God.

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“The will of God prevails. In great contests, each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same things at the same time.” (*Abraham Lincoln, A meditation written in 1862, copied and preserved by John Hay*)

**Missing the Point**

(Selected)

 Orville and Wilbur Wright were excited. On December 17, 1903, they had finally succeeded in keeping their homemade airplane in the air for 59 seconds. Immediately they rushed a telegram to their sister in Dayton, Ohio, telling of this great accomplishment. The telegram read, “First sustained flight today fifty-nine seconds. Hope to be home by Christmas.”

Upon receiving the news the sister was so excited about the success that she rushed to the newspaper office and gave the telegram to the editor. The next morning the newspaper headline read, “Popular Local Bicycle Merchants To Be Home For Holidays.” One of the greatest stories of the twentieth century was missed because an editor missed the point.

 But who has not made the same mistake in reading the Scriptures? If one is too casual about it, he might learn some truth but miss that which is most important. For years Charles Hodge has been saying, “Familiar Scripture should be read more closely.” That advice is well worth heeding, but all Scripture should be read more closely to let the deep meaning sink into your heart. Read the Bible. Read it carefully. And don’t miss the point.

“***Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so***” (Acts 17:11).