

## The High Cost Of Liberty

By: Keith Keyser

**“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.” Luke 4:18-19**

The author of the American *Declaration of Independence*, Thomas Jefferson once penned the following regarding armed revolution:

We have had 13 states independent 11 years. There has been one rebellion. That comes to one rebellion in a century & a half for each state. What country before ever existed a century & half without a rebellion? & what country can preserve it's [sic] liberties if their rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to facts, pardon & pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? **The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots & tyrants.** It is it's [sic] natural manure.<sup>i</sup>

Despite this incendiary rhetoric and all of his contributions to the founding of the United States of America, Jefferson never shed a drop of his own blood to create or defend liberty.

### **You Say You Want A Revolution?**

The recent unrest in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Iran, and other despotically ruled nations once more shows the innate human desire for freedom from tyranny. It remains to be seen whether these protests will produce political situations where freedom may flourish. Yet on a higher level the Lord Jesus Christ “preached freedom for the prisoners...to release the oppressed” through the shedding of His own blood (Luke 4:18; Eph. 1:7.) He was willing to suffer the heinous torture of crucifixion in order to free repentant sinners. Rather than sending others to die for spiritual liberty, Christ Himself gave His life on the cross. By pouring out His blood He paid the redemption price to liberate people from the tyranny of sin, Satan, the grave, and hell. His resurrection shows that the rescue has been accomplished. Only the Lord Jesus can grant true eternal freedom to lost sinners.

To obtain “a better resurrection” many of the Lord Jesus’ followers have suffered physically and emotionally (Heb. 11:35.) Old Testament Israel experienced tremendous oppression from numerous occupying powers. As a nation Israel currently disbelieves in their true Messiah Jesus (“Yeshua” as His name is in Hebrew); for them the “times of the Gentiles” continue (Lk. 21:24.) They will not recognize Him until He comes to defend and rescue them from the ire of the nations at the end of the Tribulation period (Zech. 12:1-13:1; Matt. 23:37-39.)

## **Freedom Worth Suffering For**

Today millions of Christians around the world continue to suffer and die for their faith; yet their stories often go unreported in the western media. Nonetheless, one day the great Deliverer the Lord Jesus Christ will come to rescue His servants from those who mercilessly persecute them (2 Thes. 1:4-10.) What is more, He will liberate both them and the creation itself from the bondage and pain that sin produces in this world (Rom. 8:14-24.) The freedom that Jefferson and other people pine for is but a pale reflection of the far greater program of liberty that God will inaugurate through His peerless Son. His work will encompass every nation and extend far beyond this planet as it currently is (Rev. 21-22; Isa. 9:6-7.) If you have never done so, call on Him for salvation, confessing your hopeless condition as a sinner, and He will save you (Rom. 10:9.) Or if you already have received Christ as your Lord and Savior, continue on in the struggle – “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12)! The kingdom that God will establish in the age to come is worth suffering the loss of everything in this age (Acts 14:21-22; Matt. 16:24-27; Mk. 10:30.)<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Thomas Jefferson, “Letter to William S. Smith, 13 November 1787;” accessed here on 2/28/11: <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/tj3/writings/brf/jefl64.htm> ; emphasis mine.

<sup>ii</sup> An abbreviated version of this article originally appeared on the Carryduff Gospel Hall website (<http://www.carryduff.org/>) the week of February 21, 2011.