

# DOCTRINE OF FREEDOM

- I. Introduction.
  - A. Freedom and liberty are noble concepts that are often spoken of by the human race, but little understood.
  - B. While volition (free will) entails the freedom to make choices, the possession of volition in and of itself does not make one free, either physically or spiritually.
  - C. This is easily demonstrated by the institution of slavery.
  - D. Although volition is independent in its function, it is still dependent upon factors besides itself in order to function, and is confined to the parameters within which it is to function.
  - E. This is demonstrated by the fact that the volition of the Sovereign God is bound by the parameters of His righteousness and justice.
  - F. Most people believe that freedom is simply the ability to do what you want to, when you want to, with whom you want to, but this is a fallacy.
  - G. As the Word of God will make plain, true freedom is tied directly to authority and the willingness and ability to function within certain given parameters.
  
- II. Vocabulary.
  - A. Hebrew vocabulary.
    1. **שָׁפַח** (chapash), verb, 1X, to be loosed or free as opposed to being restricted or bound, to be free as opposed to being a slave.
      - a. **חֻפְּשָׁה** (chuph shah), noun, 1X, liberty or freedom.
      - b. **חֻפְּשִׁי** (chuph shiy), adj, 17X, a free man as opposed to a slave or captive, one that is exempt from the burden of service.
    2. **דִּרְוֹר** (d<sup>e</sup>ror), noun, 8X, liberty or freedom, release from bondage, when followed by a **ל** (lamedh), it means to proclaim liberty or freedom to someone.
    3. Several other Hebrew words and phrases are used to denote the concept of freedom that do not strictly mean free, such as:
      - a. **The opening of the eyes**, is translated freedom at the end of Isaiah. 61:1.
      - b. The verb **יָצָא** (yatsa'—to go out) is translated **go free** in Exodus 21:7.
  - B. Greek vocabulary.
    1. **ἐλευθερώω** (eleutheroo), verb, 7X, to make free, to set at liberty, to exempt from liability or liberate from bondage.
      - a. **ἐλευθερία** (eleutheria), noun, 11X, freedom or liberty.
      - b. **ἐλευθερός** (eleutheros), adj., 23X, free, freeborn, freed from slavery, exempt, unrestrained, not bound by an obligation.

- c. Like the Hebrew, there are other Greek words or phrases employed to express the concept of freedom that are not strictly translated or defined as freedom or liberty.

### III. Definition and description.

- A. Webster defines freedom as the *quality or state of being free, exemption or liberation from slavery, imprisonment, restraint, or the power and control of another.*
- B. As noted in the vocabulary terms above, this definition is in line with the scriptural definition of freedom.
- C. Freedom is the independent ability to make decisions and act apart from any outside pressure, coercion, compulsion, or duress from any outside source.
- D. However, with this ability to independently make choices comes the responsibility to accept the consequences of those choices.
- E. While liberty and freedom are often used interchangeably, freedom emphasizes the lack of restraint or repression, while liberty implies freedom from previous restraint.

### IV. Freedom and God.

- A. God has revealed Himself to be the ultimate self-determining agent in the universe. Eph. 1:11
- B. Based on God's self-determination, He formed a creation that both reflects Him and reveals Him. Rom. 1:19-20; Ps. 19:1-4a
- C. The freedom of God is observed and exercised in His government of the moral creatures that He created.
- D. In God's freedom, the exercise of which must be compatible with His entire essence, He determined to create free moral agents whose eternal destiny would be decided by each one himself, and would be determined by how each used the freedom they were provided.
- E. This view of God's freedom and the free will of those He created must be maintained in the face of exaggerated and unscriptural views of sovereignty, such as Calvinism.
- F. Any notion that God's sovereignty, by some eternal divine decree, determined a fixed destiny for His moral creation, without regard to individual choice, reduces the concept of freedom to null and void. Deut. 30:19
  - 1. God clearly offers two choices to men, indicating that He has not fixed their destiny.
  - 2. The command to choose or select denotes a careful, well thought-out choice; it is the same verb used of God's own choice. Deut. 7:6
- G. That God chooses/elects/selects certain members of the human race for a particular purpose, and that man can choose for or against God's plan, denotes a self-determining action by both parties.
- H. This action is reciprocating and establishes the volitional basis of agreement between both parties if a union is to occur.

- I. Since it is clear that God created moral creatures with the ability to make individual decisions on their own, it must be recognized that these decisions, not God, determine one's eternal destiny.
- J. The reason that Divine Institution #1, volition or freedom of choice, is provided by God is so His creation might enjoy the freedom that He Himself enjoys.
- K. To that end, God placed the Laws of Divine Establishment (LDE) in order to protect freedom and insure the proper and unimpeded function of volition.
- L. Again, it must be noted that while God has maximum freedom, even He is bound to act only in a manner that is compatible with the attributes of His essence.

V. Physical freedom.

- A. Physical freedom is contrasted with the institution or status of slavery.
  - 1. Slaves possess volition, but are not free to do as they choose in every circumstance.
  - 2. Another, the master, controls their life.
  - 3. Slavery as an institution is not condemned in or by the Bible and believers should be very careful to recognize this in spite of the liberal/humanistic teaching to the contrary. Gen. 24; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22; ITim. 6:1; Philemon
    - a. While we would not argue that there have been abuses in the institution, abuses do not render any institution void. RM/RW; Family; Office, etc.
    - b. In fact, the Divine viewpoint states that if one became a Christian as a slave in this institution, he is to remain acclimated to that niche unless God made his freedom available; then, and only then, they should accept it. ICor. 7:21
    - c. Also, the reality is that slavery has existed since time immemorial and will continue to exist to the end of history. Rev. 13:16, 18:13, 19:18
      - 1.) Further, the United States is one of the worst offenders in spite of all our talk of human rights.
  - 4. One could become a slave in the physical realm by any of the following means.
    - a. Capture during war. Deut. 20:10-11; I Sam. 4:9; IKings 9:20-22
    - b. Purchase. Ex. 21:1-11; Lev. 25:44-46
    - c. Insolvency/bankruptcy. Ex. 21:1-6; Deut. 15:12
    - d. Criminal activity. Ex. 22:1-5
    - e. Birth. Ex. 21:4; Jer. 2:14
- B. Authority as it relates to physical freedom.
  - 1. Freedom never means the unbridled ability to do anything and everything a person might want to do.
  - 2. All normal members of any society must recognize that their freedom ends where the freedoms of others begin. *We have the freedom to worship in America as we see fit, as long as it does not infringe on the freedom of others to worship.*

3. Laws and authority are necessary restraints upon personal freedom in order to ensure the maximum freedom and good for all.
4. Failure to abide by the established laws that various authorities have put in place may result in the loss of the freedom men so desperately prize.
5. Therefore, personal freedom in the physical realm demands that we use our freedom responsibly if we expect to maintain the status quo of freedom we enjoy.
6. Freedom demands that we respect:
  - a. Other persons.
  - b. Other's privacy.
  - c. Other's property.
7. It should be readily apparent that apart from authority, orientation to authority, and self-discipline, freedom would cease to exist.
8. Authorities in the Divine Institutions provide the framework within which one is expected to exercise his freedom.
  - a. Volition. While we are the self-determining authority in our choices, we must allow all people that same freedom. Philemon 14
    1. Those that will not must forfeit their freedom and be removed from society. Gen. 9:5-6; Rom. 13:4
  - b. RM/RW. The husband is the authority over the wife. Eph. 5:23
  - c. The family. The parents are the authorities over the children. Eph. 6:1
  - d. The workplace. The boss is the authority over the employee. Eph. 6:5ff
  - e. The nation. Each nation is an authority over its own citizens so that political freedom is available in history for men to pursue God and His plan. Acts 17:26-27
- C. The military and physical freedom.
  1. The military, operating under the authority of the nation, is designed to prevent outside aggressors from robbing the populace of its freedom.
  2. When external forces threaten the freedom of a nation, the demand for self-sacrifice may become necessary to insure that freedom. Neh. 4:11-23
  3. A properly functioning military is the organization that purchases and maintains the freedom for individuals in the nation.
- D. Physical freedom, under the concept of nationalism, is necessary for the proper and free function of volition and the resolution of the angelic conflict.

## VI. Spiritual freedom.

- A. All men are born spiritual slaves via the genetic STA. Rom. 6:20
  1. This is due to our position in Adam. Rom. 5:12,19
  2. Adam was free prior to the fall. Gen. 2:16-17,25
  3. Spiritual slavery came about as a result of the fall, becoming the state of all born into *cosmos diabolicus*, and is the absolute, unbroken state of all men before salvation. Rom. 6:17; Gal. 4:9; Tit. 3:3
- B. Ph<sub>1</sub> salvation is freedom purchased for all mankind by the work of Christ on the cross. Gal. 3:13; Tit. 2:14; IPet. 1:18-19 *See doctrine of Redemption*

1. Prior to salvation, each person lived his entire life in the realm of spiritual death; completely dominated at all times by the STA, and the body merely acted out the corrupt desires of the sin nature. Rom. 5:19,21; Eph. 2:1-3
  2. All slaves can only be redeemed by someone who is free, and Christ was qualified to do so because of His unique relationship with God and His freedom from the genetic STA and personal sin. Jn. 8:46; IICor. 5:21
  3. The price that must be paid to redeem a slave is the ransom and is referred to in the Word of God as His blood. Eph. 1:7; IPet. 1:18-19; Matt. 20:28; ITim. 2:6
  4. Faith in Christ brings Ph<sub>1</sub> freedom. Jn. 8:35-36; Acts 13:38-39; Gal. 5:1
- C. Ph<sub>2</sub> spiritual freedom is related to the Word of God and the Spirit of liberty.
1. Christ's work, effecting our Ph<sub>1</sub> freedom, has a view to maximum freedom in Ph<sub>2</sub>. Gal. 5:1
  2. Each believer is exhorted to exploit that freedom through the pursuit of Bible doctrine and not be reduced to slavery again. Gal. 5:1; Ps. 119:45; Jn. 8:31-32
  3. The Word of God is called the Law of Liberty. James 1:25
  4. True freedom in time comes as a result of the pursuit of and application of Bible doctrine. James 1:22-25
  5. Further, Ph<sub>2</sub> freedom is contingent upon daily orientation (filling of the Holy Spirit) to God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of liberty. IICor. 3:17
  6. The mature believer, the one that understands and functions within the guidelines of Bible doctrine, experiences a freedom of which others can only dream. Ps. 119:45; Jn. 8:32-1-32; Rom. 8:2
- D. Spiritual laws and restrictions govern true freedom.
1. Spiritual authorities are the protectors/guardians of those that have been allotted to each communicator's authority. Acts 20:28; IPet. 5:1-3
  2. This is exactly what we observe in the physical realm since there is no authority except from God. Rom. 13:1-4
  3. Understanding of and orientation to the Word of God is our military/defense of freedom in time. Heb. 4:12; Jere. 23:29; Eph. 6:11-17
  4. MPR is a restriction that is placed on us to ensure our freedom, as taught in the yoke analogy and the athletic metaphor. Matt. 11:28-30; ICor. 9:24-27
  5. Isolation of the STA, under the filling of the Holy Spirit, pursuing the Royal Law of love, is the law that is to govern our Ph<sub>2</sub> freedom. Rom. 13:10; Gal. 5:13-14; James 2:8
    - a. The Law of Love is simply the mental attitude and overt applications that come about from placing other believers first. Gal. 5:13; ICor. 9:19
    - b. This mental attitude was clearly that which Christ demonstrated in His deity and, more especially, in His humanity. Phil. 2:3-7a
      - 1.) The mother of James and John did not possess this attitude (nor did they likely), something that Jesus strongly rebuked. Matt. 20:20-28

- c. The Law of Love demands that we not use our freedom to infringe upon the freedoms in Christ that have been bestowed on other believers. ICor. 8:4-8; Rom. 14:1-6
  - 1.) These two passages deal with the principle of freedom in Christ and how we are to relate to other believers.
  - 2.) Two specific things are addressed—partaking of things associated with idols, and observance of holidays.
  - 3.) In general, there are two categories of believers, the strong and the weak.
    - a.) The strong believer refers to the believer that has been around doctrine for some time, fully understands and is grounded in the principle of freedom.
    - b.) The weak believer, or **weak in faith** is the relatively new, or untaught believer that does not grasp his freedom in Christ.
    - c.) The weak believer is not one hampered by STA disobedience or rejection of Bible doctrine since this demands separation. IIThess. 3:14
    - d.) This is seen in the use of the verb διακρίνω (diakrino—to distinguish, doubt, discern, or differentiate), indicating that the weak believer lacks the evidence or proof necessary for faith in regard to some matter. Rom. 14:23
  - 4.) This principle is designed to maintain harmony between those new to certain principles of doctrinal freedom and those that have greater understanding. Rom. 14:1,19
  - 5.) The stronger believer is not to be contemptuous of the weak, and the weak in faith is not to judge those that are stronger; leave all judging to the Lord. Rom. 14:3-4,10-12
  - 6.) The higher application is for the stronger believer to abstain from any activity that would knowingly violate the conscience of a new or weak believer. ICor. 8:9-13; Rom. 14:14-15,20-21
  - 7.) This is designed to give all members of the local church maximum freedom to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, while working out their own salvation. IIPet. 3:18; Phil. 2:12
  - 8.) The pastor-teacher is responsible to teach the principles of doctrine clearly over time so the weak believer eventually grows up and overcomes his areas of weakness. Eph. 4:11-15; Col. 1:28
- E. Ph<sub>3</sub> freedom in eternity will be the ultimate expression of freedom for all believers. Rom. 8:21
  - 1. The believer will be permanently and eternally freed from the corruption of the indwelling STA in his resurrection body. Rom. 7:24; ICor. 15:42
  - 2. We will manifest the freedom that comes from having the entire realm of Bible doctrine in our new brain computer. Heb. 8:10-11
  - 3. Since righteousness and justice is the standard for maximum human freedom, those who finish their course will be rewarded with the crown of righteousness, hailing them as the true champions in the cause of freedom. IITim. 4:8

4. Our freedom in eternity will be certainly be conditioned on the freedom that Christ Himself enjoys. Rom. 8:29; Jn. 3:2
  5. The physical creation will benefit from the revealing of the sons of God and be set free from the slavery of the curse. Rom. 8:21; Isa. 11:6, 65:25
- VII. Abuses and enemies of freedom.
- A. Liberty is not license. Gal. 5:13; IPet. 2:16
  - B. Legalism destroys personal freedom. Acts 15:10; Gal. 2:4, 5:1-9
  - C. The STA and lasciviousness. Prov. 5:22; Gal 5:13
  - D. Liberal false teachers of the last days. IPet. 2:18-19
- VIII. Conclusions.
- A. The understanding of physical freedom provides the background by which one may understand concepts related to spiritual freedom.
  - B. Sadly, the majority of mankind will never be free; and most believers do not understand or appreciate their freedom in Christ and are not truly free at all.
  - C. They are slaves to some viewpoint, system, activity, etc. that proceeds from the indwelling STA and not from walking in fellowship and adhering to Bible doctrine. Rom. 6:20
  - D. The result of failure to deal with the STA via doctrine is enslavement and death. Rom. 6:23, 8:6
  - E. Ironically, those that choose to enslave themselves to the divine viewpoint of life are set free. Jn. 8:31-32; Rom. 6:22
  - F. To the extent the believer is oriented to God, to that extent he is free; in those areas of ignorance or intentional disregard the believer remains a slave.
  - G. Doing what you choose in life, in disregard of Bible doctrine, including pursuing funsville, violating separation, pursuing the opposite sex, money, power or the details of life will not make you a successful or happy believer.
  - H. The happiest and most free people on the planet are those with maximum doctrine, pursuing MPR, and subjecting themselves consistently to the Law of Liberty.

*“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”*  
Gal. 5:1

*“Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.”*  
IPet. 2:16