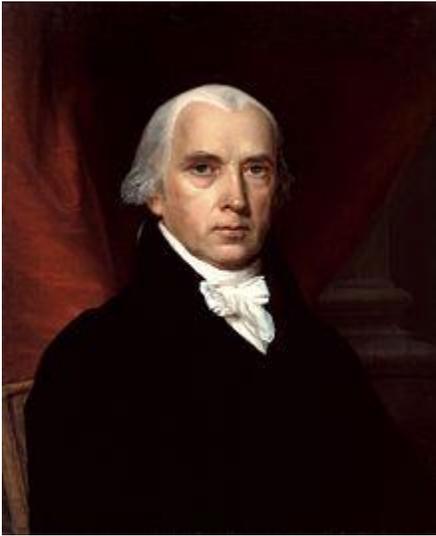


James Madison (1751-1836)



Key Designation: “Father of the Constitution and Bill of Rights”

Key Background Information:

- ◆ Converted at an early age and baptized as a Congregationalist
- ◆ Seriously considered entering the Ministry, but instead became a lawyer
- ◆ Heard Baptists preaching from their cell, having been incarcerated for nothing more than being “nonconformists” to the Anglican establishment in Virginia
- ◆ A devout Bible student
- ◆ Regularly led his own family in private devotions

Key Events

- ◆ March, 1778-In a meeting requested by John Leland, Madison became aware that Baptists would not support the Constitution’s ratification without clarification in a bill or rights that protected from the re-establishment of any denomination. Leland, the leading Baptist in Virginia, also made it clear that they would oppose him as the delegate to the Constitutional Convention, and voted for Leland instead without such assurances. It was at this point that Madison agreed and comprise the Bill of Rights. He decided also to clarify other issues, lest this one issue become a point of contention, therefore, there are 10 articles and not one.
- ◆ His 29 contributions to the 85 *Federalist Papers* leads to the ratification of the Constitution by all the states in 1787
- ◆ Elected President in 1808 and served two terms.

Key Ideas

- ◆ Believed in religious liberty, and oppose anything that could be construed as an establishment of government laws which compelled any observance or participation in religion. However, as typical of all the Founders, he believed that

religion should be an important part of the public domain, and necessary for a government such as ours to function. In 1825: “The belief in a God All Powerful wise and good, is so essential to the moral order of the World and to the happiness of man, that arguments which enforce it cannot be drawn from too many sources nor adapted with too much solicitude to the different characters and capacities to be impressed with it.”

- ◆ Clearly believed in the traditional doctrines of the Faith and salvation by grace through Christ

Key Works:

- ◆ His contributions to the Federalist Papers
- ◆ His work on the Constitution
- ◆ 1785 address to the Virginia Legislature entitled “Religious Freedom: A Memorial and Remonstrance” in which he opposed Patrick Henry’s bill to establish Christianity itself as the official religion of Virginia.