

07-03-2023, COTR Texarkana

Title: America's Christian Heritage, *revision 7*

Purpose: Proclaim the Christian history of America's Founding Fathers and, provoke people to stand for Biblical principles today.

Text: Psalm 33:12, Jeremiah 6:15-16

Topic: America, Founding Fathers, 4th of July, Politics, Christian History

Truth for Today: Our Founding Fathers gave us a nation built on God and the Bible.

America's Christian Heritage

- I. Introduction (Song God Bless America, Irving Berlin, 1918 WW1/ revised 1938 WW2)
 - A. On this 4th of July weekend, I will interrupt my series, Faith Endures; Faith Receives and talk about America's Christian heritage. As Christians, we have dual citizenship, 1st as citizens of the KOG and 2nd as citizens of USA, illus. Flags. This week, we celebrate the birth of our nation. Pic³⁸, On July 4, 1776. The Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence declaring that the 13 American colonies were a new nation, no longer part of the British Empire.⁶ America wasn't and isn't perfect, but we've been blessed by God because of our Founders commitment to God and the Bible. [Ps. 33:12 (ESV) **Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord..**]
 1. 2 Pics Rotunda US Congress²⁶ erected 1840-1855 reflecting America's Christian heritage. Baptism Pocahontas, 1st convert to Christianity in Va.⁵⁸; Pilgrims leaving Holland, praying around the Geneva Bible.⁵⁷
 2. John Adams, 2nd president, Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.⁵¹ This is our main problem, America has drifted from our Christian heritage and the nation is in trouble.
 - B. Title: America's Christian Heritage. It'll be more than a history lesson; it's about our responsibility as citizens of the KOG and American citizens to be light in a dark world and salt to prevent moral decay as we call America back to God.
 1. Last week pastor Dan Fisher gave you a historical look at Christian leaders during the American Revolution. Theirs was a war fought with guns for freedom from Great Britain; ours is a war of ideas between the Biblical notion of God and truth vs. godless socialism and communism. We fight our battle with truth, love, prayer, and civic involvement.

- C. Truth for Today: Our Founding Fathers gave us a nation built on God and the Bible.
- D. Today we'll talk about (1) Spiritual darkness in America (2) Our founders view of the Bible and Christianity (3) Early education in America, (4) America's national motto, (5) A call to action. We need a spiritual awakening. What can we do?
- II. Background: Spiritual darkness has gained a foothold in American culture.
- A. (1) The lie of gender choice elevates politics over science. A biology professor at a Texas community college has claimed he was fired...after he taught a lesson about how sex is determined by X and Y chromosomes.⁵³ (2) How pride month ended in NYC: Video chant⁵⁸ “we’re queer, we’re here, we’re coming for your children.” Don’t think it’s not happening. 3rd graders in a Connecticut school were shown a video about gender identity without parental consent.⁵⁴ ***I’ve wrestled during pride month how Christian truth and love address the issues. Pic. drag queens “There’s room at the cross for you.” Every human being is valuable to God and the root problem of all sin can only be changed by an encounter with Jesus. (3) Breakdown of the traditional family, e.g., 1 in 4 kids live in a home without a dad. Most single moms struggle to survive. (4) As government grows and tries to take the place of God, we have less freedom. “That government is best which governs least.”, Thomas Paine, Founding Father. NYC today wants to ban wood-fired pizza to save the environment. (5) Cities defund the police whose Biblical role is to restrain evil. (6) We’re rewriting history and tearing down statues like chairman Mao did in communist China. (7) Out of control debt. (8) We’re moving backwards in race relations. MLK taught us to judge people by their character not skin color, yet we deal with past discrimination by discriminating. (9) Drug epidemic, violence is a way of life on our streets, pornography is one of the biggest industries on the internet, etc.
- B. Something has happened in America in the last 60 years. In the 1960’s the Supreme Court removed the 10 commandments and Bible reading from schools and manger scenes from public buildings. Now religious freedom, i.e., the right to live out your faith as you see fit is under attack. There is open hostility to Christianity in America and Christians are being bullied. Bakers and florists had to violate Christian convictions or be fined. Christians are fired for privately standing for traditional marriage. Crosses

are forcibly removed from cemeteries, chaplains are told not to pray in Jesus name, and “under God” is often deleted the Pledge of Allegiance, etc.

- C. What happened? George Barna: In 1991, 86% of U.S. adults held a biblical view of God, in 2021, 46%. Belief in the Bible as “the accurate Word of God”: 70% in 1991 now 41%. Americans who believe they’ll go to heaven because they accept Jesus as their personal Savior 36% in 1991, 30% now. The Don’ts, i.e., they don’t believe or know if God exists, 12% in 2011 to 34% in 2021. 43% of Millennials are Don’ts.⁴⁵
- D. What’s the solution? A lesson // from ancient Israel, [Jeremiah 6:15-16 (NLT) **Are they ashamed of their disgusting actions? Not at all**—they don’t even know how to blush!...¹⁶ This is what the Lord says: “**Stop at the crossroads and look around. Ask for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls...**”] The Bible calls this repentance, returning to God and a spiritual awakening is the result.

Founding Fathers?

III. Our founders view of the Bible and Jesus Christ

- A. Of the 56 signers of the Declaration, all held religious affiliations and the vast majority were Christians: 4 of the signers were preachers.⁷ 29 of the 56 signers of the Declaration held what are today considered seminary or Bible school degrees.⁸
- B. No book in the world deserves to be so unceasingly studied and so profoundly meditated upon as the Bible.⁴⁷ John Quincy Adams, 6th President.
- C. The Bible is a book worth more than all the other books that were printed. Patrick Henry, Founding Father.⁴⁶
- D. The Bible is the Rock on which our Republic rests,⁴⁸ 7th President Andrew Jackson.
- E. The Bible is the best of all books, for it is the Word of God and teaches us how to be happy in this world and the next. John Jay, 1st Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.¹⁹
- F. 1781, Robert Aitken, asked Congress for permission to print Bibles for schools. They approved and printed in the front a Congressional endorsement, ‘The United States in Congress recommend this Bible to the inhabitants of the United States’.²²
1. Contrast: State Representative Stephanie Hamilton caught hiding Bible in the representatives lounge in Arizona.⁵⁵
- G. Oath of office, State Constitution of Delaware 1776."Every person who shall be a chosen member of either House, or appointed to any office or

place of trust shall make and subscribe the following declaration, 'I _____ do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God- blessed forevermore; and I do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures and the Old and New testament to be given by divine inspiration."²¹

- H. 12-27-1982, Newsweek said, "Historians are discovering that the Bible, perhaps even more than the Constitution, is our founding document."²⁰
- I. I rely on the merits of Jesus Christ for a pardon of all my sins. Samuel Adams, signer of the Declaration. Jesus Christ is the only savior of sinners; if you are not reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, you must forever perish. John Witherspoon, signer of the Declaration.¹⁸
- J. John Jay, 1st Supreme Court Justice appointed by George Washington: Providence has given to our people the choice of rulers, and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation, to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.²
- K. According to Supreme Court Justice Brewer, late 1800's, America is "of all the nations of the world most justly called a Christian nation" because Christianity "has so largely shaped and molded it."²⁴
- L. What did this Biblical outlook on life produce? (1) It ended slavery, (2) It started the Industrial revolution, fueled by the Protestant work ethic, made America the world's superpower (3) Individual freedom and responsibility offered every person the opportunity to succeed in life, (4) Our schools led the world in education (5) There were no school mass shootings, and we didn't need police depts on campus. ***Returning to the Bible as the source of right and wrong will fix what's broken.

IV. Christianity and schools in America

- A. Picture²⁹ New England Primer taught children of the Colonies how to read and pray. They learned to pray: Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep; If I should die before I wake, I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.⁹ It taught the ABC's from stories in the Bible. A: "In Adams fall, we sinned all." B: "Heaven to find, the Bible mind." C: "Christ crucify'd." By the time children learned their A, B, Cs they were also well acquainted with the Bible stories and concepts of right and wrong. Literacy rates were high and grew in early America. By the mid 20th century, schools switched to readers like Picture "Dick and Jane"³¹ which no longer taught the Bible stories. Later books like, Picture 'Heather Has 2 Mommies"³⁰ were added to the curriculum. At the same time test scores

began to drop, along with a moral decline of our youth and a rising crime rate. CNS news today, 65% of Public-School 8th Graders Not Proficient in Reading; 67% Not Proficient in Math. Only 5 percent of Detroit public-school eighth graders were proficient, in math. 7 percent in reading.⁴⁴

- B. Colleges: 106 of the first 108 in America were built upon Christian principles, Harvard: 2nd Rules and Precepts of Harvard: (2) Let every student be plainly instructed, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning,⁴⁹ 11 May, 2016 the Washington Times reports A Harvard law professor, Mark Tushnet, has called for liberals to begin treating like Nazis those who subscribe to Christian or conservative beliefs.¹²
- C. Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, the founder of public schools, wrote [T]he Bible, should be read in our schools in preference to all other books because it contains the greatest portion of knowledge which is calculated to produce private and public happiness.¹³ The great enemy of the salvation of man never invented a more effective means of eliminating Christianity from the world than by persuading mankind that it was improper to read the Bible at schools.⁸
- D. Dr. Lawrence A. Cremin, Ph.D. from Columbia University, said that during the colonial period the Bible was "the single most important cultural influence in the lives of Anglo-Americans."³
- V. America's national motto, "In God We Trust" (Picture of money²⁵
 - A. Our national motto, "In God We Trust", comes from our National Anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner", written by Francis Scott Key, in 1814 after witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry by British ships in the War of 1812. Key was inspired by the large American flag, the Star-Spangled Banner, flying triumphantly above the fort during the American victory. Verse 4 declares, Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!...Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, And this be our motto: 'In God is our trust'.⁵⁰
 - B. "In God We Trust" first appeared on U.S. coins in 1864 and has appeared on paper currency since 1957. It's our National Motto, adopted in 1956 by Congress to differentiate the United States of America from the atheistic communism. Two years earlier Congress had added the words "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance.

VI. America has changed. We need a spiritual awakening. What can we do?

A. Be like Paul; stand up for your rights and religious freedom as an American citizen. Paul used his Roman citizenship to avoid persecution. [Acts 22:25 (ESV) when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said, "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a **Roman citizen and uncondemned?**] Bill of Rights: (1) Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. This guarantees our freedom to live out our faith. Sometimes we must fight for it, e.g., Supreme Court said a coach could pray on the football field after a game.

B. Be like Daniel; do what God says is right even if it's unpopular. [Daniel 6:7-10 (NLT) the king should make a law...any person who prays to anyone, except to you, Your Majesty-will be thrown into the den of lions, 10 But when Daniel, went home, **He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done,**

C. Be like Jonah; speak the truth in love in hopes of a spiritual awakening. [Jonah 3:2-5 (NIV) "Go to, Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.", 4, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." 5 **The Ninevites believed God,**] 120k

VII. Conclusion: America's Christian heritage is undeniable, but our future depends on us.

A. In 1931, the Supreme Court said, "We are a Christian people, according to one another the equal right of religious freedom and acknowledging with reverence the duty of obedience to the will of God."²³

B. This was our past. The only hope for our future is a spiritual awakening. Let us: (1) Be like Paul and stand up for our rights and religious freedom as American citizens. (2) Be like Daniel and do what God says is right even if it's unpopular. (3) Be like Jonah and speak the truth in love in hopes of a spiritual awakening.

C. Response: Prayer for Christians and a spiritual awakening in America.

VIII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message. (Some references in the bibliography refer to past revisions and are not included in revision 7)

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IX. Supplemental material: God and the American Revolution, the War for American Independence

- A. The Christian emphasis during the Revolution caused one British governor to write to Great Britain complaining that: "If you ask an American who is his master, he'll tell you he has none. And he has no governor but Jesus Christ."⁴
- B. A motto of the American Revolution directed against King George III confronted the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings (i.e. when the king spoke, it was the voice of God to the people) was simple and direct: "No King but King Jesus!"⁴
- C. John Quincy Adams, 6th President, "The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected, in one indissoluble bond, the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."⁵ The 1st right in the Bill of Rights was the freedom to practice religion as one chooses.

D. Picture²⁷ Ben Franklin's motion at the Constitutional Convention Sept. 1787: „groping as it were in the dark to find political truth, how has it happened, Sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understandings? In the beginning of the Contest with G. Britain, we had daily prayer, for the divine protection." Our prayers, were graciously answered.³

X. Abortion, the Bible, and the Declaration of Independence

A. In light of the recent Supreme Court decision on abortion, When does the Bible say human life begins? I.e., when does a baby in the womb become a person? [Psalm 139:13–16 (NLT) **You (God) made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb...**15 You watched **me** as...I was woven together in the dark of the womb. 16 You saw **me** before I was born...] Jeremiah 1:5 (NLT) **“I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”**] Luke 1:41–44 (NCV) When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, **the unborn baby inside her...44... jumped with joy.**]

1. It’s clear the Bible teaches human life begins in the womb and science confirms it. *American College of Pediatricians*: The predominance of human biological research confirms that human life begins at conception—fertilization.⁴¹ i.e., sex Pic of headline and conception.⁴⁰ Scientists at Northwestern University Just Captured The Flash of Light That Sparks When a Sperm Meets an Egg.

B. Why is abortion Biblically wrong? [Exodus 20:13 (ESV) **“You shall not murder.**] Def. murder: Intentional, premeditated, and unlawful taking of human life. Murder usurps the authority that belongs to God³⁹ as to who lives and when they die.

1. For me, the starting place for a discussion about abortion is simple: God tells us in His Word that human life begins in the womb, and He forbids the murder of innocent life. If we respect God’s Word, our opinion about abortion will be shaped by the Bible but also our commitment to marriage and our sexual practices that produce babies. There is a lot less need for abortion if we live by God’s standards for sex and marriage. Courts and legislatures may pass laws, but our love and fear of God determine what we believe and do. Dred Scott was wrong about slavery and was overturned, so was Roe v Wade about abortion.

C. The Declaration of Independence agrees. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that **all men are created equal**, that they are **endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.**--That **to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,**

1. The Supreme Court recognized that the right to make laws about abortion belongs to the states so “we the People” Pic Constitution⁴² could decide. It’s called Federalism, i.e., divided political power between states and the federal government. Citizens vote for people to represent them. Communism takes away the people’s voice and puts all power in the hands of a centralized government.
2. It was this Biblical principle ‘all men are created equal’ that overturned the evil of slavery. African American, Stanford economist, Thomas Sowell Pic^{43,34} ...within Western civilization (*America*), the principle impetus for the abolition of slavery came first from very conservative religious activists - people who would today be called 'the religious right.', This story is not 'politically correct' in today's terms. Hence it is ignored, as if it never happened."³²
3. Not only did our Declaration of Independence ultimately do away with slavery, it protects the right for life for all Americans, including those in the womb. The 1st unalienable rights, i.e., a right given by God not government is the right to life.

D. Our church isn’t just against abortion, we’re involved in helping moms and kids in a big way. We are under contract to expand ‘Grace House’ to a 10-bedroom facility. Grace House helps young moms in crisis transition to a life of stability. Started by Karen (a former homeless mom) and Artie Rayfield, Pic. We have a group in the church called, Wellsprings, Pic. They help pregnant moms with practical and spiritual support. We also support both CPC in town and all foster care ministries in the area.

XI. Revision #4: 4 Pics Rotunda US Congress²⁶ erected 1840-1855 reflecting America's Christian heritage. Baptism Pocahontas, 1st convert to Christianity in Va.; Pilgrims leaving Holland, praying around the Geneva Bible; Desoto at Ms. river planting a cross dedicating the land to God; Columbus off Fla. coast dedicating the land to God.

A. There is a movement in America to discredit our Founding Fathers and replace the Constitution because of slavery in early America. Let me offer a

different view of history from David Barton and WallBuilders referencing source documents.

- B. The Founding Fathers and Slavery, WallBuilders.³³ Slavery was not introduced by the Founding Fathers; slavery began in America 200 years before the Founders. The Revolutionary War was the turning point to get rid of slavery. Many of the Founders complained that Great Britain had forcefully imposed upon the Colonies the evil of slavery. Thomas Jefferson said, "King George III has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people, carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere. 3 Benjamin Franklin, in a 1773 letter to Dean Woodward, confirmed that whenever the Americans had attempted to end slavery, the British government had indeed thwarted those attempts.
- C. John Quincy Adams, 6th President, "The inconsistency of slavery with the principles of the Declaration of Independence was lamented by all the southern patriots of the Revolution; Never from their lips was heard one syllable of attempt to justify the institution of slavery. They saw that before the principles of the Declaration of Independence, slavery was destined sooner or later to be banished from the earth."
- D. Christian roots of abolitionist movement, African American, Stanford economist, Thomas Sowell picture³⁴ "While slavery was common to all civilizations, only one civilization developed a moral revulsion against it. Moreover, within Western civilization, the principle impetus for the abolition of slavery came first from very conservative religious activists - people who would today be called 'the religious right.' This story is not 'politically correct' in today's terms. Hence it is ignored, as if it never happened."³²
- E. Many of the Founders never even owned slaves, e.g. John Adams, 2nd President, proclaimed, "[M]y opinion against it [slavery] has always been known . . . [N]ever in my life did I own a slave." 9 However, some did own slaves but released them when America separated from Great Britain, e.g. George Washington. Though he was wrong, does that negate the sacrifices he made to give us freedom? We're grateful for MLK, a voice for freedom, but evidence suggests he was an adulterer. We don't cast away great leaders because of their sin. We all make mistakes, our Founders weren't perfect, yet God used them to create the greatest bastion of freedom in world history. Slavery and racism are wrong but not the unpardonable sin.

Otherwise, God would have never redeemed a former slave captain, John Newton, who repented, became a Christian and wrote, "Amazing Grace".

- F. Let me state unequivocally that slavery of our past and present is wrong and inexcusable, but it is a mistake to cast aside freedom and the Constitution and replace them with socialism or communism.
- G. Something has happened in America in the last 50 years. Religious freedom, i.e. the right to live out your faith as you see fit is under attack. There is open hostility to Christianity in America and Christians are being bullied. E.g. it started in the 60's when the Supreme Court removed the 10 commandments and Bible reading from schools and manger scenes from public buildings; since then judges have restricted prayer in schools, told bakers and florists they had to violate Christian convictions or be fined, Christians are fired for privately standing for traditional marriage, crosses are forcibly removed from cemeteries, chaplains are told not to pray in Jesus name, "under God" is often deleted the Pledge of Allegiance, etc.

XII. Rev 1, God and the American Revolution/ War for American Independence, April 1775

- A. Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.
- B. Ben Franklin's motion at the Constitutional Convention Sept. 1787:
...groping as it were in the dark to find political truth... how has it happened, Sir, that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understandings? In the beginning of the Contest with G. Britain...we had daily prayer... for the divine protection. " Our prayers...were graciously answered...And have we now forgotten that powerful friend?...the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth- that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the sacred writings, that "except the Lord build the House they labour in vain that build it." I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the Builders of Babel...I therefore...move, that...prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven...be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the Clergy of the City...officiate in that

service.

<https://wallbuilders.com/franklins-appeal-prayer-constitutional-convention/>

- C. The Christian emphasis manifested so often by the Americans during the Revolution caused one British governor to write to Great Britain complaining that: "If you ask an American who is his master, he'll tell you he has none. And he has no governor but Jesus Christ." A motto of the American Revolution directed against King George III confronted the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings (i.e. when the king spoke, it was the voice of God to the people) was simple and direct: "No King but King Jesus!" <https://wallbuilders.com/4th-july-article/>
- D. John Quincy Adams, 6th President, "The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected, in one indissoluble bond, the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."
<https://wallbuilders.com/unconfirmed-quotations/>
- E. The Bill of rights gives every individual the right to practice their religion or the right to reject religion. They did not force people to be Christians. The Founders gave us the assurance there would be no state church like the church of England.

XIII. Quotes and miscellaneous

- A. George Barna: In 1991, 86% of U.S. adults held a biblical view of God, now in 2021, 46%. Belief in the Bible as "the accurate Word of God": 70% in 1991 now 41%. Americans who believe they'll go to heaven because they accept Jesus as their personal Savior 36% in 1991, 30% now. The Don'ts, i.e., they don't believe or know if God exists, 12% in 2011 to 34% in 2021. 43% of Millennials are Don'ts.⁴⁵
- B. "A wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government."
Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801

Our legislators are not sufficiently apprized of the rightful limits of their power; that their true office is to declare and enforce only our natural rights and duties, and to take none of them from us. - Thomas Jefferson

"The marvel of all history is the patience with which men and women submit to burdens unnecessarily laid upon them by their governments." ~

George Washington

“We the people are the rightful masters of both Congress and the courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.” ~ Abraham Lincoln

“Government is best which governs least” ~ Thomas Paine

1. 4 Pics Rotunda US Congress²⁶ erected 1840-1855 reflecting America's Christian heritage. Baptism Pocahontas, 1st convert to Christianity in Va.⁵⁸; Pilgrims leaving Holland, praying around the Geneva Bible⁵⁷; Desoto at Ms. River planting a cross dedicating the land to God; Columbus off Fla. coast dedicating the land to God.
- C. Thus, the cornerstone of early American education was the belief that "children are an heritage from the Lord, Ps. 127:3"⁴
- D.