

In the World . . .

“And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world . . .” (John 17:11).

Use this news story from recent days to help your students see the relevance of this week’s Sunday school lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®/Standard Lesson Quarterly.

FREEDOM IN EGYPT?

Leaders in America and other western democracies continue to watch events in Egypt nervously. That country—which controls the vital Suez Canal—continues to experience a move toward democracy that has been anything but smooth following last February’s revolution. Parliamentary elections that concluded last week saw Islamist parties capture over two-thirds of the vote. Some Islamists are moderates who advocate significant levels of freedom. Others, such as the hardline Islamist Salafi al-Nour party (which won more than a fifth of the vote), advocate the immediate enforcement of strict Sharia law on Egyptian citizens. There is widespread resistance in Egypt to allowing freedom as Americans experience it, and no one knows how the current political tug-of-war will end.

FREEDOM FROM EGYPT!

When God acted to free Israel from generations of slavery in Egypt, the move came swiftly and with specific direction. Moses relayed God’s instructions that the Israelites were to obey. Crossing the Red Sea to freedom by God’s miraculous intervention resulted in the song of praise we see in today’s text. But the gratitude was short-lived as the people began to complain. Eventually, people would even express a desire to pick a new leader and go back to Egypt! Then as now, people do not always embrace the concept of freedom as one might think that they should.

1. Why is modern Egypt having such difficulty in creating a free society?
2. How can Christians do better at handling the responsibilities of political freedom (1 Peter 2:13-17; etc.)?
3. What are some responsibilities of freedom in Christ that Christians do not always handle well (1 Corinthians 8; Galatians 5:1-18; Colossians 2:20-23; etc.)?
4. In what way is spiritual freedom analogous to political freedom in terms of the challenges placed before us?
5. What lessons can we learn from ancient Israel’s reactions to their circumstances?

—*Charles R. Boatman*

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