

BURYING SYMBOLS OF SLAVERY

In 1838, after a strong emancipation movement among blacks, slavery was abolished in Jamaica.

That was nearly a quarter of a century before U.S. President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation on Jan. 1, 1863, proclaiming freedom of slaves in the 10 states that were still in rebellion during the Civil War.

But back to Jamaica. The emancipation was to take effect on Aug. 1, 1838. On the evening of the last day in July, a large company of former slaves gathered on a beach for a solemn, yet joyous, occasion.

A large mahogany coffin had been constructed and placed on the sand next to an accommodating hole in the beach. All evening, the soon-to-be-emancipated slaves placed into the coffin, with some ceremony, symbols of their enslavement.



There were chains, leg irons, whips, padlocks and other paraphernalia of slavery. A few minutes before midnight, the box was lowered into the hole in the beach. Pushing sand into the hole to cover the coffin, all joined their voices with one accord to sing: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise Him all creatures here below, praise Him above ye heavenly host, praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

They were free from the chains of bondage and repression. Their freedom had been won. It was, indeed, a day for rejoicing.

How much those men and women on the beach in Jamaica that night painted a picture of the spiritual emancipation of Christians everywhere.

Through Christ's death, we are free from our slavery to sin.

Although the enemy, Satan, still seeks to tempt us and ensnare us, we have an Advocate in the Father, who – upon confession and repentance – provides mercy and grace in forgiving our waywardness.

And one day, when our journey ends in heaven, we shall be free at last from the very reminder and presence of sin.

Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God (1 Peter 2:16 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter