



"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance" (Psalm 33:12).

Celebrating Freedom in the Home

Lesson Subject: Families may share in the blessings of spiritual and political freedom.

L44. Date: July 1982. **Text:** Exodus 12:1-11. **Topic:** Home; Passover.

Let us join in a little old-fashioned flag waving. This Lord's day [July 4, 1982] marks the 206th year of independence for this country we call the United States of America.

There has never been a country like this one — never a country with the opportunity, the people, the wealth, and the freedom which we enjoy as citizens. Our country has been so blessed of God that we stand in amazement at His watchcare. What a privilege to live today as citizens of this great republic. We have problems in our national life, but there is no other nation on earth with the privileges we enjoy.

The freedom won for your country can be related to the freedom entered by ancient Israel when she came out of bondage in the land of Egypt. Therefore, the lesson text deals with the events of the first Passover, recorded in Exodus 12:1-13. The lesson comments which follow will examine their national freedom, our freedom as citizens today, and our spiritual freedom in Jesus Christ.

The central truth of this lesson is, "Families may share in the blessings of spiritual and political freedom."

I. DAY OF FREEDOM

Freedom (whether political or spiritual) does not slip up gradually until one day one awakes with the blessing there. Never! Freedom begins at a point-in-time victory. It can be dated and identified.

Our national birthday is July 4. It is dated July 4, 1776. The Jewish exodus from Egypt is dated by the annual observance of the Passover. The Jewish Passover is dated on the fourteenth day of Abib, which was April 8, 1982. Each of those important events can be marked by a specific date.

Spiritual deliverance in Jesus Christ is just as definite. Most Christians can name the day when they met God personally in a conversion experience. (Others who cannot name the specific day on the calendar can tell of the occasion, for it is definite and real.) At what specified time were you set free from the bondage of sin by faith in Jesus Christ?

God announced the Passover to ancient Israel with the words, *"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you"* (Exodus 12:2). And well might it be. They were becoming free people, no longer slaves to their pagan overlords. They were becoming identified to the world as the chosen people of God, the nation of His delight.

When a person is saved from sin, *"he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (II Corinthians 5:17). He has entered into a new life, which is nothing less than the life of God being lived in him (Galatians 2:20). That day becomes his spiritual birthday, the day of his freedom from sin. Praise the Lord!

II. INVOLVEMENT IN FREEDOM

Freedom does not come as men sit listless, idle, and uninvolved. God gives the freedom, whether political or spiritual, but man must receive it. There must be a personal participation to enter into the freedom which God gives. It is entered at a point in time as victory is secured after the battle is fought.

God only has the record of how many men and women suffered and even died as the early American colonies struggled against their European master in an effort to secure political independence. One day the victory came but it came because men and women fought to secure it.

God only has the record of how many innocent lambs were slaughtered in Egypt on the even of the Passover. There was to be *"a lamb for an house"* and Israel was to *"kill it in the evening"* (Exodus 12:3, 6). That would involve several thousand lambs if the nation numbered three million, as

some scholars estimate. There must be suffering before there can be victory.

Behold the sufferings of the Son of God who gave himself unto death by crucifixion on the behalf and in the place of sinners. His sufferings were real, personal, and vicarious.

The lamb killed at the Passover in ancient Egypt is a type of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The lamb must be without blemish, taken from among the flock, tested over many days to determine its fitness for sacrifice, killed, its blood applied, and its flesh eaten. Jesus Christ was and is sinless, taken from among men (for He was a Man among men), tested during a three-year ministry, killed, His blood applied by faith and His flesh eaten by faith. A careful examination of the events of the Passover occasion will help to make clear the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The former is a picture description of the latter.

What is your place of involvement in the spiritual freedom Jesus gives? You could not secure that freedom. Neither can you repeat the sacrifice He made. Your part is to receive by faith the benefits He secured by His death and resurrection. You can receive, and you must receive, the forgiveness He offers. That is why the Bible instructs you to "*believe*" (Acts 16:31), "*come*" (Matthew 11:28), "*take*" (Matthew 11:29), "*receive*" (John 1:11, 12), "*call*" (Romans 10:13), etc. There must be the consent of your will in receiving what He offers in order for you to enter into the freedom- He has secured.

III. RESPONSIBILITY IN FREEDOM

Freedom is not given to make us comfortable, but to give us opportunity to build and to serve. Responsibility accompanies the privilege of being free.

God raised up the United States of America for a great purpose. He raised her up for world missionary-evangelistic ministries. Never in the history of the human race has any nation had as much wealth, training, equipment, and potential as our nation has today. God's purposes in us are more than political, economic, or social. They are spiritual purposes. The Christians in the United States alone, without help from other countries, could reach our generation with the gospel of Jesus Christ if we would do it.

God raised the nation of Israel up for a world missionary-evangelistic purpose also. He promised Abram, "*In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*" (Genesis 12:3). God's great purpose was to bring all groups of people, whether Jews or Gentiles, together and form one new man in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-18).

Our spiritual freedom from sin in Jesus Christ joins us to that holy company of the redeemed and makes us available to share in God's great purpose of world missionary-evangelism. You were not saved just to get you to heaven; you were saved to serve (Ephesians 1:12).

IV. GOD GIVES FREEDOM

Freedom is God's gift to men. Even when it comes in the midst of judgment, it is an act of grace.

Our political freedom as a nation arose out of a war for independence. Israel's social-political freedom arose from the judgment of God on Egypt in the death of the firstborn of those who did not believe His warning. Our spiritual freedom in Christ arose from the sacrifice He made on the cross, followed by his victorious resurrection from death. In each case, God gave the freedom.

Look to God when you think of freedom. Thank Him for giving victory in warfare between nations. Thank Him for giving deliverance from sin in Jesus Christ. Thank Him for power to overcome temptation and to live in spiritual purity. Thank Him for help in service by which spiritual victories are won in the lives of others. Keep your eye on God when you think of freedom: political, social, or spiritual.

Jesus said, *"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"* (John 8:32, 36). The truth which sets people free is the revelation God has given in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Freedom is a precious privilege. It is much better than political tyranny. It is much better than social bondage. It is much better than spiritual condemnation.

Prize your freedom. Protect your freedom. Promote your freedom by sharing its blessings with others.

Remember that it is God who makes men free.

QUESTIONS

1. How is July 4 related to April 8 in the year 1982?
2. What three types of freedom are discussed in this lesson?
3. What was the purpose of God in raising up ancient Israel?
4. What was the purpose of God in raising up our nation?
5. What was the purpose of God in your salvation?

6. How did Israel fulfill her destiny in God's purpose?
7. How does the United States fulfill her destiny under God?
8. How can you fulfill God's will in your life?
9. Why does responsibility accompany freedom?
10. How has this study helped you to be a better Christian?