Lesson: Independence Day

Otherwise referred to as the Fourth of July, on this day Americans revere the adoption of our Declaration of Independence in 1776, which affirmed our separation from England and its domination over the original thirteen colonies. It is a time of national solidarity and patriotism, complete with festivals, great food, sporting events, parades, and fireworks. It is a time to remember the birth of our nation, the integrity of our founding fathers, and the resolve of those who sacrificed much to secure our liberties. It is a time for sincere devotion towards our founding documents and the sacred beliefs upon which this nation stands.

Interestingly, Jefferson and Adams, the primary contributors to the Declaration of Independence, as well as the celebration of this event on an annual basis, both died on July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of Independence Day. Though these two presidents were formidable adversaries in the political arena, they never ceased conversing with one another during those fifty years. Monroe, another president and founding father, died exactly five years later on July fourth.

We are beholden to the founders of our nation and the framers of our founding documents; they all served this great nation with honor, integrity, and decency. Whatever their faults, these men arguably assembled the greatest think tank in human history. Shame on those antagonists who want to change the meaning, the words, or the actual documents, as if they are no longer relevant. They most certainly are relevant and always will be if we have any hope of continuing this great experiment in freedom and democracy. Beware, when leaders in your government attempt to nullify our founding documents or alter them in order to invalidate them. They are the ones that should be nullified by defeating them at the polls or impeaching them, for they swore an oath to uphold and enforce our Constitution and our laws.

* PSA 33:12 ~ Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and blessed are the people He has chosen for His own inheritance.
* PSA 119:44–46 ~ I will obey God’s laws continuously and forevermore; I will walk in freedom, for I have sought His rules.
* 2 CO 3:17 ~ The Lord is Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
* GAL 5:1, 13 ~ Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ made us free, and do not get entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Brothers, you have been called into liberty; but do not use that freedom as a reason to indulge the flesh, but love and serve one another.
* 1 PE 2:13–17 ~ Submit to the laws of the land, for it is God’s will that you are lawful and upright, thereby silencing those ignorant people who would talk behind your back. Be free, but do not use your freedom to conceal evil. Instead, you must serve the Lord, respect all people, love your fellow Christians, fear God, and honor those in authority.

Freedom is not free; it comes at a heavy price. Our fight for freedom resulted in a great deal of bloodshed. Assuredly, most wars are fought over freedom, and the cost is blood. The freedom bought for us by Jesus Christ cost His blood; the sacrifices made as a sin atonement by God’s people before Christ also required blood offerings. Those carrying Christianity to the world also bled, and many died. Why so much blood? Well, to be free indeed, means being free from the slavery of sin. This requires that your soul be cleansed of sin; and the payment is death. Those dying for freedom, whether Christ or our nation’s freedom fighters, were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice so others can live free. People subjected to slavery will fight to be free; they would rather die than forfeit liberty. Who wouldn’t want to be free of evil tyrants, that are careless with their sinning and enslave the innocent? Tyrants eventually lose their freedom if not their lives, because their causes and desires cannot be paid for with the blood of patriots.

* EXO 24:6–8 ~ Moses put half of the blood into bowls and sprinkled the other half on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read to the people, who responded, “We will do everything the Lord has commanded, and we will obey Him.” Then Moses took the rest of the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with these words.”
* LEV 17:11 ~ The life of all flesh resides in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.
* DEU 18:18–19 ~ Moses sprinkled blood of the sacrifice on the Book of Law and the people, saying “This is the blood of the everlasting covenant made by God through this His Word.”
* MIC 6:6–7 ~ How am I to appear before God? Shall I come before Him with offerings and sacrifices? Will He be pleased with thousands and thousands of sacrifices? Shall I sacrifice my firstborn, the fruit of my body, to atone for the sin of my soul?
* JOH 5:22, 24 ~ Jesus said, “The Father judges nobody but has entrusted judgment to the Son. Truthfully, whoever hears my Word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned, but will cross over from death into life.
* HEB 9:13–28 ~ The blood of animals and the ashes sprinkled on the ceremonially unclean sanctified those who were only outwardly clean. How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may live to serve the living God! This is why Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. Now Christ has died as a ransom, freeing us from our sins committed under the first covenant of the Law. As is the case with a will, it is necessary to prove that the person who wrote the will is dead, since a will can only be enforced after someone has died. This is why the first covenant also could not be put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed the commandments to the people from the Book of the Law, he took the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled it on the scroll and the people saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God has commanded for you to keep.” In the same manner, Moses sprinkled blood on the tabernacle and the ceremonial utensils. In fact, the Law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, for without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness. Christ did not enter heaven to offer Himself again and again, like the high priest did by presenting offerings year after year using blood that was not his own. If that were the case, Christ would have to suffer many times. But He appeared only once, for all people and for all the ages, to remove sin through the sacrifice of Himself. As humankind is destined to die once and then face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once, to take away the sins of many people. And He will appear a second time, not to bear our sins, but to bring salvation to those who await His return.

Our Father in Heaven, who gave His Son for us so that we could be freed from sin and death, thereby becoming acceptable in your sight: we thank you, we praise you, we worship you, we adore you. Thank you for redeeming our souls, and giving us eternal independence from sin and absolute freedom from death; how glorious it will be to live forever with you in a glorified state. Thank you for all the blood that has been shed in the name of true freedom. Let us never take this for granted. And if called upon, help us to be prepared to give our lives for Christ, knowing that death is but a momentary state, after which eternity will be ours. Help us to have the courage to give our lives for others, when their eternal salvation is at stake, knowing that ours is not in question. As Jesus sacrificed Himself for us, let our lives be a living sacrifice for Him and for His church on earth. In the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

By Andrew V. Barber (posted: 07/02/2023)