

LIBERTY

As we celebrate this Fourth of July weekend, it is good and profitable to commemorate the day our nation was born. The United States of America declared its independence from Great Britain in 1776 and held its first Presidential election in 1789 as a free and sovereign new nation. Since then, the U.S. has been and continues to be the great beacon of freedom's light to the rest of the world. For 232 years, our nation has served as the distinguished example of the prosperity that is derived from a free and entrepreneurial society. We should be most thankful to God for our freedom and for the blessing of living in this wonderful country.

Much can be learned from comparing the liberty gained by the United States in 1776 and the liberty one can gain in Christ. First, before this nation was conceived in liberty, men had to acknowledge that they were living in bondage. Our forefathers declared, "the history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an *absolute tyranny* over these states" (The Declaration of Independence, emphasis B.G.). Before one can be born again into the freedom which is in Christ, one must first acknowledge that he is in bondage to sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Second, upon the understanding that the American Colonies were suffering at the hand of despotism, men chose to do something about the problem. In 1775, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "In our own native land, in defense of the freedom that is our birthright, and which we ever enjoyed till the late violation of it -- for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our fore-fathers and ourselves, against violence actually offered, *we have taken up arms*. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, and not before" (www.nationalcenter.org, emphasis B.G.). Our nation's founders determined that in order to be free, they would need to take appropriate action. In like manner, once an individual concludes that he is in bondage to sin, he must take appropriate action in order to lay hold upon the freedom which can only be found in Christ. The New Testament teaches that one must have faith (John 8:24), repent of past sins (Luke 13:3), confess that Jesus is the Christ (Rom. 10:9-10), and be "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:27) in order to enjoy Spiritual liberty and eternal salvation. As our nation was born out of tyranny and into freedom, men can be born again spiritually (John 3:5) – out of sin and into Christ.

Had our founding fathers not acted in harmony with their conclusions, they would not have enjoyed the freedom which came from breaking the enslaving bands of Great Britain. If an individual does not act, in obedience (Jam. 2:17, 24) and in accordance with God's Will (Col. 3:17), he cannot know the freedom which is in Christ. Today, we relish the liberty attained by our ancestors who, "with one mind resolved to die freemen rather than to live slaves" (Jefferson, www.nationalcenter.org). However, it is with eternity in mind that we should resolve today to break away from the powers of sin and devote our lives to living as free men in service to the Most High God.

- Brad Green

