



Born Free

by Kimberly Fletcher

For five thousand years people lived in grass houses, plowed fields with their bare hands and lived every day just to survive. In a little over two hundred years we have gone from grass houses to Victorian mansions, from wagons to motor cars, from the Pony Express to Federal Express and it all began with the simple knowledge that men are free. Our Founding Fathers didn't just come up with an idea and thought they'd try it out. They had studied centuries of history repeating itself. They witnessed tyranny and oppression first hand. They knew that power corrupts and that ultimate power corrupts ultimately and they knew there *must* be a better way.

They found that better way at the foot of their mother's knee as she read to them the stories of the Bible.

Each night families would gather together and read the stories that gave them hope direction, guidance, and understanding. They read about the deep faith and unwavering obedience of Abraham, the courage of Stephen, the steadfastness of Job, and the charity of Ruth. They read of Daniel who sacrificed his own life for what he knew to be right and true, David who stood against Goliath, and Esther who sacrificed her own well-being to save her people.

They read about Joseph who mastered his own passions, and later prepared Pharaoh for the coming famine by storing food for seven years—an act that made Egypt the richest nation in the world for centuries. They read the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus taught of all the attributes a person needs to govern themselves. And when they read those powerful words of Paul when he stood before King Agrippa stating, "I was born free", they came to understand for the first time in centuries, that their rights came from God and not from man.

With tear filled eyes, they read of the Israelites who *knew* they were free but begged for a King, and traded their freedom for a monarchy because freedom was too much work. How it must have made our Founders ache to read those words. To them—being living witnesses to the evil and oppression of a monarchy—it was the same as trading a divine birthright for a bowl of soup.

The Bible was the foundation that cultivated the soil of liberty and America was the venue God chose to house it. Our Founding Families knew what freedom was long before it was openly declared in the Declaration of Independence. Because of that simple, consistent act of reading the bible together as families, the knowledge that

man's rights came from God and not government was infused in their very souls. And when they saw that knowledge manifested in the United States Constitution they embraced it as the banner of freedom that would secure their liberties not only for themselves but for their posterity for generations to come.

Our Founding Families learned all the *key* ingredients to a free society in those well-worn pages of the Bible—self-mastery, self-reliance, self-sacrifice, and self-governance. With this knowledge, they *found* the better way and they thoroughly believed that with these key ingredients, and the divine intervention of a loving God, man could in fact govern himself. They believed it with all their heart and formed our entire government on that belief.

Our Founding Fathers learned what freedom was from the *Bible*. When they signed the Declaration of Independence they knew they were going against Goliath. When they pledged their lives, fortunes and sacred honor they—like Daniel and Esther—sacrificed their own lives and well-being for what they knew to be right and true.

For over a hundred and fifty years, families read together, ate together, worked together, and served together. And in 1776, we saw the fruits of their labors as fifty-six men, raised with an understanding of these principles, pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor for the greatest contribution of freedom ever made on this earth. And when they penned the words “We hold these truths to be self-evident”, they did so with the words of Paul echoing in their ears and they *knew* they were “born free!”

For over a century Americans learned what freedom meant. For the next two centuries they lived it and now, in this century, we are in danger of losing it. There are troubling times ahead for our nation.

Now, more than ever, we need those timeless stories of faith, courage, and freedom from the Bible in our lives. They are the stories that touched the hearts of our Founding Families; they are the stories that laid the foundation of freedom; and they are the stories that will revive the spirit of liberty in the hearts of this generation; and leave their imprint on generations to come.

“Perhaps,” as Kriss Anne Halls has suggested, “our job is not necessarily to win this fight but to prepare the ground; to make the soil fertile and sow the seeds so that Liberty may thrive when the battle is done.” When we lay that foundation as our Founders did—firmly rooted in the Bible, then the foundation will be sure; and we will be evidenced in the hearts and actions of our children.

When our sons and daughters raise their hands to defend the Constitution of the United States, to pledge their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor for the cause of freedom; then we will know liberty is secure, because we will know our children know what it means. They will know because they will remember the stories

we read to them. They will know because they will remember the love of liberty we shared with them. They will know, because they will remember that story they once heard us tell about a man named Paul, and they will know *they were born free!*