

OUR GREATEST FREEDOM

By Keith Greer

Thursday was a national holiday for this country. The Fourth of July is a time of remembering when we received our "freedom." Now we can go in "pursuit of happiness", as we see fit! Being an American is a wonderful privilege and honor. For me, I truly treasure the freedoms we have in our country.

However, I would like to spend some time talking about another type of freedom, one much more valuable and precious to me than those I enjoy as an American.

"That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." {Ephesians 2:12} Can one picture a more dark and bleak outlook for the future? No hope, without God, and without Christ! Yet, this is the condition everyone of us found ourselves in at one time or another. Why?

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." {Romans 3:23; }

"If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." {1 John 1:8} Sin is a terrible thing! It is liken unto cancer that spreads until it "chokes" the life from the body! Sin does this to our spiritual body!

How can we "free" ourselves from this grievous burden?

"...Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." {Isaiah 1:18}

"And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." {Romans 6:18;} How can this "freedom from sin" be achieved?

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" {Romans 10:17} One must **HEAR** the good news of the gospel of God's salvation.

"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." {John 8:24} One must have **FAITH** in Him and His promises.

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." {Acts 17:30} Next, one must **REPENT** of their sins and turn towards God.

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." {Romans 10:9,10} **CONFESS** our faith in Christ with our lips.

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." {Ephesians 1:7} According to this passage, and many others we could give, the only element that can "free" men from sin is the blood of Christ! {Hebrews 9:22} Contacted by **BAPTISM**.

Freedom is a wonderful thing, isn't it? Just ask the man who caused "havoc" among the church, gave his consent to the death of Stephen, and was zealous in bringing those followers of Christ to "justice!" Yet, when he learned of his error, Paul made the transformation, which brought him freedom! {Acts 9:1-ff}

Nothing can compare to the "freedom" offered by God in taking away my sins! God not only "forgives the sins", but also forgets them! {Hebrews 8:12} Yet, this freedom did not come cheaply! No freedom does. It cost Christ His life on the cross! What "freedom" is greater? ***