

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1).

The Galatian Christians were forsaking their freedom in returning to what Paul calls “the weak and beggarly elements” of the law of Moses for justification. To do such was to forsake the liberty available in Christ alone.

Similarly, the Colossian Christians were warned against being “subject to ordinances” imposed, not by God, but “after the commandments and doctrines of men” (Colossians 2:20-23). Jesus said of those of His day, “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). He had asked the people, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions?” (15:3).

Proper authority in religion obviously matters. While we exercise tolerance towards others in allowing all freedom of choice, as well we should, there is no room for saying that all authority is equal. God looks with disfavor upon those who would subject themselves to human authority in religion rather than the authority of our Lord, who has “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). I read recently of a number of churches that have placed copies of the Koran alongside copies of the Bible in the pews, and read from both during services. This is troubling! What kinship can the Christian faith, that affirms Jesus to be the Son of God, have with the Muslim faith that declares, “God has no Son”?

Even within the nominally Christian setting, denominational decisions on matters of both faith and morals are increasingly favoring what may be politically correct over any “thus saith the Lord.” Dogmas and traditions not clearly based upon God’s word are to be avoided by all who would be truly free in Christ.

Freedom is so easily lost. When we begin accepting what respected preachers and teachers affirm to be truth, without subjecting it to a thorough test, with the Word of God as the standard, we are in danger of being “entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

--Ron