

Truth and Liberty

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Summary: Slavery can be very attractive and comfortable so long as it is not called 'slavery.' To get the security and reduced responsibility of slavery without the stigma, we (or Satan) invent lies that make our situation palatable. This is the context of Y'shua's statement that the truth would set His disciples free. The Pharisees had created a web of rules that placed a heavy yoke on the Jews, yet they stoutly maintained that they had never been slaves. So too modern Americans.

Great Torah portion today, we got talking donkeys, we got fiery serpents. I'm not going to talk about any of that. What I want to talk to you about is the 4th of July, which is coming up on Tuesday, and as most of you probably know, we're going to have a picnic and barbecue and so forth.

This has been a great week. As we get ready to go into Independence Day, the Supreme Court has issued four or five rulings, and it sort of makes you feel like you're almost in a constitutional republic again. It's wonderful.

They reeled in the executive authority, which needs to happen periodically. They made rulings for religious conscience, which was wonderful. What happened was the state of Colorado and the state of Washington, I believe, were trying to use public accommodation law to compel somebody to say things they didn't believe in. That got overturned, so it's been a good week for that.

The next thing is, I got an email from Chosen People. Chosen People, if you don't know, is a ministry of ethnic Jews who have become messianic as opposed to people like me, for example. As far as I know. I'm not an ethnic Jew, but I am messianic as well. These folks are former Jews that have become messianic, and I'm on their mailing list, have been for years, and they're good folks. But anyway, let me read you a part of his note.

It's from Rich Freeman. Don't know him personally, but I get emails from him all the time. "Even a basic reading of the Declaration of Independence links independence and freedom with duty, obligation, and sacred honor. Phrases like the 'Laws of nature and nature's God' and 'Self-evident truths' indicate these men were driven by a sense of responsibility to God and their fellow man. There was no freedom for freedom's sake or libertine self-expression. This was a measured, careful, principled, mutual covenant between these men and the 13 colonies they represented."

"Their independence came hand-in-hand with commitment to the common good. As we think of our freedom and what it means, may we recognize how independence necessitates dependence as well. Without dependence on God himself, no level of independence is possible. Perhaps this truth is why the Lord accompanied the Israelites every step of the way on their freedom march out of Egypt and their independent-minded wanderings in the wilderness. If nothing else, his visible glory in the Pillar of Cloud and Pillar of Fire and the Tabernacle reminded the people of Israel that their independence was fully dependent on their Creator.

I thought that was just a lovely sentiment. I really liked that, which is why I read it to you. So, I've been talking about liberty now ever since Passover. That's sort of been a recurring theme, and I'm going to do it again today. God desires human liberty. It appears to me that the purpose of creation is for God to create something who is not him. In fact, there's a book by Ron Dart that I thought was excellent, which is called *The Lonely God*. In other words, what God wants is somebody who can relate to him voluntarily, someone who will have a relationship with him, someone who will love him, and he can't impose that upon them without destroying the project.

So, if God makes you love him, then you're not independent anymore. So, what I've been talking about these last several months is this project of liberty that God has embarked on, starting with Israel, and it ends when Israel demands a king, and that's in 1 Samuel 8. One of the things that God says in that process is, "They have not rejected you, Samuel. They've rejected me from being king over them."

That's important because God believes in hierarchy. The system he set up of judges was tribal. Everybody's born into a family. Everybody's born into a tribe, and you've got tribal elders and so forth. So, there's structure there, and there's order there, and he also appoints judges, and the deal with judges is judges are supposed to be independent.

The nice thing about a judge, theoretically, doesn't work that way very often, but theoretically, a judge doesn't care what you do as long as you can get along with other people. So, the only reason you ever should have to come before a judge is if you've committed a crime, or you can't get along with your neighbor and he drags you into court. Otherwise, a judge has nothing to do with you, theoretically.

So, it is theoretically the most free system that you can have. Families, tribal elders, and so forth, judges when you need it, and then God himself is king. So, what we did is we brought the king down, and that's the beginning of lots of bad stuff.

In fact, one of the rallying cries during the revolution was no king except King Jesus, and the whole idea of the revolution was to get rid of the aristocracy and so forth, and form a government based on biblical principles, and our government, by the way, is based on biblical principles. So, all of that is worth celebrating, and as I say, we've had a string of good court decisions. We've had strings of bad ones, too, so, you know, it goes and comes.

But the last thing I want to talk about is Yeshua, and he one day will be king on earth as well as king in heaven, and I firmly believe that. But in John chapter 8, he's duking it out with the Pharisees, and one of the things he says is, "If you are my disciple, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." That's a really important statement, because what happens with humanity, and it happens cyclically all the time, is slavery is very attractive. Now, everybody's, "Oh, wait a minute, I don't want to be a slave." Well, not so fast. Slavery is very attractive if you can lie to yourself and convince yourself that you're free.

Think about that for a second. If you can buy an attractive lie which says that you are free, you will submit to all sorts of things that are objectively slavery. That's what Israel does over and over again. That's what every people in the world has done over and over again. And what happens is God has periodically got to come in and stir things up and clear out all the

chaff and get you back to the truth, because the thing that allows you to accept enslavement is lies. And Yeshua said Satan is the father of lies.

But what Satan wants to do is enslave you, and to do that, what he uses are lies. And it's interesting that one of the first things that's said in the Declaration of Independence is "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and that they were endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights." What we're doing is we are coming back to something that is true.

We have drifted away from the truth and we have become enslaved by, in this case, Great Britain. In a long enough time frame, everybody's ancestors have been both slaves and enslavers. If I'm talking about Great Britain, don't worry about it, because they've been slaves too.

But the point is, this happens cyclically. And the thing that they appeal to when they start their Declaration of Independence and they start the revolution is these things are true. And what we're doing is we're clearing out a whole bunch of lies that we have believed over the centuries that have caused us to be enslaved.

That's what Yeshua does when he comes into Israel. He goes over and over and over again against the established religious order. He never goes against Moses, because he's the one who inspired Moses to write it. "I wrote it the first time. It's correct. I'm not going to change that."

But what's happened is, over the centuries, people in Israel, the priesthood, the kingdom, the king, and so forth, have sold a whole bunch of lies that give them power. And so what Yeshua does when he's talking to the Pharisees is he's cutting through all of that and saying, "You guys have established a system that has enslaved your fellow Israelites, and you are doing it in the name of God." That's the gospel in a nutshell.

And what he's doing is saying, "I have come to strip away all that religious chaff, get you back to the Word of God, which is what Moses was doing, and I have come to set you free." That's what he said. "My disciples will know the truth, and that truth will set them free." And the truth is the Word of God. And anything that deviates from the Word of God is a lie and is designed by somebody to enslave you.

Now, that process is not immediate. It takes hundreds of years. The United States at this point is, what, 250 some odd years old. Started off pretty free. But over time, we have accumulated lies that have wound up enslaving us. And the thing about it is, the reason it works is because slavery is attractive. The thing about slavery that's attractive is you don't have responsibility. Responsibility is scary, and people love to be able to shed responsibility. "Not my problem, not my fault. Somebody else told me to do it. I'm just doing this." I think the Germans used to say, "I was just following orders." Well, that's the whole point. That's why Nazism was so attractive. You had somebody else telling you what to do, and you could shed responsibility. That's what makes slavery attractive.

Now, being a slave is not attractive. You've got to tell yourself a whole bunch of lies to get there so that you think that you are free, while in fact you are a slave. And that's what we're

celebrating Tuesday, is this cutting away of a whole bunch of accumulated chaff that happened in Great Britain and the colonies and so forth.

And we're saying, "We're starting over. And we're starting over based on the truth. And the truth is, God created us all, and he created us to be free. And so what we're going to do is, we're going to set up a system that encourages that freedom."

Now, one of the most dangerous things in the world is abundance. Because what abundance does, is it insulates you from reality.

If you're not scraping and working and worried about where your next meal is coming from, you're sort of up looking around. And what you wind up doing is you find Baal and Asheroth and all of those gods who will tickle your fancy and say, "Ooh, why don't you go do this?" That's what we're hearing about in the Moabite women today in today's Torah portion, where you got the Moabite women and they come in there looking hot, I imagine, and they say, "Hey, you want to stay with me? Well, oh, I've got this God. And this God says that this is just fine." And you get a whole bunch of people that go off and follow that God because they have abundance. They've got food, they've got water, they're about to go into the land, everybody's really fine. And by the way, those women look really good.

"You know, what's the harm of saying we like this God of yours, babe? No, I like this God of yours. Come on, let's go into the tent." And again, God is, of course, very close to them at this point. He gets really grumpy about it. But the whole point is, when you have abundance, you start looking around. And what's happened in the United States is we have been blessed. More than any nation in the history of the world, we have been blessed. And all of this abundance has got people looking around, and they start drifting off and they start drifting away from the truth. And as they drift away from the truth, they start picking up lies. And those lies tell them that "You're not responsible." Hence, what happens is they finally vote themselves into slavery. And by the way, we are not unique.

Every society in history goes through this. So don't feel special. And the point is, what God is saying is, "My word is true. If you'll hew to my word, and you will test everything against my word, you will know what is true. And that truth will set you free." You will wake up and realize, wait a minute, this is not freedom. This is not what I want. And as enough people realize that this is not freedom, and this is not what I want, what happens is things change.

And it's cyclic, as I say. It goes up and down, and that's where we are. And what we're doing is celebrating, as I say, an event in the past. But as we do that, we ought to look at the present, see where we are today. What lies have we bought? What have we believed that isn't true that has led to our slavery? There's a quote, it's by a guy named Yoram Hazoni, which wrote a book that I like, called The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture. "If there is a way for human beings to attain truth, it will have to be by way of the flawed mental apparatus with which God has equipped us." In other words, God is telling you, through himself and through Yeshua, learn what is true.

He has also made you so it's possible for you to do that. Because if it wasn't possible for you to do that, that would be totally unjust. God is not unjust. So what he's done is he's given you everything that you need. And what we do as willful human beings who go after the

Moabite women, or whatever the equivalent of going after the Moabite woman is, what we do is, "Well, I don't want to know that truth. I want to be over here in the tent with her."

So failure to learn the truth is very often willful. Because we don't want to know the truth about this, that, or the other thing, because we want the Moabite babe here. And that's what the scripture teaches us over and over again, that that's how we are. But God also loves us. He has given us everything that we need. He wants us to know the truth. He wants us to walk and live in freedom. You just have to have the courage to do it.

And look at our culture. What are some of the lies that people are believing today? I'll leave that as an exercise for you. I'm sure you could probably think of some. So learn the truth. Compare everything to the scripture and the truth. And when somebody is selling you a pack of lies to get you to go after the Moabite babe, say "No." That's the way of freedom.