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A Research Project

Illuminating the Dark Ages: foundations for the European enlightenment of liberty



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Abstract

This research endeavors to narrate the histories of freedom as it progressed during the Middle Ages out of Christianity. It will explore freedom as understood from both its religious and secular impacts. This work will address its emerging from the Bible and its biblical meaning as it progressed during the antithesis of feudalistic servitude. Moreover, it will examine the histories of being expressed by events and declaration of rights. The historical support for how this concept was imbued and can be identified is in the mechanisms of law, religion, and middle age institutions. Middle Age Europe embraced a Biblical, and more specifically, New Testament truths of human freedom. The examination of contemporary texts not only show that the concept of freedom existed in medieval Europe, but also that it was realized. Two factors that jumpstarted freedom were religious education and general repression. Freedom was an irony of religious persecution and feudalism. The prominent infusing of Christian faith in Europe during the Middle Ages, based on its biblical teachings, imbued a pervasiveness of freedom.

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Introduction

Western Europeans grasped for freedom that lurked in the shadows of feudalistic, Monarchic, and Papal constraints. But, it was these external impositions that compelled it; their internal religious conviction and virtue expressed it, moreover, laid a foundation for liberty to shine. Liberty exuded from a Euro-Christian world view during the Middle Ages and continued as secularism became manifest. Christianity did not invent freedom but freedom progressed by Christianity from the exposition of the Bible. Liberty has been rooted in religious belief, particularly with the Gospel of Christ, and advanced through the dissemination of the Bible. Consequently, to understand freedom during the Middle Ages, it is best to understand it with both its religious and secular impacts. The religious emphasis was expressed as an internal/spiritual salvation, and the secular emphasis was manifest as external, in the form of laws and rights. Events such as peasant revolts and the Reformation, reveal the grasping for freedom. Additionally, the making of explicit charters, constitutions, and laws, for the enabling and protection of freedoms also reveal the concept's realization. Research illuminates, liberty was rooted in Christianity and promulgated by the Bible. The prominent infusing of Christian faith in Europe during the Middle Ages, from its biblical teachings, imbued a pervasiveness of freedom.

Looking Further Back at Freedom

Many authors have addressed freedom in the context of America like Edmond Morgan, Carole Emberton, and Maura Jane Farrelly. These authors have addressed freedom in the context of America and similarly focused on the antithesis of slavery.¹ A leading authority on

¹ Edmund S. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox," *The Journal of American History* Vol. 59, No. 1, (1972): 5-29, retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1888384>; Maura Jane Farrelly, "American Slavery,

the topic of freedom is DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University, Eric Foner, who explains that the meaning of freedom is quite elusive and paradoxical.² Anthony Gill, in his journal article, contends that religious freedom is conducive to economic growth by making the historical connections of tolerance to trade.³ Still, for a comprehensive study, it requires one to look at a time and place before pilgrims fled from Religious persecution to a seemingly unlikely period that may otherwise be easily overlooked- the Middle Ages.

The Middle Ages reveal that freedom was phantom, hiding in the darkness of tradition, superstition, and authoritative constraints; nevertheless, the period percolated the realization of freedom. This revelation may imbue a new encompassing perspective on the part of Middle Age and Renaissance histories. On the cusp of the Enlightenment, there existed much overlap of religion and secularism. The Enlightenment was a time of ridding religious control (not necessarily faith) and the integrating of secularism. Just as there was a pluralism of societal worldviews of the organic and mechanized, so too there was with religion and the secular.⁴

At the time of the Enlightenment, religion did not just go away; for the most part, it lost its political and stately power but never lost its influences on the people; this is evident even until today with an estimated 2.5 billion Christians worldwide in a 2019 report.⁵ This research

American Freedom, American Catholicism: 1," *Early American Studies* Vol. 10 Issue 1, (2012): 69-100, retrieved from <http://search-proquest-com.ezproxy1.apus.edu/docview/1022173114?accountid=8289>; Carole Emberton, "Unwriting the freedom narrative: A review essay," *The Journal of Southern History* 82(2), (2016): 377-394, retrieved from <http://search-proquest-com.ezproxy1.apus.edu/docview/1788738332?accountid=8289>

² Eric Foner, "The Idea of Freedom in American History," (New York, NY: Columbia University, 2018), Retrieved from http://www2.law.columbia.edu/law_culture/Faclunch_sp04/Foner_Feb26.pdf

³ A. Gill, & John M. Owen, IV, "Religious Liberty and Economic Prosperity: Four Lessons from the Past," *Cato Journal* 37(1), 115-134 (2017), Retrieved from <http://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/serials/files/cato-journal/2017/2/cj-v37n1-9.pdf>

⁴ Peter Burke, *Italian Renaissance Culture and Society in Italy*, 3rd Edition, Newark: Wiley, 2013, 214, accessed April 27, 2019. ProQuest ebook, retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/apus/reader.action?docID=4471383&ppg=222>

⁵ Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, "Status of Global Christianity, 2019, in the Context of 1900-2050," Center for the Study of Global Christianity, retrieved from <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/ockenga/research/documents/StatusofGlobalChristianity20191.pdf>

submits that it was a corruption of the Church institution, opposed the following of Jesus's teachings or Gospel message that suddenly became offensive and the subject of antipathy. There was much humanistic thought among Church theologians, so religion and humanism ought not to be viewed strictly incompatible or in opposition. The greater premise of the Reformation was that of Church fallibility.⁶ Thus, to be historically concise, the apparent *transition* of ideologies and philosophies was rather a twofold *co-existence*, despite the enmity that later developed in the 1600s. Moreover, at the dawning of freedom, what later developed as competing ideologies of religion and humanism, initially was commutual; subsequently, there developed an extreme element of humanism that disseminated hatred at Christianity incited by proponents like Voltaire.⁷

Freedom did not emerge exclusively from the Enlightenment, instead became accelerated by it. Thus, this premise is that the pathway for the manifestation of freedom ought not to be barred before the Enlightenment began, rather corresponds with an onset during the Middle Ages. Initially, religion lost its political and stately authority, not its existence. Religious and not religious ideologies encompassed much overlap.⁸ Not until the 17th century did humanism and secularism increase as separate concepts of thought. All the while, many Europeans continued to adhere to Christianity, even among some of the most prominent progressive thinkers and figures such as Peter Abelard (c. 1079 A.D.), Francis Bacon (c. 1561 A.D.), and René Descartes (c. 1596 A.D.) of whom, Voltaire references.⁹

⁶ Ryan Reeves, *Enlightenment*, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, retrieved from YouTube user: Ryan Reeves <http://youtu.be/DdB4DzKTyb0>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

In the journal *Modern Intellectual History*, Michael Printy examines Charles Villers's Essay on the *Spirit and Influence of Luther's Reformation (1804)*. Printy titles it, *Protestantism and Progress in the Year XII*, and with Villers, looks back at "a specific ideological and the social struggle in the wake of the French Revolution."¹⁰ Villers is poignant to identify that "the Reformation was at the root of the progress of Enlightenment because of the way it combined a renewal of knowledge and intellect with a broad-based social reform."¹¹ Only, Villers falls short of looking farther back to identify what the "renewal of knowledge and intellect" that would bring about this "broad-based social reform" specifically was, namely, *Christian liberty*.¹² Printy notes that the historian Ludwig Timotheus Spittler in the 1780s alludes to the "freedom of conscience, and the interpretation of the Bible."¹³ However, to examine Martin Luther's cause (later addressed in this research) one can surmise Christian liberty, derived from the bible, as the basis of this "renewal of knowledge" that leads to freedom of religion and thought.¹⁴

This research argues that freedom was unwittingly propagated through European Christianity by way of its biblical doctrine. This essay will synthesize the role of the Bible's involvement with the concept of freedom. Consequently, the argument is multifaceted when examining freedom. It should not be limited by place (America) or period (Enlightenment). Preferably, freedom ought to be studied by the religious influences of the Middle Ages.

¹⁰ Michael Printy, "Protestantism and Progress in the Year XII: Charles Villers's Essay on the Spirit and Influence of Luther's Reformation (1804)," *Modern Intellectual History*, 9(2) (2012): 303-329, doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy2.apus.edu/10.1017/S1479244312000054>, retrieved from <http://search-proquest-com.ezproxy2.apus.edu/docview/1030088199?pq-origsite=summon&accountid=8289>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Furthermore, the progression of freedom should be viewed in the context of a co-existence of the predominant ideologies or philosophies with that of religion and secularism.¹⁵

Precursor of Middle Age Freedom

Before the Middle Ages, Christianity suffered persecution under the Roman Empire.¹⁶

The dissension, hostilities, humanitarian maltreatment, and executions of Christians were premised on what a person could *believe*; moreover, it dehumanized the individual's very existence.¹⁷ Christians were attacked for a belief/thought. Not until Constantine, did relief come with his Edict of Milan (c. 313 A.D.), providing religious tolerance; moreover, he commissioned the writing of fifty Bible manuscript copies.¹⁸ With this tolerance, the Bible became a standard of righteousness in government that permeated the ideals of freedom. Theodosius followed this with laws of human dignity. To control a belief is to control thought, and to control thought, diminishes if not destroys, the knowledge of that intelligence or truth. The long-term significance was that of liberty, for if humanity could *believe* freely, humanity could think freely; and if humanity could think freely, humanity could live freely. Freedom of belief/thought is one of the "unalienable rights" that humans are "endowed by their Creator."¹⁹ Freedom of thought enables for one to reason.

¹⁵ Christopher Grasso, "The Religious and the Secular in the Early American Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 36 (2): 359-88. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy1.apus.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=115924530&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

¹⁶ Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals*, book 15.44, (Online: Perseus Digital Library), retrieved from <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0078%3Abook%3D15%3Achapter%3D44>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Galerius, Constantine, and Licinius, "Galerius and Constantine [and Licinius]: Edicts of Toleration 311/313," Eusebius and Lactantius, *Original Sources of European History*, Vol 4:, 1, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1897-1907), 28-30. Fordham University, retrieved from <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/edict-milan.asp>

¹⁹ "America's Founding Documents: Declaration of Independence," A Transcription, National Archives, <http://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

The Dark Ages

After the Roman Empire fell (c. 476 A.D.), power shifted to the Byzantine Empire (c. 330-1453 A.D.) with its dominance in the east, and eventually to the Holy Roman Empire in the west (c. 800-1806 A.D.). Emperor Constantine (c. 306-337 A.D.) tolerated the new religion of Christianity; subsequently, continued to grow in prominence under Justinian (c. 527 A.D.) and Charlemagne (c. 768 A.D.). Consequently, the Middle Ages predominantly consisted of a mostly Christian and or biblical worldview that began with Catholicism and Orthodox Churches then later Protestant forms of the religion in Western Europe.

Christianity shaped and transformed not only medieval society but also the way Europe was governed. Both Charlemagne and the Church forged Europe into a theocratic monarchy with an imperial ideal. The Church often ruled both spiritually and civilly. More significant to consider, regarding the background of the medieval world was that of *religious education* and *repressions* in Western Europe under feudalism. The *divine right of the king* and the supreme papal authority as the *Vicar of Christ* (Vicarius Christi) would wane in the balance as they both either fought for power and wealth or shared it.

The setting is that of the feudalistic, Monarchic, and Papal constraints that controlled peasants (even the bourgeoisie) of the period. The King had the power to control land and what was done with it as a property right known as a fief.²⁰ He could impose taxes as he had the need.²¹ The King also wrote the law and enforced order as he saw fit.²² The Church Ecclesia held religious freedom, who enjoyed rights and benefits such as receiving tithe as well as having

²⁰ Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial 2015), 215-30, ePub Edition, ISBN 9780062444608

²¹ Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial 2015), 300, ePub Edition, ISBN 9780062444608

²² *Ibid.*, 312.

tax and military exemption.²³ Baron's rights were to own property given to them and distribute to Knights in accordance to societal order.²⁴ Although, there were restrictions on Barons that required payment of taxes, and ransoms if the King was kidnapped.²⁵ Barons were also to provide services such as protection, Knights, as well as lodging.²⁶ Moreover, it was the role of the Baron also, if their heir was a female, to find her a husband to take over the Manor.²⁷

Positions of authority often overlapped from religious to the royal. The Abbot maintained a political influence, particularly concerning monastic education, and the filling of the Bishopric, notably those of the Benedictine Order.²⁸ The Knights (warriors) were rewarded fief by the Baron but also answered to the King usually through a Duke.²⁹ Peasants and serfs were at the bottom of the social hierarchy, yet still had some rights.³⁰ They were required to provide food and free labor; in return, they were given plots of land on which to work.³¹ The fief given to the peasants were passed down through the family and remained in the family as their right.³² Peasants did not have freedom of travel and had to gain permission to marry.³³ Each social group answered to all groups above their own. Often, the Clergy overlapped the nobility. With Christianity as the dominant religion, therein lies a paradox of its control over the people, yet who were also prominent disseminators of the knowledge of biblical freedom. It was a time

²³ Ibid., 78, 188.

²⁴ Ibid., 484.

²⁵ "Feudal system during the Middle Ages," Khan Academy, retrieved from <http://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/medieval-times/european-middle-ages-and-serfdom/v/feudal-system-during-the-middle-ages>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial 2015), 173, ePub Edition, ISBN 9780062444608

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "Serfs and Manorialism," Khan Academy, retrieved from <http://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/medieval-times/european-middle-ages-and-serfdom/v/serfs-and-manorialism>

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

when the Bible was a primary educational and spiritual source of information, as well as the formation of traditional learning. All the while, as revolts and revolutions took place during the middle age, Christianity and the Bible's concept of freedom continued to remain in the hearts and minds of Europeans.

Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury (c. 1162-117 A.D.) so eloquently reflects the Medieval concepts of rights in *The Letter of the blessed Thomas to King Henry* as he wrote, "To *speak* concerning *God* stands in need of a *mind* utterly *free* and unbiased." In this one sentence, he infers the notion of, freedom of speech, religious freedom, and intellectual freedom.³⁴ The constraints placed on the peasants for centuries reached a climax, causing rebellion, revolution, and reformation.

Those above the peasantry most likely learned first from family life, skilled labor and guild contacts, then from monastic schools, notably the School of St. Victor (c. 1000 A.D.), with a quadrature curriculum.³⁵ These included topics like Bible/theology, Latin language, logic, rhetoric, philosophy, astronomy, music, and mathematics. Students could move on to the Cathedral Universities that offered Master of Arts programs.³⁶ Moreover, monistic libraries and their professional dealings were further sources of knowledge. The peasantry learned knowledge visually, audibly, and verbally. They spoke their local language learning from family life, the hearing of the Bible in Church, stained glass images, practical farming, and homemaking experiences, as well as their contact with monks and priests. While the peasantry's reading and

³⁴ Roger of Hoveden. "The Chronicle: On the Disputes between Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury and King Henry II of England," Presented by Scott McLetchie, 1998, Fordham University. Translated by Henry T. Riley. *The Annals of Roger de Hoveden* (2 volumes). (London: Bohn, 1853). Retrieved from: <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/hoveden-becket.asp>

³⁵ Paul Vincent Spade, "Medieval Philosophy," Stanford University, March 15, 2016, retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/medieval-philosophy/#AvailabilityOfGreekTexts>

³⁶ Ibid.

writing may have been dismal, their ability to speak and understand was their means of learning and communication, mostly with that of Latin, French, or English. Knowledge of freedom empowered the people by religious truths, conviction motivated movements and revolts, as they expressed what was *right* for them. Within the setting of this background, it produced sparks of freedom in the forms of contemporary texts that sought to ignite liberty's light and remedy its paradoxical contraries.

Middle Age Europe's Exposé to the Biblical Context of Freedom

Middle Age Europeans understood that freedom came from the knowledge of truth, "ye shall know the Trueth, and the Trueth shall make you free."³⁷ But what was this truth? The Middle Ages disseminated knowledge (truths) of righteousness as societal virtues or standards that provided a means in which to gauge what was right and fair, albeit, society was not always fair. So, freedom comes from what is right and fair. It was right and fair to be forgiven of sin and granted eternal life because of the belief in Christ's sacrifice as payment/judgment for sins. Forgiveness granted *inner freedom* (salvation or liberty of conscience) that correlated into an outward expression of rights and opposition to tyranny.

What was this freedom of which the Bible spoke? The Bible associated freedom with the forgiveness of sin, and more readily in Romans chapter six, the Apostle St. Paul equates emancipation, to salvation.³⁸ Moreover, Luke, the historian of the Apostles, ascribes in his book that Jesus Christ provided freedom from sin saying, "to set at libertie them that are bruised."³⁹ More simply put, the biblical meaning of freedom had a spiritual or *internal* connotation. The

³⁷ *King James Bible Version 1611*, John 8:32 (Henderson, NV: King James Bible Online, 2018). Retrieved from <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611-John-Chapter-8/>

³⁸ *King James Bible Version 1611*, Romans 6 (Henderson, NV: King James Bible Online, 2018), retrieved from <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611-Bible/>

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Luke 4:17-18.

internal connotation was theologically contemplated throughout the Middle Ages concerning the doctrine more commonly known as *Christian liberty and liberty of conscience* (hamartiology).⁴⁰

Martin Luther, likewise, referred to it as “*Christian Liberty*.”⁴¹

In examining the religious aspect, it is essential to explore the two parallels that the Bible makes concerning freedom. The Bible makes the following two suppositions: 1) extreme religious legalism is as bondage, and 2) sin is as enslavement.⁴² These two parallel references (concerning legalism and sin) equate them to slavery or servitude that is the antithesis to freedom. Likewise, it was the Middle Ages that would undergo a feudalistic or servitude society. By understanding the antithesis, one gains the contrastive understanding of what freedom is not, and freedom is not slavery or servitude. Freedom is not repression, oppression, and suppression. Freedom is not constraints, regulations, or limitations.

Moreover, the Bible reveals that law or regulations cannot free one from the bondage of its constraints. In Galatians chapter five the Bible reveals that religious law that is taken to extremes can be in opposition to freedom.⁴³ That is, rituals, tradition, rules or regulations limit freedom by constraint. It was this limit setting of rules, regulation, ritual requirements and tradition that became problematic for the Church as an institution. In the book of Romans chapter six, the Apostil Paul parallels emancipation to salvation and eternal life.⁴⁴ By understanding freedom in its biblical context, to Europeans, they would become free from sin

⁴⁰ "The 1677/89 London Baptist Confession of Faith," (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 41, Christian Classics Ethereal Library of Calvin College, retrieved from: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous/bcf.pdf>

⁴¹ Martin Luther, *Concerning Christian Liberty*, (c.1520), Letter of Martin Luther to Pope Leo X, (Salt Lake City, UT: The Project Gutenberg eBook, 2006), retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1911/1911-h/1911-h.htm>

⁴² *King James Bible Version 1611*, Galatians 5, Romans 6 and 8 (Henderson, NV: King James Bible Online, 2018), retrieved from <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611-Bible/>

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Galatians 5.

⁴⁴ *King James Bible Version 1611*, Romans 6 (Henderson, NV: King James Bible Online, 2018), retrieved from <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611-Bible/>

and eternal death, the sweetness of the gospel message. The message of inner freedom became referred to as *Christian liberty and liberty of conscience*.⁴⁵

The extreme position that the Church took is more commonly referred to as *religious legalism* in protestant theology. The constraints on thought by the Church system bread thought outside the confines of Religion. The Church, by misdirecting its purpose from being that source of freedom, caused bitterness to the sweetness of its message that resulted in the Protestant Reformation movement of Martin Luther and the advent of humanism as the renaissance took shape.⁴⁶ Both movements were expressed, and reflective of freedom by Europeans. By the exercising of revolts and rebellion, they expressed the freedom they knew existed from the bible. However, the attack on Christianity negated religious freedom. So, with the extreme element of humanism's hatred and attack on the Church, freedom was impeded upon by negating the ability to believe/think on one's own volition.

From the object of slavery/servitude, one can observe the subjects of whose freedom have been violated or exploited and they are that of, race (i.e., enslaved blacks, and Hebrews), religion (i.e., Christian persecution), gender (i.e., female servitude), and children (i.e., labor during the industrial revolution). The exploitation is the reason for considering the medieval lower class who were subservient to upper-class in feudalism, moreover, a time when the people of whole classes fell into the category of either subservient or free. The meaning of the word freedom has no limits, for it is *to be free*, yet minimal limits are necessary and placed on it so that it does not

⁴⁵ "The 1677/89 London Baptist Confession of Faith," (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 41, Christian Classics Ethereal Library of Calvin College, retrieved from: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous/bcf.pdf>

⁴⁶ Martin Luther, *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum* [Ninety-Five Theses], Academic dispute debated at Wittenberg; presented in a speech by the author. Printed in Nuremberg Germany: Hieronymus Höltzel, c. 1517 A.D. A collection of Berlin State Library. "World Digital Library." (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2018), retrieved from <http://www.wdl.org/en/item/7497/>

impede on the freedom of others (causing freedom to impede on freedom) or infringe on society or is harmful to oneself. John Calvin (c. 1500s), a French Protestant Reformation theologian puts it this way, “because, when men have much liberty of action, their lusts can never be sufficiently restrained.”⁴⁷ Disproportionate freedom, whether excessively controlled or unbridled can impede on freedom.

With Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press in the 1450s, the Bible was “the first mass-produced book in Europe,” that provided a critical component for the Reformation.⁴⁸ These resulted in the increased dissemination of the knowledge of righteousness that initially formulated humanitarianism, justice, and the exercising of freedoms in revolt. Moreover, by the late Middle Ages’ education became increasingly secular.⁴⁹ The challenging of Church authority opened new ideas of freedom in the secular realm.⁵⁰ The powerful Church institution had become the antithesis of its teachings concerning the very foundations of humanitarian ideals it had laid. The separation of Church and state enabled for freedom to extend to the non-religious and continued to grow.

Christian Bible Instilled Freedom

There existed many early versions of the Bible such as Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, but it was *Jerome’s Latin Vulgate* (c. 347 A.D.) that would become the standard throughout the Middle Ages until the Authorized King James Version (c. 1611

⁴⁷ John Calvin, *Harmony of the Law*, Volume 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 103, Christian Classics Ethereal Library of Calvin College, retrieved from: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom04.pdf>

⁴⁸ Emily Culbertson, "History of Graphic Design," NC State University, retrieved from <https://go.distance.ncsu.edu/gd203/?p=24661>

⁴⁹ Paul Vincent Spade, "Medieval Philosophy," Stanford University, March 15, 2016, retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/medieval-philosophy/#AvailabilityOfGreekTexts>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

A.D.).⁵¹ Other notable classic Bibles was the Carolingian *Moutier-Grandval Bible* (c. 830 A.D.), Henry VIII's *Great Bible* (c. 1539 A.D.), Gutenberg's *Genova Bible* (c. 1560 A.D.), and the Book of Kells (c. 800 A.D.). The Bible was the backbone of freedom in the Middle Ages, and more specifically, the New Testament that revealed freedom to humanity in a new way, a personal and individual way. It not only revealed freedom as something right for humanity; it was for all, the peasant, the knight, the priest, the monk, even the king. Christian Bible influences instilled internal or inner freedom in the lives of all levels of society. Christianity, by its preservation and propagation of Biblical texts, perpetuated the knowledge of freedom within those texts; furthermore, through the education of those texts inseeded and instilled the concept of freedom. Below are only a few select verses from the King James Version 1611 that establishes this premise:⁵²

- Leviticus 25:10 "proclaime libertie throughout all the land, vnto al the inhabitants thereof"
- Isaiah 61:1 "to proclaime libertie to the captiues [captives]"
- Jeremiah 24:15 "proclaiming libertie euery man to his neighbour"
- Luke 4:17-18 (Concerning Jesus) "to set at libertie them that are bruised."
- John 8:32, 36 "And ye shall know the Trueth [Truth], and the Trueth shall make you free... If the Sonne therfore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."
- Acts 22:28 "With a great summe [sum] obtained I this freedome. And Paul said, But I was free borne."
- Romans 8:2, 21; 6:22 "life, in Christ Iesus [Jesus], hath made me free from the law of sinne and death... bee deliuered [delivered] from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious libertie of the children of God... you have been freed from sin"
- Galatians 3:28 (Equality / Egalitarianism) "There is neither Iewe [Jew], nor Greeke, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Iesus [Jesus]."
- Galatians 5:1, 13 "Christ hath made vs [us] free, and bee not intangled againe with the yoke of bondage... ye haue beene called vnto liberty, onely vse not libertie for an occasion to the flesh, but by loue [love] serue [serve] one another."
- 2 Corinthians 3:17 "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is libertie."

⁵¹ "The Bible in the Middle Ages," Brigham Young University, retrieved from <http://exhibits.lib.byu.edu/kingjamesbible/middle-ages.html>

⁵² *King James Bible Version 1611*, (Henderson, NV: King James Bible Online, 2018), retrieved from <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611-Bible/>

- 1 Peter 2:16 “As free, and not vsing your libertie for a cloke [or outer garment] of maliciousnesse”

With the Bible as the preeminent curriculum and religious source, these, among other verses concerning being free were exposed to all who could read or hear. It was the Bible that was meticulously hand copied by monks in scriptoriums (subsequently printed), taught, and written of in schools, read and spoken aloud in church mass, all in the common languages of Latin and English.⁵³ Moreover, it was translated into the variety of European languages including German, French, and English throughout Europe unlike any other book, and revered as Holy Writ or the Word of God.

Middle Age Theology Instilled Freedom

It is significant to consider what occurred in the theology of the period regarding freedom. Roman Catholic Church and Protestant theology concerning free-will became a topic of discussion throughout the middle ages among theologians within middle age universities that were predominantly that of theology. The theological concept of *free-will* (soteriology), was and is generally accepted by all branches of Christianity. Significant contemplation of this began with St. Augustine of Hippo who concentrated on free-will in his work titled *On Grace and Free-Will* (c. 426 A.D.).⁵⁴ Free-will is the ability to choose, think, and act voluntarily.⁵⁵ Among the theological reformers was Calvin who went on to expound upon human free-will with the

⁵³ "The Bible in the Middle Ages," Brigham Young University, retrieved from <http://exhibits.lib.byu.edu/kingjamesbible/middle-ages.html>

⁵⁴ Aurelius Augustin, "A Treatise on Grace and Free-Will," c. 426 A.D., Onthewing.org, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Ed. Philip Schaff, Vol 1-05 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887.), 441-465, retrieved from <http://www.onthewing.org/user/Augustine%20-%20Grace%20and%20Free%20Will.pdf>

⁵⁵ John Calvin, *Harmony of the Law*, Volume 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 140, Christian Classics Ethereal Library of Calvin College, retrieved from: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom04.pdf>; Richarde Lugg and John Cawood, "Articuli XXXIX. Ecclesiae Anglicanae. A.D. 1562. The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England Published A.D. 1571," (London in Powles Churchyard: Majestie of the Queene, A.D. 1571). Christian Classics Ethereal Library of Calvin College, retrieved from: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds3.iv.xi.html>

context of freedom to choose to be righteous or desire God.⁵⁶ By this biblical doctrine, humans can be the author of their actions and are not limited by fate; instead, they have an influence on destiny. The doctrine of free-will further substantiates the bible's involvement with not only spreading the idea of freedom but also, the contemplating of its meaning to humanity.

Also, as previously mentioned, the theological concept of freedom from sins judgment and the righteous requirements of the law became known as hamartiology. Hamartiology was likewise a topic of the period.⁵⁷ Additionally, concerning Church dogma, the Fifth Council of Orleans (c. 549 A.D.) used the legal term *freedmen* in distinguishing the contrast from that of a slave.⁵⁸

There were significant scholars of thought and reason that the Church produced as an expressed level of freedom. Some examples were Alcuin of York, Roger Bacon, William of Ockham, and Saint Thomas Aquinas.⁵⁹ The Carolingian Renaissance brought about a movement of enlightenment. At the direction of Charlemagne, Abbot Adalhard of Corbie was given the freedom to assemble artists and intellectuals, revive classical works, commission the Carolingian Miniscule Script, and produce *Moutier-Grandval Bible* manuscripts.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ "The 1677/89 London Baptist Confession of Faith," (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 41, Christian Classics Ethereal Library of Calvin College, retrieved from: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous/bcf.pdf>

⁵⁷ Innocent IV, *Quae Honorem Conditoris Omnium: Whatever Is for the Honor of the Creator of All*, Lyons, September 1, 1247, retrieved from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/innoc04/i4carmrl.htm>

⁵⁸ "Fifth Council of Orleans: Concerning Freedmen, 549," J. D. Mansi, ed., *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, (Paris: H. Welter, 1902), Vol. IX, pp. 130, 134; reprinted in Roy C. Cave & Herbert H. Coulson, eds., Fordham University, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1936; reprint ed., New York: Biblio & Tannen, 1965), pp. 281-282, retrieved from <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/549Orleans.as>

⁵⁹ James Hannam, "Science and Church in the Middle Ages," *Medieval Science and Philosophy*, 2007, retrieved from <http://jameshannam.com/medievalscience.htm>

⁶⁰ Sarah J. Biggs, "A Carolingian Masterpiece: the Moutier-Grandval Bible," *British Library*, July 22, 2013, retrieved from <http://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2013/07/a-carolingian-masterpiece-the-moutier-grandval-bible.html>

Institutions Disseminated the Bible's Message of Freedom

Besides governmental institutions like The Holy Roman Empire, the Church, educational institutions like monastic schools and cathedral universities, there also existed *monastic libraries* as a means that infused the biblical enlightenment of freedom.⁶¹ Some well-known libraries were Monte Cassino (c. 529 A.D.) and Bobbio (c. 614 A.D.) in Italy; Luxeuil (c. 550 A.D.) in France; Reichenau (c. 724 A.D.), Fulda (c. 744 A.D.), and Corvey (c. 822 A.D.) in Germany; Canterbury (c. 597 A.D.), Wearmouth (c. 674 A.D.), Jarrow (c. 681 A.D.), and Benedictine abbey in England. These libraries included books of Bible texts, saints' lives, Church Fathers works, and other religious books with one example within the catalogs titled *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*.⁶² Within the workings of the abbey were not only the repository within the cloister, refectory or sacristy but also the scriptorium, the place where Bibles and other books were manuscript copied.⁶³ Many authors used more than one language in documents during the later medieval period being first in Latin, then in French, and or English.⁶⁴

Connections from Inward Freedom to Outward Expressions

The inner meaning of freedom took root in Medieval society as the Bible was the preeminent literary and educational source.⁶⁵ The church transferred the biblical knowledge of liberty by way of schools, and religious activity both in the Mass and spreading of the Gospel. As discussed, the Protestant movement demonstrates a direct connection from the internal

⁶¹ Alison Ray, "Medieval monastic libraries," British Library, retrieved from <http://www.bl.uk/medieval-english-french-manuscripts/articles/medieval-monastic-libraries#>

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ "Manuscripts and Special Collections," University of Nottingham, retrieved from <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/medievaldocuments/languages.asp>

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⁶⁵ James Hannam, "Science and Church in the Middle Ages," *Medieval Science and Philosophy*, 200, retrieved from <http://jameshannam.com/medievalscience.htm>

knowledge of freedom to the external expression of freedom. Also, etymologically, the two words liberty and freedom are used with both the internal and external connotations and have European roots.⁶⁶ Moreover, internal (personal) liberty was reflected by individual rights outwardly.

There is evidence of how the religious belief within the Church began to effect outward humanitarian expressions of freedom as seen in two Papal decrees. First, by Pope Gregory X in the *Papal Protection of the Jews* (c 1272 A.D.). Gregory X cites Gregory I who in 598 initially “Embodies the attitude of the Church to the Jew” by granting their “protection” “through the clemency of Christian Piety.”⁶⁷ Put plainly, the right for Jews to have peace/defense was a Christian thing to do. Additionally, this decree supported the right to be judged by peers through the required testimony of a Jew if a Christian charged a Jew with wrong.⁶⁸ Second, by Pope Eugene IV in the *Sicut Dudum Against the Enslaving of Black Natives from the Canary Islands* (c. 1435 A.D.). Eugene decreed “liberty... [and] to be totally and perpetually free” for all slaves taken captive from the Canary Islands “with a holy and fatherly concern, for the sufferings of the inhabitants.”⁶⁹ Likewise, put plainly, to give freedom was the Christian thing to do.

The *Holy Roman Empire free cities* established a multi city-state autonomy. This concept of free cities prevented the high centralization of a single government. These cities ruled by

⁶⁶ "Liberty, Freedom," Online Etymology Dictionary, retrieved from <http://www.etymonline.com/search?q=liberty%2C+freedom>

⁶⁷ Gregory X, *Papal Protection of the Jews*, Given by the hand of Magister John Lector, vice-chancellor of the Holy Roman Church, at Orvieto, October 7, 1272. Retrieved from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/greg10/g10jprot.htm>

⁶⁸ Gregory X, *Papal Protection of the Jews*, Given by the hand of Magister John Lector, vice-chancellor of the Holy Roman Church, at Orvieto, October 7, 1272. Accessed on March 7, 2019, retrieved from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/greg10/g10jprot.htm>

⁶⁹ Eugene IV, *Sicut Dudum: Against the Enslaving of Black Natives from the Canary Islands*, Florence, January 13, 1435. Papal Encyclicals Online, retrieved from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/eugene04/eugene04sicut.htm>

princes who had the right to self-govern.⁷⁰ The Emperor could not issue decrees or rule entirely.⁷¹ While governed independently, the empire's armed forces acted as one.⁷² Beginning with Charlemagne by Pope Leo III, from 800 A.D. to 1530, emperors were crowned by the Pope under the concept of coronation, reflecting its support for this form of government freedom.⁷³ Subsequently, the Emperor was an elective monarchy selected by Prince-electors who would commonly elect the Emperor's heir.⁷⁴

The concept of canonizing *Royal Christian Saints* reflected the meshing of Christianity (a faith of freedom) with royalty and was practiced by the Catholic Church, its Protestant Anglican branch, and Orthodox Churches.⁷⁵ These were men of the faith and royalty that were either coronated and or canonized as Saints by the Church. These Royal Saints ruled with notable measures of freedoms and rights to Christianity and the people of their realms.

Events, Outward Expressions of Freedom

Three significant events of the Late Middle Age that occurred were the peasant revolts, the Protestant Reformation, and *Glorious* Revolution that reflected how and why Europeans grasped for freedom. Tyranny imposed feudalistic constraints, monarchic control, and a heavy-

⁷⁰ Charles IV, "The Golden Bull of the Emperor Charles IV 1356 A.D.," Yale Law School: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Ernest F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1896), retrieved from: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/rightsof.asp

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ "The Coronation of Charlemagne," Seton Hall University, retrieved from http://pirate.shu.edu/~wisterro/cdi/0800a_coronation_of_charlemagne.htm

⁷⁴ Louis Gentilucci, "Imperial Electioneering: The Evolution of the Election in the Holy Roman Empire from the Collapse of the Carolingians to the Rise of the Ottonians," Gettysburg College (2014), retrieved from http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1378&context=student_scholarship

⁷⁵ "List of royal saints and martyrs," IPFS, retrieved from http://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoyvizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/List_of_royal_saints_and_martyrs.html

handed dictatorial rule.⁷⁶ Europe had realized the concept of Freedom, only to be hampered and stagnated by tradition, the culture of feudalism, and heavy-handed monarchic government institutions but it was this oppression coupled with their religious belief that moved the people.

There were roughly 40 peasant revolts in Christian Europe throughout the Middle Ages where most of them were suppressed but also a few successes. The background includes national liberations, social inequality, tax resistance, religious conflicts, land distribution, and resistance against serfdom. One of the examples was that of the English *Great Rising* (c. 1381 A.D.).⁷⁷ Rebels sought lower taxation, the removal of the Kings officials, and an end to the system of serfdom.⁷⁸ Serfs expected higher wages with the loss of workers from the Black Death. *The Statute of Labourers* law mandated that serfs could not earn more than they did before the tragedy.⁷⁹ The rebellion was initially inspired by the sermons of a Lollard Protestant Priest by the name of John Ball.⁸⁰ It was the peasant's conviction of inner freedom that empowered them to do what was right for them. King Richard II first agreed to abolish serfdom until he regained control and rescinded.⁸¹

⁷⁶ "Focus on rebellion: Peasant revolts," Khan Academy, Retrieved from <http://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/medieval-times/european-middle-ages-and-serfdom/e/focus-on-rebellion--peasant-revolts>

⁷⁷ Tony Robinson and David Willcock, "The Peasants' Revolt Of 1381: Timeline," Directed by Kashaf Chaudhry, Timeline- Spire Films, March 3, 2018, retrieved from YouTube user Timeline - World History Documentaries at <http://youtu.be/4kq9sbtFCR8>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Edward III, "The Statute of Laborers; 1351," Yale Law School: Lillian Goldman Law Library. England: Statutes of the Realm, vol. i. p. 307, retrieved from <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/statlab.asp>

⁸⁰ John Connor, "John Ball — Primitivist: The Peasants' Revolt and the State of Nature," The Anarchist Library, retrieved from <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/john-connor-john-ball-primitivist-the-peasants-revolt-and-the-state-of-nature>

⁸¹ Tony Robinson and David Willcock, "The Peasants' Revolt Of 1381: Timeline," Directed by Kashaf Chaudhry, Timeline- Spire Films, March 3, 2018, retrieved from YouTube user Timeline - World History Documentaries at <http://youtu.be/4kq9sbtFCR8>

The Protestant Reformation officially began with Martin Luther delivering his 95 Theses on October 31, 1517.⁸² It was a period with the Bible being well in print, and the Enlightenment beginning within the following hundred years. Here, is a look at three documents that consist of, Luther's thesis, letter to Pope Leo X, and essay *Concerning Christian Liberty*. Luther's reformation reveal's a direct connection from the internal belief of Christian liberty to the external expression of this belief in the very title of his essay presented with his letter to the Pope.⁸³ In his letter, he writes regarding his opposition ("war") with the Church and supports his argument of Christian liberty in the essay titled "*Concerning Christian Liberty*."⁸⁴ Additionally, in his 95 Thesis, he writes, "The dying are freed by death from all penalties... Christians are to be taught that they buying of indulgences is a matter of free choice, not commanded."⁸⁵ These documents make a direct connection of inner liberty to the outward action and motivation of the movement. It is important to recognize this connection to grasp the impact that the Bible had on the citizenry of Medieval Europe. In Luther's letter, he poignantly addresses, "since the word of God, which teaches liberty in all other things, ought not to be bound."⁸⁶ As revealed in earlier works of the New Testament, Christian liberty was not new;⁸⁷ instead, Luther illuminated it.

⁸² Martin Luther, *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum (Ninety-Five Theses)*, Academic dispute debated at Wittenberg; presented in a speech by the author, printed in Nuremberg Germany: Hieronymus Höltzel, 1517. A collection of Berlin State Library, "World Digital Library," (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2018), retrieved from <http://www.wdl.org/en/item/7497/>

⁸³ Martin Luther, *Concerning Christian Liberty*, (c.1520), Letter of Martin Luther to Pope Leo X, (Salt Lake City, UT: The Project Gutenberg EBook, 2006), retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1911/1911-h/1911-h.htm>

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Martin Luther, "The 95 Theses," KDG Wittenberg (1997) retrieved from <http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html>; Martin Luther, *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum (Ninety-Five Theses)*, Academic dispute debated at Wittenberg; presented in a speech by the author, printed in Nuremberg Germany: Hieronymus Höltzel, 1517. A collection of Berlin State Library., "World Digital Library." (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2018), retrieved from <http://www.wdl.org/en/item/7497/>

⁸⁶ Martin Luther, *Concerning Christian Liberty*, (c.1520), Letter of Martin Luther to Pope Leo X, (Salt Lake City, UT: The Project Gutenberg EBook, 2006), retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1911/1911-h/1911-h.htm>

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Decrees/Edicts, Laws, Charters, Declarations, Constitutions,
and Rights- Outward Expressions of Freedom

Governmental or Royal edicts, laws, charters, and constitutions also reflected an expression of freedom through establishing rights. Indeed, it was those kings that enacted such laws that, if not adherent to Christianity and the Bible were at minimum exposed to it. Problematic to freedom was the despotic/autocratic monarchic rule of kings who decreed unjustly. On the contrary, there also rose those Royal Christian Saints who had decreed freedoms. Many middle age laws were modeled after Justinian the Great's Codex, a Christian Roman Emperor of Byzantium (c. 529 A.D.). His Codex included four books known as *Corpus Juris Civilis* but was individually titled *Codex Constitutionum* (constitutions), *Digesta*, or *Pandectae*, *Institutiones*, and *Novellae Constitutiones Post Codicem*.⁸⁸ In his decree *Protection of Freeman and Coloni* (c. 530 A.D.), he constrains judgments against freemen and requires written complaint to be supported with a witness among other civil enactments.⁸⁹

The etymology of the words liberty and freedom have their origins in Europe and is reflected in Alfred the Great's (c. 871 A.D.) code of righteousness the *Doom Book*.⁹⁰ The word liberty has a Latin origin: *libertātem* or *libertās*- liber (free) tas (dom, hood, ness, ship).⁹¹ Whereas, freedom has an Old English/Anglo-Saxon origin: freedom- free (free) dom (law/judgment, mercy).⁹² The prefix is used for Alfred the Great's doom book or *domboc*. Dom

⁸⁸ Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: HarperPerennial 2015), 332, Epub Edition, ISBN 9780062444608

⁸⁹ Justinian I, "Protection of Freeman and Coloni," (c. 530 A.D.) Codex Justinianus XI.48.xxii., Fordham University, retrieved from <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/codexXI-48-xxii.asp>

⁹⁰ "Full text of 'King Alfred's books'," Internet Archive, retrieved from http://archive.org/stream/kingalfredsbooks00alfruoft/kingalfredsbooks00alfruoft_djvu.txt

⁹¹ "Liberty, Freedom," Online Etymology Dictionary, retrieved from <http://www.etymonline.com/search?q=liberty%2C+freedom>

⁹² Ibid.

also meant judgment book from which common law was derived. In it, he prefaces the Ten Commandments and constituted Christian canon laws of ethics.⁹³ The *dom boc* provides for mercy, derived from Biblical Christian canon law and the biblical principle of mercy.⁹⁴ Another root word is free-domain or also free-realm. Thus, the word freedom more aptly means *free-realm where mercy rules*. Unfortunately this law code is too expansive of a topic to cover in detail here; however, its outward expressions of freedom through civil law directly reflects many biblical associations.⁹⁵

A document worthy of examining that instilled freedom is the *Charter of Liberties of King Henry I* (c. 1100 A.D.). Upon his coronation, in it he declares the Church free, assurances for due process of law, subjects himself to the rule of law, declares rights of baron's properties, absolves revenue, provides relief of debts to knights, pardons crimes, commits peace to all the kingdom, affirms existing law, absolves losses with acknowledgment of perpetrator, and commences declaration under witnesses.⁹⁶

Among many, these Royal Christian Saints enacted laws that imbued freedom. Such a one was the early Norman law by St. Edward the Confessor. In the *Liberties of London* (c. 1120 A.D.), he declared freedom of commerce or the ability to earn a living.⁹⁷ Edward declared for

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Michael Treschow, "The Prologue to Alfred's Law Code: Instruction in the Spirit of Mercy," *Society of Canadian Mediaevalists, Learned Societies Meetings*, Calgary, (1994), 79-110, retrieved from <http://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/flor/article/viewFile/18463/20304>

⁹⁵ "Law-code of King Alfred the Great," University of Cambridge, retrieved from <http://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/251507>

⁹⁶ Henry I, "Charter of Liberties of Henry I, 1100." Translated by Albert Beebe White and Wallace Notestein, eds., *Source Problems in English History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1915), Fordham University, retrieved from <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/hcoronation.asp>

⁹⁷ Edward the Confessor, "Leges Edwardis Confessoris: The Liberties of London, c. 1120," Benjamin Thorpe, ed., *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1840), 462, reprinted in Roy C. Cave & Herbert H. Coulson, Fordham University, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1936; reprint ed., New York: Biblio & Tannen, 1965), 199-200, retrieved from <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/1120privlndn.asp>

those merchants that were within three miles of London that they were not to be interfered or stopped from engaging in a local business.⁹⁸ Moreover, he adds to it the social class element of “let the market be the same to the rich man as to the poor.”⁹⁹

The *Magna Carta*, written in 1215 by King John of England at Runnymede, and to paraphrase his words, by God’s grace, he addressed Bishops among others.¹⁰⁰ This charter is regarded as the most important document ever written that acknowledged rights to free people. It became the foremost document model for law, constitutions, and declaration of rights.¹⁰¹ It opens in high esteem of the Church, to its officials, and addressing all the King’s hierarchical subjects.¹⁰² It covers topics like fief (land) rights, feudal obligations, justice, peace, Church, lending and debt, towns and trade, property rights, the *Magna Carta* even includes conditional rights of foreign merchants under the situation of war and royal forest usage laws (a right of the king).¹⁰³ The clauses address long-term grievances in the context of the feudal system.¹⁰⁴ There are many references to the words free, liberty, and rights; moreover, it is distinct from its model document by including many specific protections from heavy-handed actions like seizures, imprisonments, the requirement of witnesses, and “to no one deny or delay right or justice.”¹⁰⁵ It establishes a “judgment of equals” or jury system of trials.¹⁰⁶ It closes with stating the purpose is

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ John of England at Runnymede, “Magna Carta 1215,” British Library, retrieved from: <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/magna-carta-1215>

¹⁰¹ Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial 2015), 484, ePub Edition, ISBN 9780062444608

¹⁰² John of England at Runnymede, “Magna Carta 1215,” British Library, retrieved from: <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/magna-carta-1215>

¹⁰³ John of England at Runnymede, “Magna Carta 1215,” British Library, retrieved from: <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/magna-carta-1215>

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ John of England at Runnymede, “Magna Carta 1215,” British Library, retrieved from: <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/magna-carta-1215>

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

to secure the customs, liberties, and peace of the kingdom.¹⁰⁷ It should be noted that up to this point these statutes were of the High Middle Ages among what was also brewing in San Marino as explained below.

In the Late Middle Age, human rights continued to grow. Another significant law is signed by King Henry IV in April of 1598 in the *Edict of Nantes*. This provided rights to Protestant Huguenots who lived in what was predominantly Catholic France.¹⁰⁸ The law helped bring religious conflicts to an end and a peaceful co-existence.¹⁰⁹ In this rebellion, the rousers make known what is right for them and through “a great deal of negotiating” the King comes to a “compromise” for peace.¹¹⁰ It was veritable freedom of religion enactment, and where freedom of religion is, there is freedom of thought. Moreover, among the articles was the “freedom of opinion.”¹¹¹

The independent state of San Marino located within the boundaries of what is now Italy exhibits two documents. The first document is titled, *Constitutions of Catalonia* (c. 1495 A.D.) and contains rights of Catalonia (modern-day San Marino).¹¹² The second, *Statuta, decreta, ac ordinamenta illustris Reipublicae ac perpetuae libertatis terrae Sancti Marini Arimini* (c. 1600 A.D.) is the actual constitution of San Marino.¹¹³ This national Constitutional Republic document declares rights to the citizenry. San Marino was founded by Marinus the Dalmatian in

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ “The Edict of Nantes (1598),” Protestant Museum, retrieved from <http://www.museeprotestant.org/en/notice/the-edict-of-nantes-1598/>

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² “History of San Marino: Primary Documents,” Euro Docs, retrieved from http://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/History_of_San_Marino:_Primary_Documents

¹¹³ “History of San Marino: Primary Documents,” Euro Docs, retrieved from http://eudocs.lib.byu.edu/index.php/History_of_San_Marino:_Primary_Documents

301 A.D. who fled Christian persecution during the reign of Diocletian.¹¹⁴ The landlady, Felicissima, gave him the property with the commitment to keep united in the cause of religious freedom among his followers.¹¹⁵ This constitution was an “amalgamation” of its prior laws dating back to 1243 A.D. and *Corpus Juris Civilis* under Justinian I.¹¹⁶

The English Civil War was in the minds of Britain’s, and to this regard, another aspect that caused a significant revolution was the overthrowing of King James II of England in 1688, known as the *Glorious Revolution*. With this revolution came the diverting of authority to Parliament and the *English Declaration of Right* and the *English Bill of Rights* (c. 1689 A.D.).¹¹⁷ It should be noted that by the 17th century the Bible went beyond manuscripts and had been mass printed in roughly the hundreds of thousands for a little over 250 years; moreover, reading literacy was dramatically increased with the growth and added secularization of universities.

Revolts continued, and the French Revolution transpired, as the Enlightenment began to take shape. However, a significant aspect to the French Revolution was the cause against the Protestant Reformation as noted in *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* in Chapter XXIII, a chronicle of Christian persecutions.¹¹⁸ By about this point secularism emphasized the external freedoms and began to preclude the internal meaning, succinctly, this expanded rights beyond the Church but also had a reverse effect on religious rights, the foundations of freedom to believe as one sees fit.

¹¹⁴ Joe Wolverton II, "The Oldest Constitutional Republic," *The New American*: that freedom shall not perish, October 9, 2009, retrieved from <http://www.thenewamerican.com/component/k2/item/4695-the-oldest-constitutional-republic>

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ "The [English] Bill of Rights," British Library, retrieved from <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-bill-of-rights>

¹¹⁸ John Foxe, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Gutenberg, 2007), 490-91, retrieved from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22400/22400-h/22400-h.htm>

Conclusion

Religious education promulgated the Bible that imbued freedom. While advancements in law, education, and secularism were significant proponents that helped advance and propel liberty beyond the Christian, it is evident there were significant influences of the Bible's meaning of freedom had impacted all these aspects of society. Significantly, there existed the symbiosis of religion and secularism that enabled for the blooming of freedom. From this, bred an extreme element of humanism that diluted the core foundations of liberty, and put freedom in digression through an attack on religious freedoms of belief/thought. Although, this also enabled for the breaking free from what had become an overbearing Church institution. While internal acknowledgment is not required for freedom to be enjoyed externally, the lack or prevention thereof stifles freedom of thought, and thus its propagation, and perpetuation. The virtues of Western Civilization have a commonality among Christianity and secular with the ideal of freedom for all, only with differing connotations of the internal and external. The Middle ages revealed that freedom progressed when a society retained elements of Christianity and elements of secularism.

With religious tolerance came freedom of thought, the avenue for rights to flourish. Freedom became a human reality in thought then followed in action. As the indoctrination of freedom took place throughout the Middle Ages from the Bible, century after century, generation after generation, humanity was given this internal knowledge. A realization of inner freedom (salvation) facilitated the acceleration of external freedoms expressed as rights. It was biblical virtues that provided a cohesive moral gauge on which the medieval world determined its righteousness or values that provided a basis for freedom. When freedom of religion was

suppressed so too was freedom of thought. Likewise, when the Bible was suppressed, the driving force of freedom became suppressed.

This research revealed that the Church and the Christian Bible were interconnected with society, as such, influenced the Middle Ages with the biblical concept of freedom and liberties foundationally. The people believed they were free from sin and death through Christ (whether it had been of the Church or directly from the Bible's gospel message) that culminated in the expectation for human rights and dignity. For Middle Age society, the internal connotation derived from the bible was the inspiration, motivation or driving force of freedom. Furthermore, societal cause and effect can be observed. Inner freedom (Christian Liberty) or the belief thereof was the cause, and the effect was that external freedoms were expressed by revolts, reformation, and laws. The Bible's concept of freedom was an integral part of motivating movements of change that brought about rights. Likewise, it reveals the paradox of freedom with its limitless, yet limited nuances that encompassed Biblical truths of righteousness. With the Bible as a moral compass, the people began to reflect humanitarianism. More specifically, the era revealed that the antithesis of feudalism was a significant factor in the progression of freedom. At the core, was religious liberties that transposed to freedom of thought — by illuminating Bible knowledge with legitimacy and relevance this research identified foundations that imbued a pervasiveness of freedom throughout the Middle Ages.

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