

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

What the “Declaration” declares

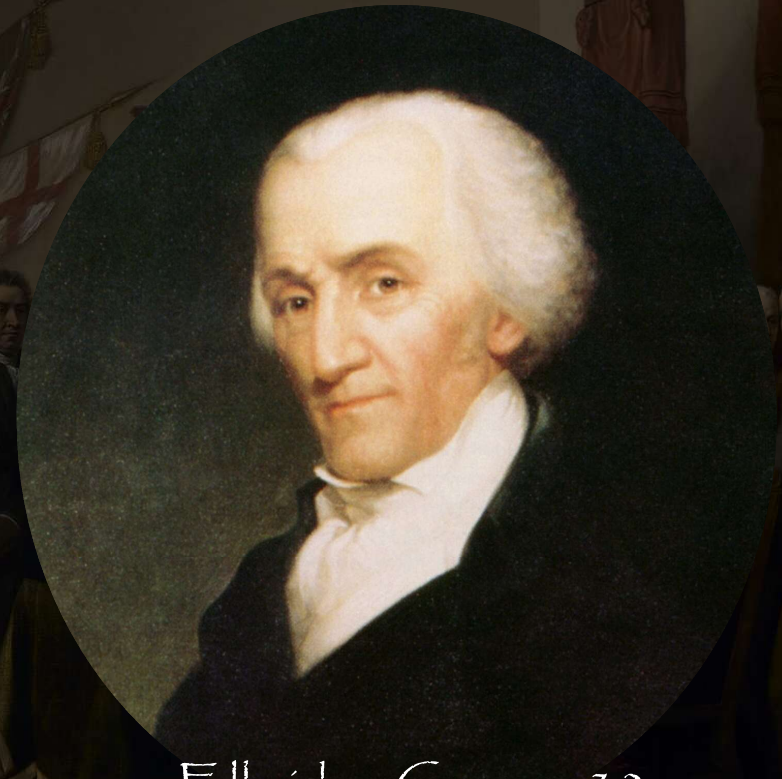
Thomas Jefferson ~ 33
John Adams ~ 41
John Hancock ~ 39
Geo Washington ~ 44
Benjamin Franklin ~ 70



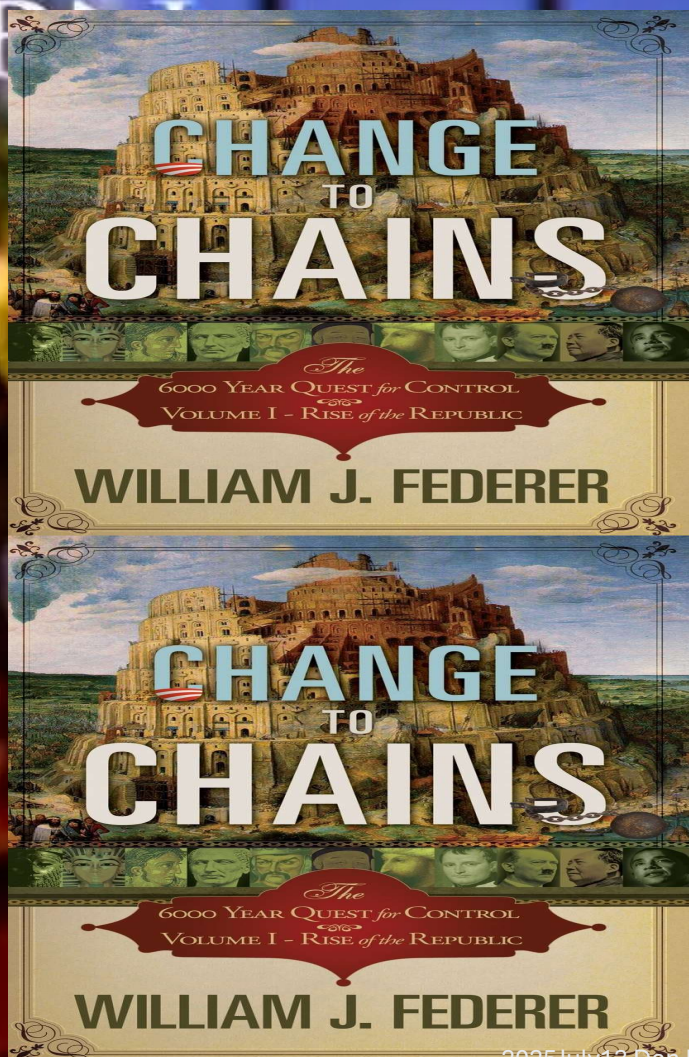
2025 July 13 Dan Fisher - What the "Declaration" declares
(Part 1)



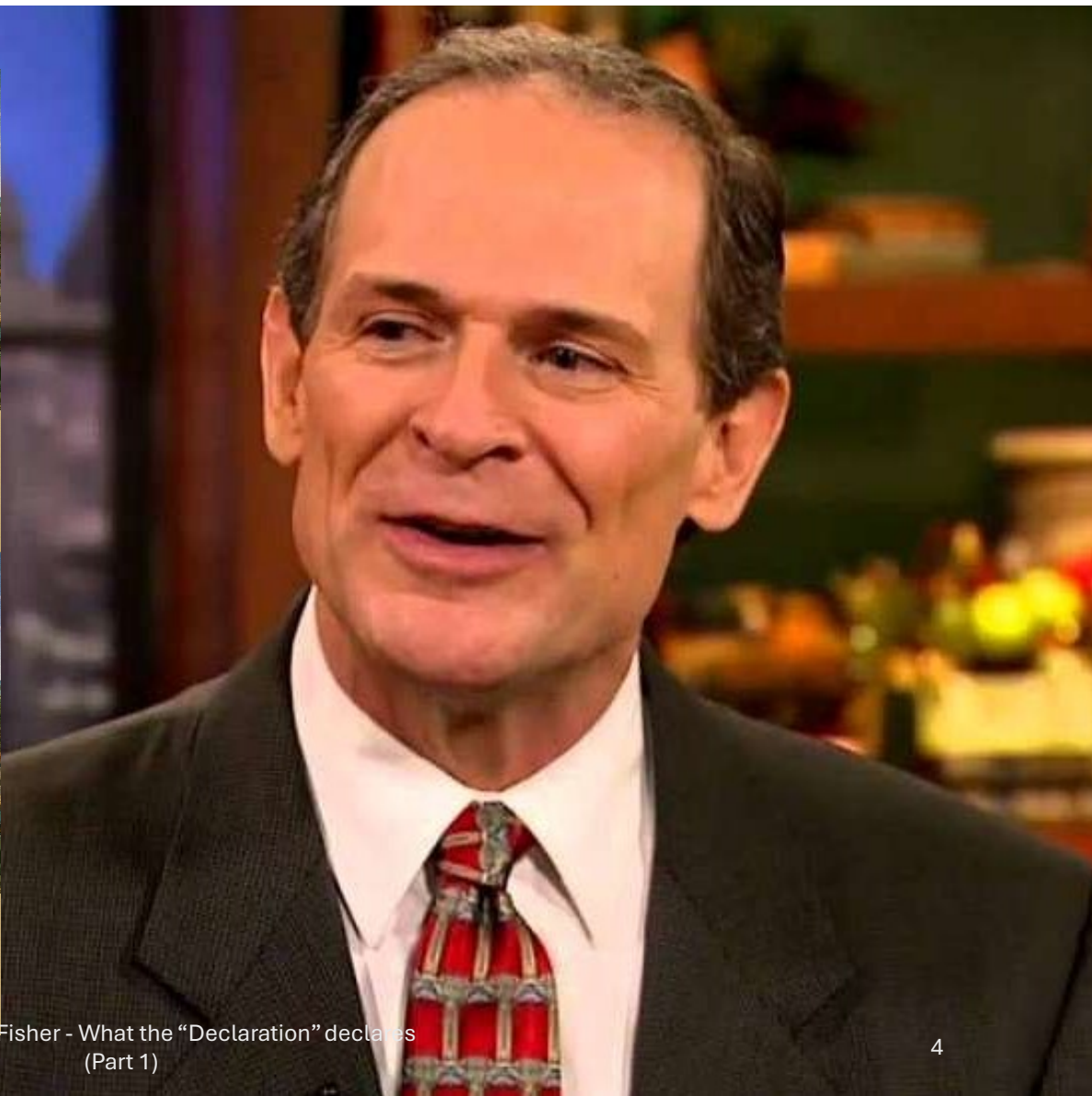
Benjamin Harrison ~ 50

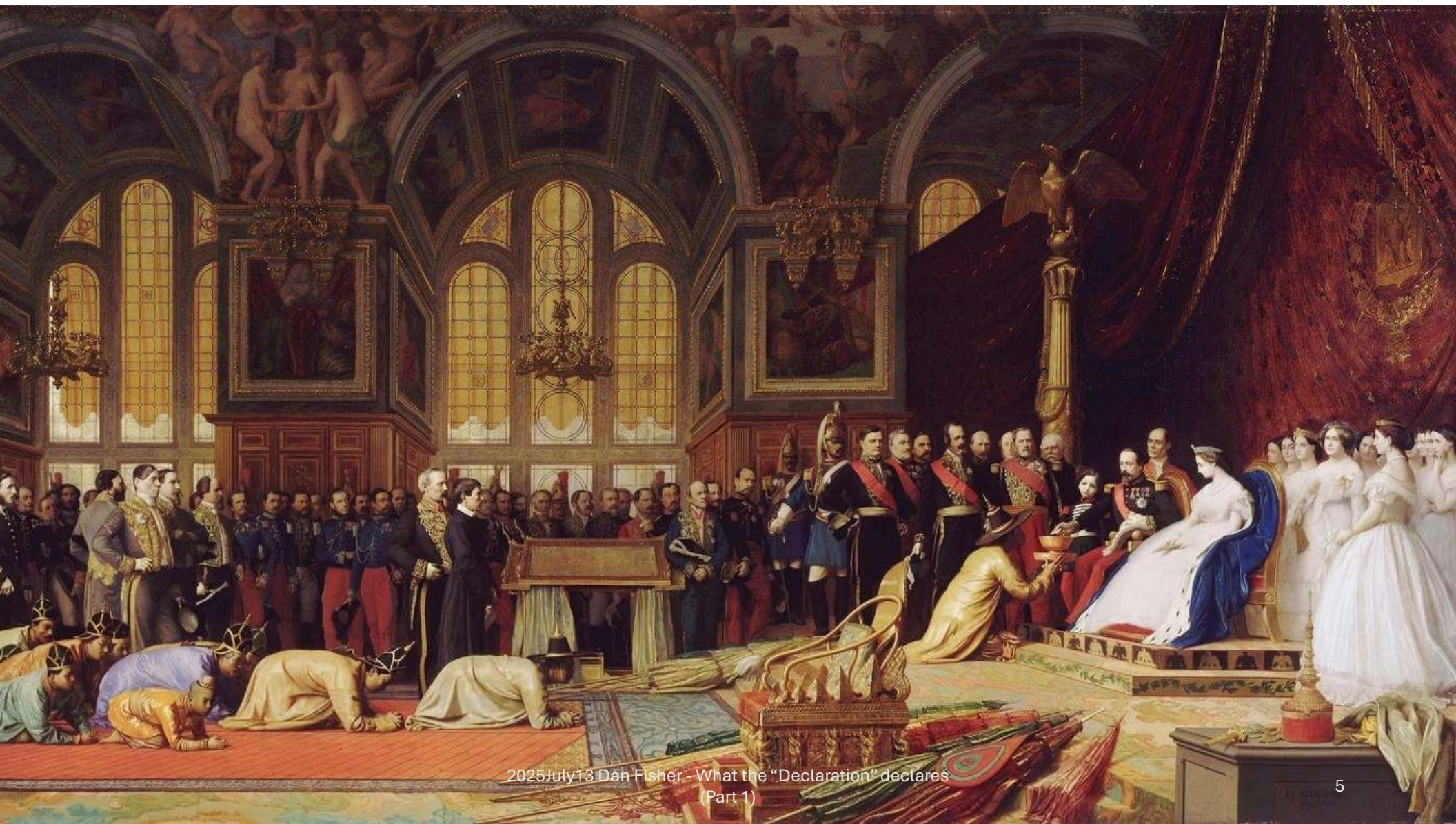


Elbridge Gerry ~ 32



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In 1215 A.D. when British King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta and surrender many rights to the aristocracy, it was the first declaration that the people's ruler was under the law, it was the first check on royal power, and it introduced early concepts of due process, jury by one's peers, freedom of religion, and no taxation without representation.

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We the People

of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article 1.

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative; and until such Enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies. The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

Section 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the

Wich. 1.

principles in the Declaration of Independence

IN CONGRESS. JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

[illegible]

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

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.

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem best, for the safety and Happiness of the People.

Prudence in the course of this transition, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and according to all the just notions of Liberty, that mankind are not disposed to suffer, while they are secure in their property, under a Government which they have a reason to believe is likely to be good for them.

It is therefore the duty of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem best, for the safety and Happiness of the People.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would acquiesce in the claims of a representation in the Legislature.

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Executive Mansion,

Washington,, 186 .

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal"

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have

Executive Mansion,

Washington,, 186 ..

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought

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"The Union, and the Constitution, are the picture of silver, subsequently framed around it [Declaration of Independence]. The picture was made, not to conceal, or destroy the apple; but to adorn and preserve it.

The picture was made for the apple – not the apple for the picture."

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on a great battle field of that war. We have

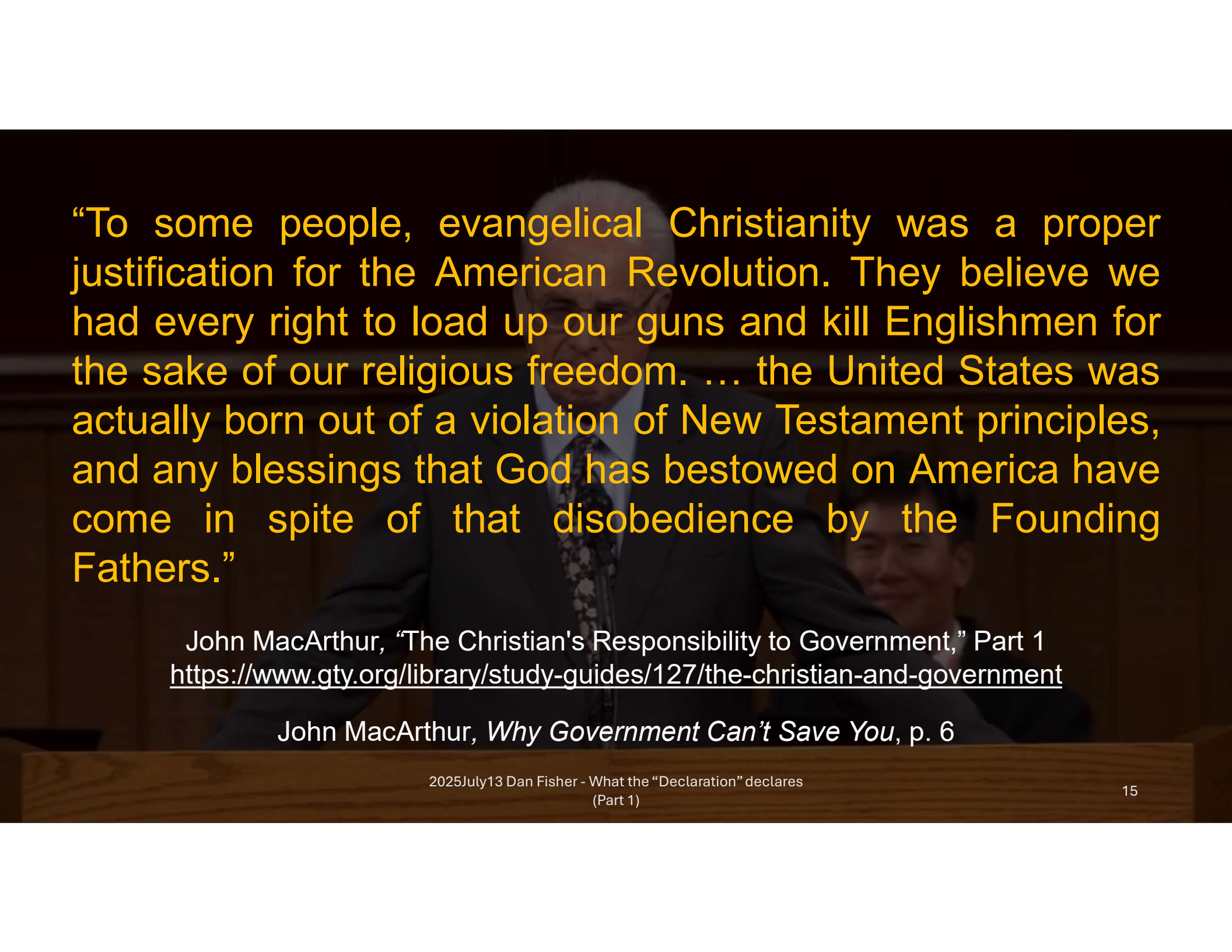


Before digging into the Declaration of Independence, we must first understand what motivated its authors & supporters

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“To some people, evangelical Christianity was a proper justification for the American Revolution. They believe we had every right to load up our guns and kill Englishmen for the sake of our religious freedom. ... the United States was actually born out of a violation of New Testament principles, and any blessings that God has bestowed on America have come in spite of that disobedience by the Founding Fathers.”

John MacArthur, “The Christian's Responsibility to Government,” Part 1
<https://www.gty.org/library/study-guides/127/the-christian-and-government>

John MacArthur, *Why Government Can't Save You*, p. 6




Were the Framers rebels, ignoring proper governmental authority & just doing their “own thing”?

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Rom 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

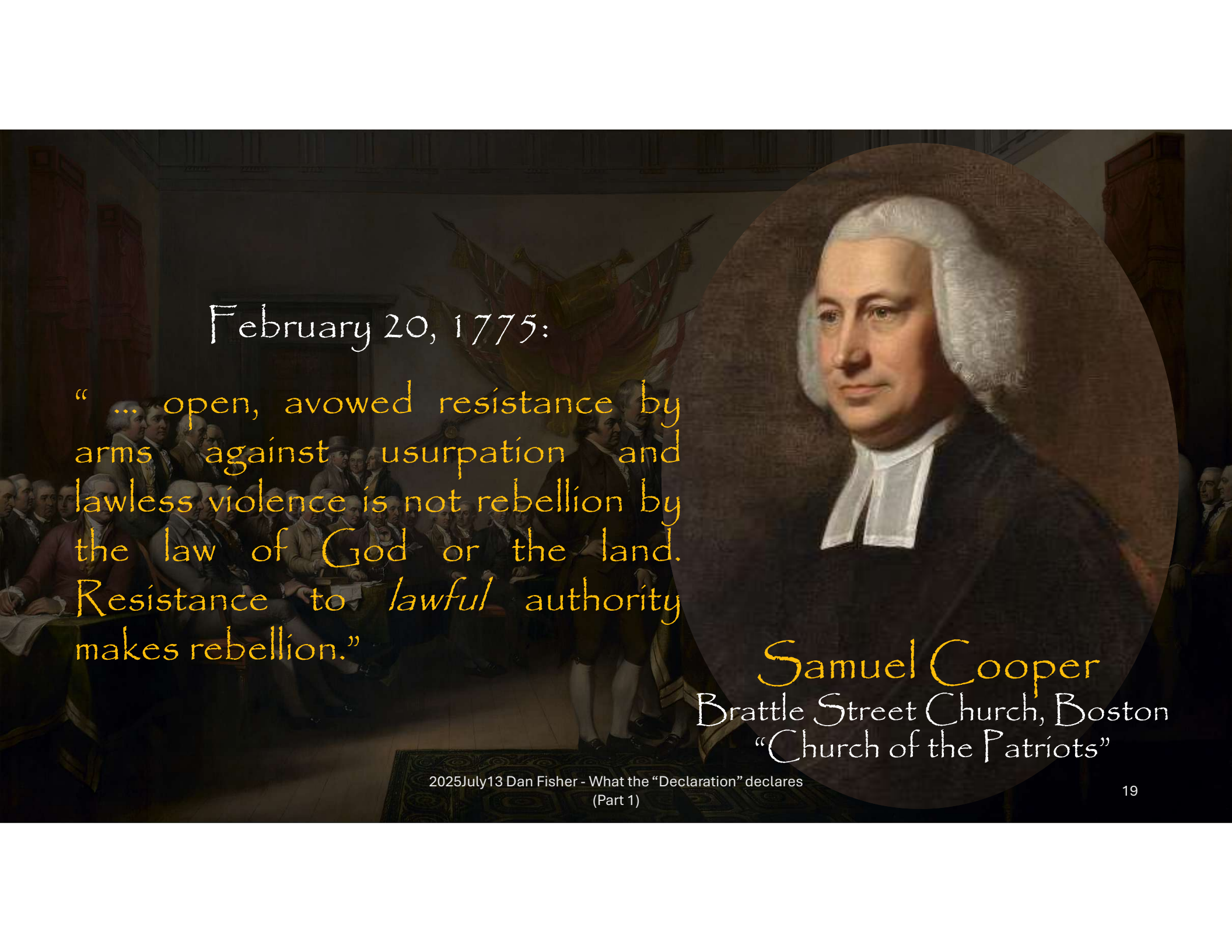
1 Pet 2:13-15 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.



Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1 Cor 11:3-10, Eph 5:22-24, Col 3:18

- Ultimately, all submission is to be done in reverence and obedience to God
- Christians are called to submit to God's will in all things, even when it is difficult
- This involves trusting God, laying down one's own will, and accepting His plan

The background of the slide is a historical painting depicting the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It shows a large group of men in 18th-century attire gathered in a grand hall, with several flags hanging from the ceiling. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from windows on the left.

February 20, 1775:

“ ... open, avowed resistance by arms against usurpation and lawless violence is not rebellion by the law of God or the land. Resistance to *lawful* authority makes rebellion.”

A circular portrait of Samuel Cooper, a man with white hair, wearing a dark coat and a white clerical collar. The portrait is set against a dark, textured background.

Samuel Cooper
Brattle Street Church, Boston
“Church of the Patriots”



Elizur Goodrich, Pastor, Congregational Church, Durham, CT
“The Principles of Civil Union and Happiness Considered and
Recommended,” 1787:

“When a constitutional government is converted into
tyranny, and the laws, rights and properties of a free people
are openly invaded, there ought not to be the least doubt
but that a remedy is provided in the laws of God and
reason, for their preservation; nor ought resistance in such
case to be called rebellion.”



Alice M. Baldwin, PhD.
Historian, Duke University

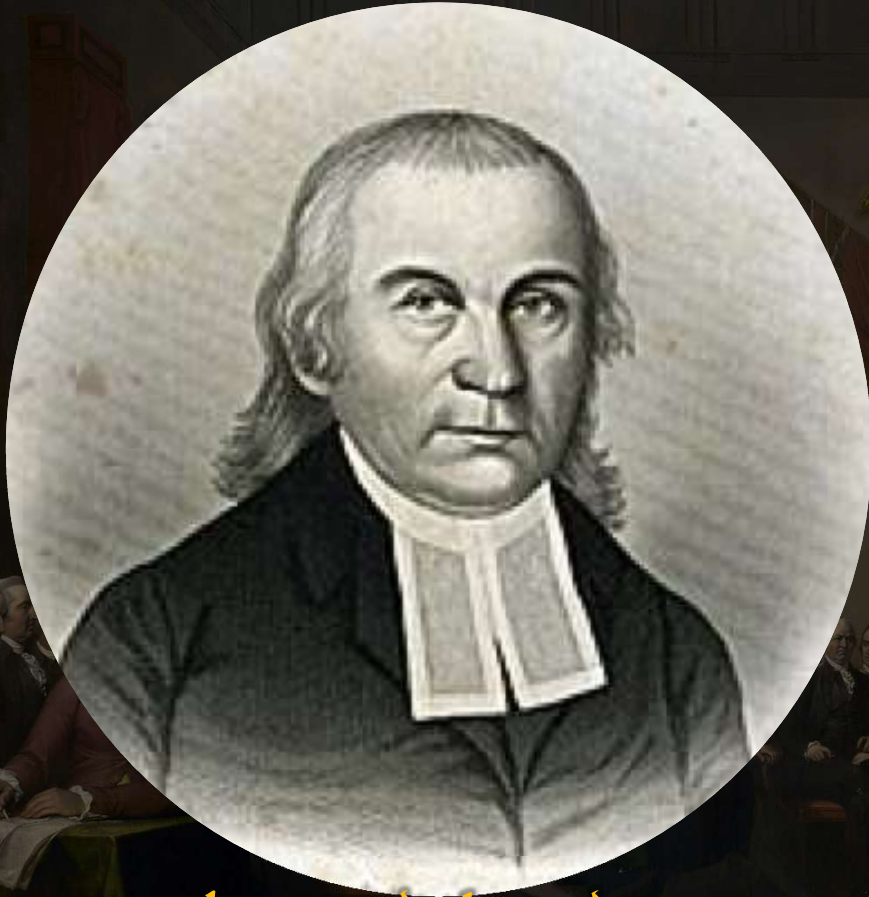
“Probably the most fundamental principle of the American constitutional system is the principle that no one is bound to obey an unconstitutional act. ... No single idea was more fully stressed, no principle more often repeated, through the first sixty years of the eighteenth century, than that governments must obey law and that he who resisted one in authority who was violating that law was not himself a rebel but a protector of law.”

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John Hancock, Mar 5, 1774
Old South Church in Boston

“I am a friend to righteous government, to a government founded upon the principles of reason and justice; but I glory in publicly avowing my eternal enmity to tyranny.”



Joseph Lathrop
Pastor, 1st Congregational
Church, West Springfield, MA

“A Sermon On A Day Appointed For
Public Thanksgiving,” Dec 14, 1787

“Is there no case in which a people may resist government? Yes, that is, when rulers usurp a power oppressive to the people, ... in contempt of every respectful remonstrance. In this case the body of the people have a natural right to unite their strength for the restoration of their own constitutional government.”



They did not want to separate from England – their
“mother country”

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*The Fate of Blood-thirsty Oppressors, and GOD'S
tender Care of his distressed People.*

A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT LEXINGTON,
APRIL 19, 1776.

To commemorate the *MURDER, BLOOD-SHED* and *Commencement of Hostilities*, between *Great-Britain* and *America*, in that Town, by a Brigade of Troops of *GEORGE III.*, under Command of *Lieutenant-Colonel SMITH*, on the Nineteenth of *APRIL, 1775.*

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A BRIEF NARRATIVE of the principal
Transactions of that Day.

BY JONAS CLARK, A. M.
PASTOR of the CHURCH in LEXINGTON.

Those Things doth the LORD hate :—*A proud Look, a lying
Tongue, and Hands that shed innocent Blood.* PRO. vi. 16, 17.

—*Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,
Auri sacra fames?*—

*Quis talia fando,
Mymidonum, Dolopumvæ, aut duri miles Ulyssæi,
Temperet a lachrymis?*— VIR. ÆNEID.

MASSACHUSETTS-STATE: BOSTON:
PRINTED BY POWARS AND WILLIS.
M,DCC,LXXVI.

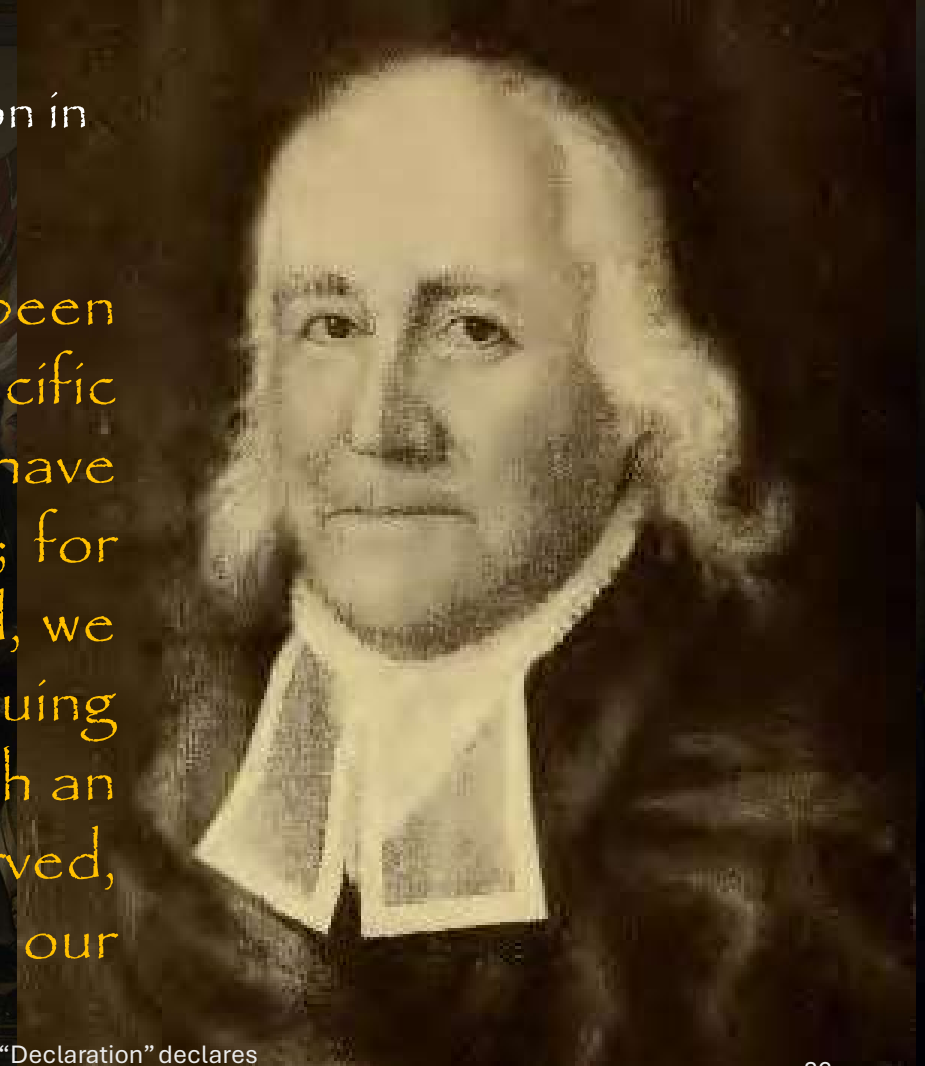
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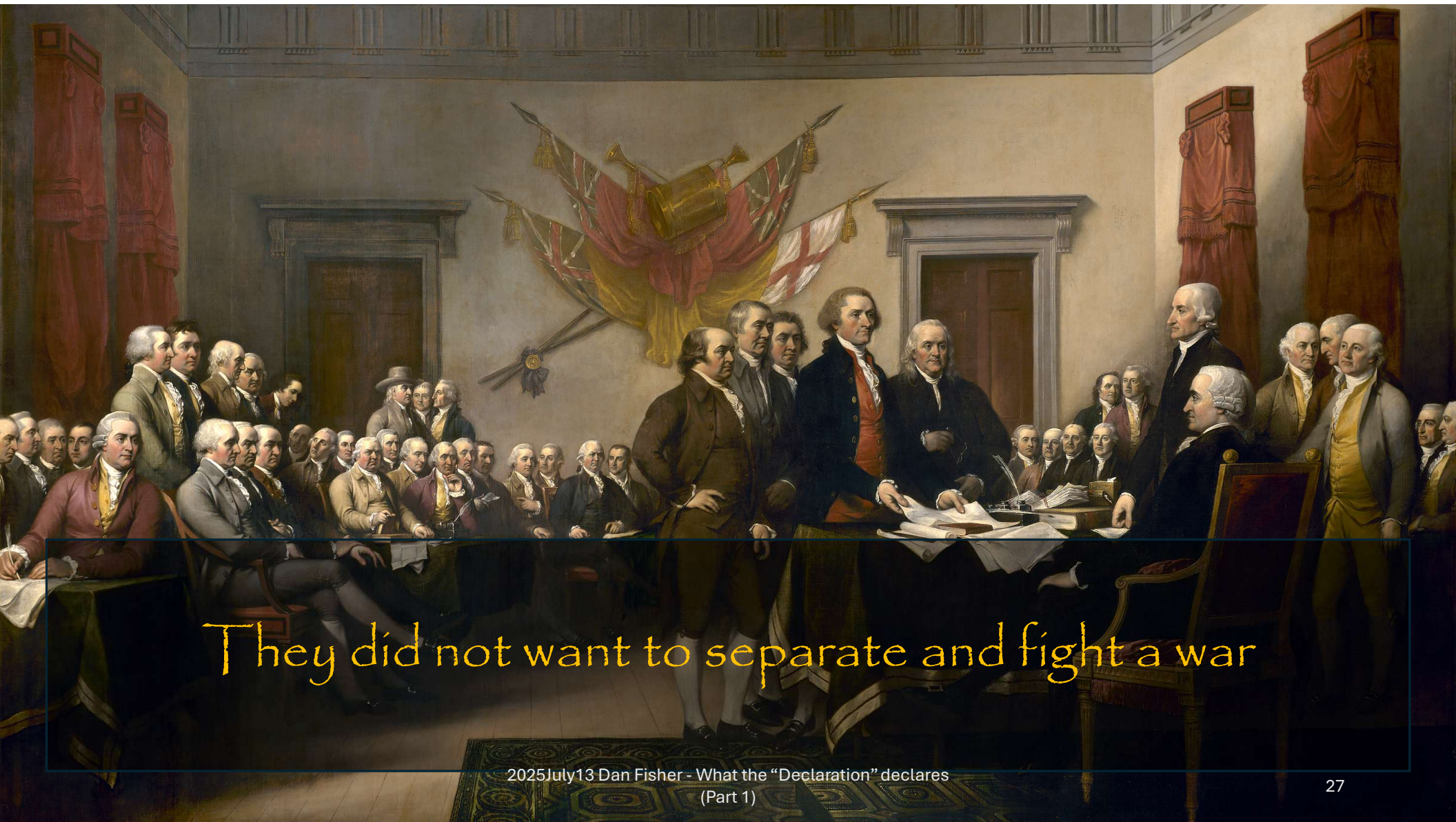
“... the connection of America with Britain ... might have been preserved inviolate to the end of time. And it may be added, that there is no just ground to suppose, that it would have ever entered the heart of Americans, to have desired a dissolution of so happy a connection with the Mother-Country, or to have sought independence of Britain, had they not been urged, and even forced upon such an expedient, by measures of oppression and violence, and the shedding of innocent blood.”

Henry Cumings

BRR Pastor, MA, April 19, 1781 sermon in
Lexington, MA

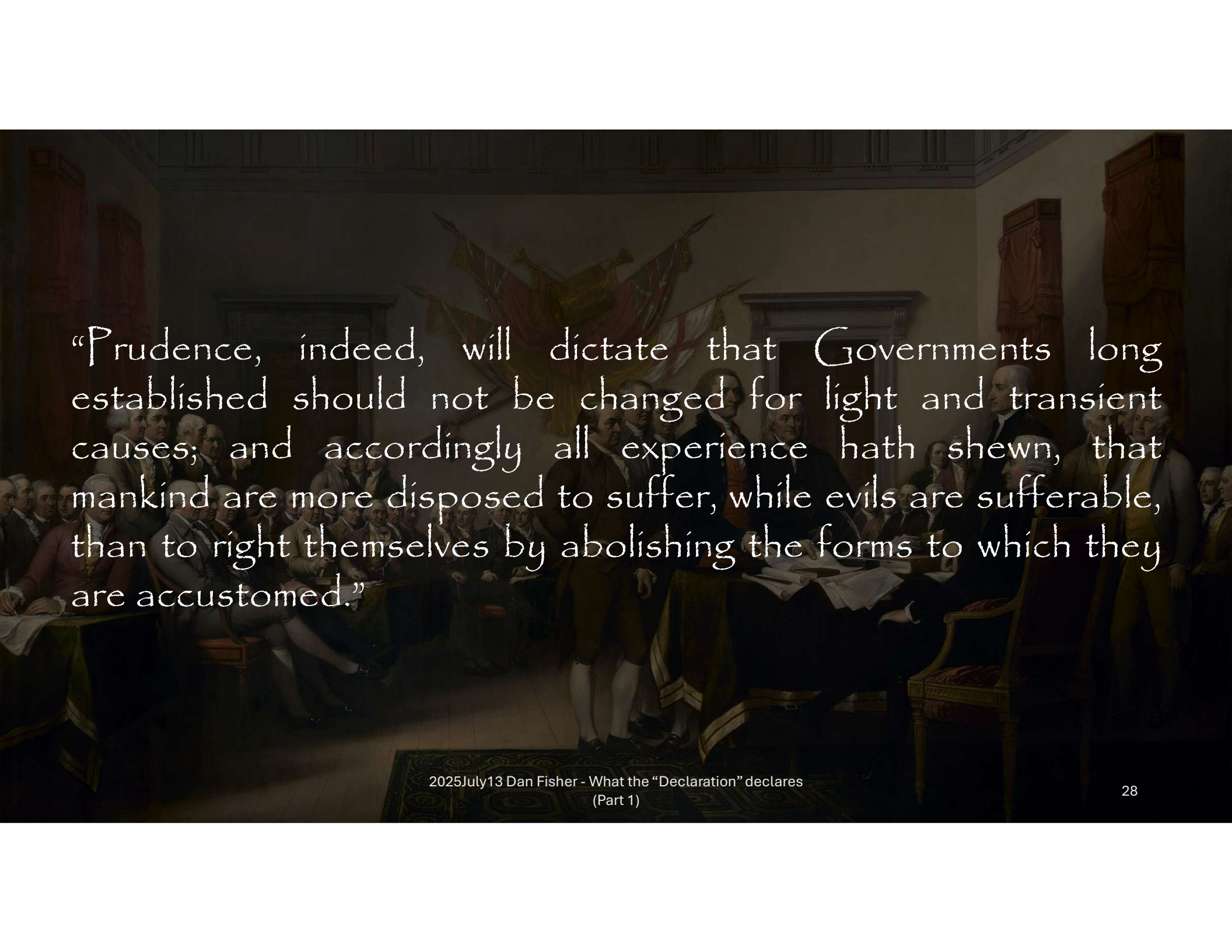
“Had our petitions and prayers been properly regarded, and moderate pacific measures pursued, we should have entertained no thoughts of a revolt; for even after hostilities had commenced, we were ardently desirous of continuing united with our mother country, if such an union could have been preserved, without making a sacrifice of our liberties.”





They did not want to separate and fight a war

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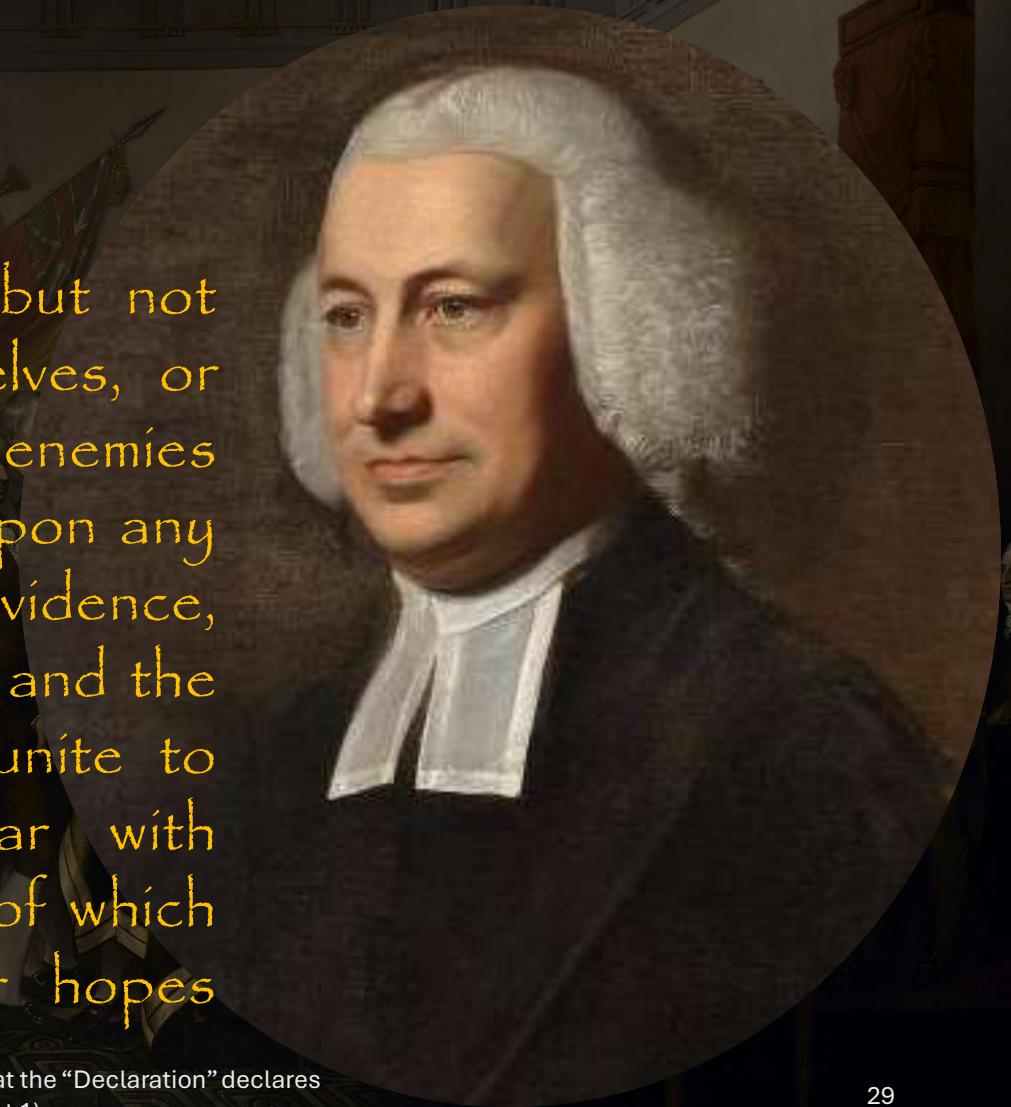


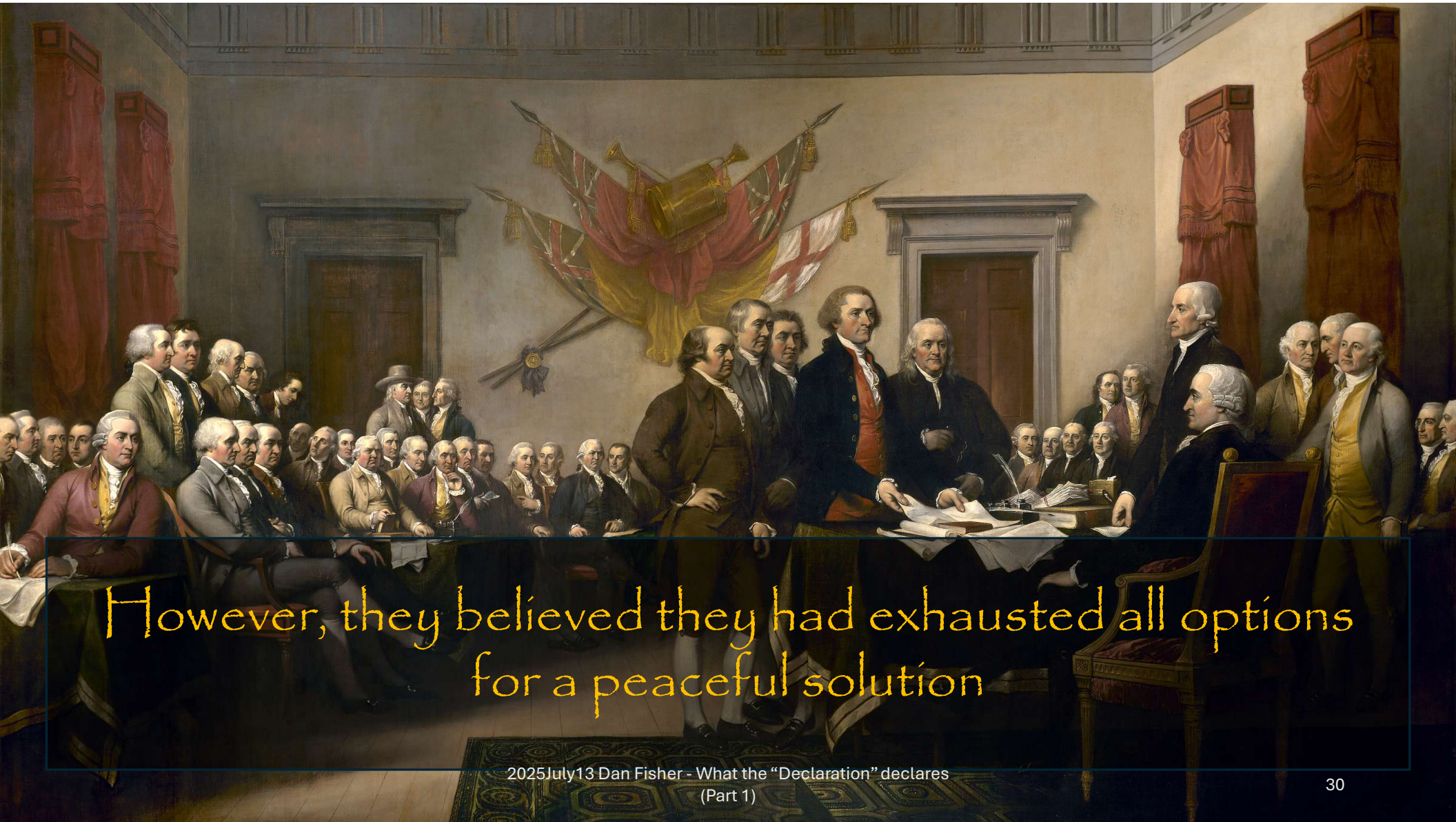
“Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.”

Samuel Cooper
Pastor Brattle Street
Boston, MA 1780

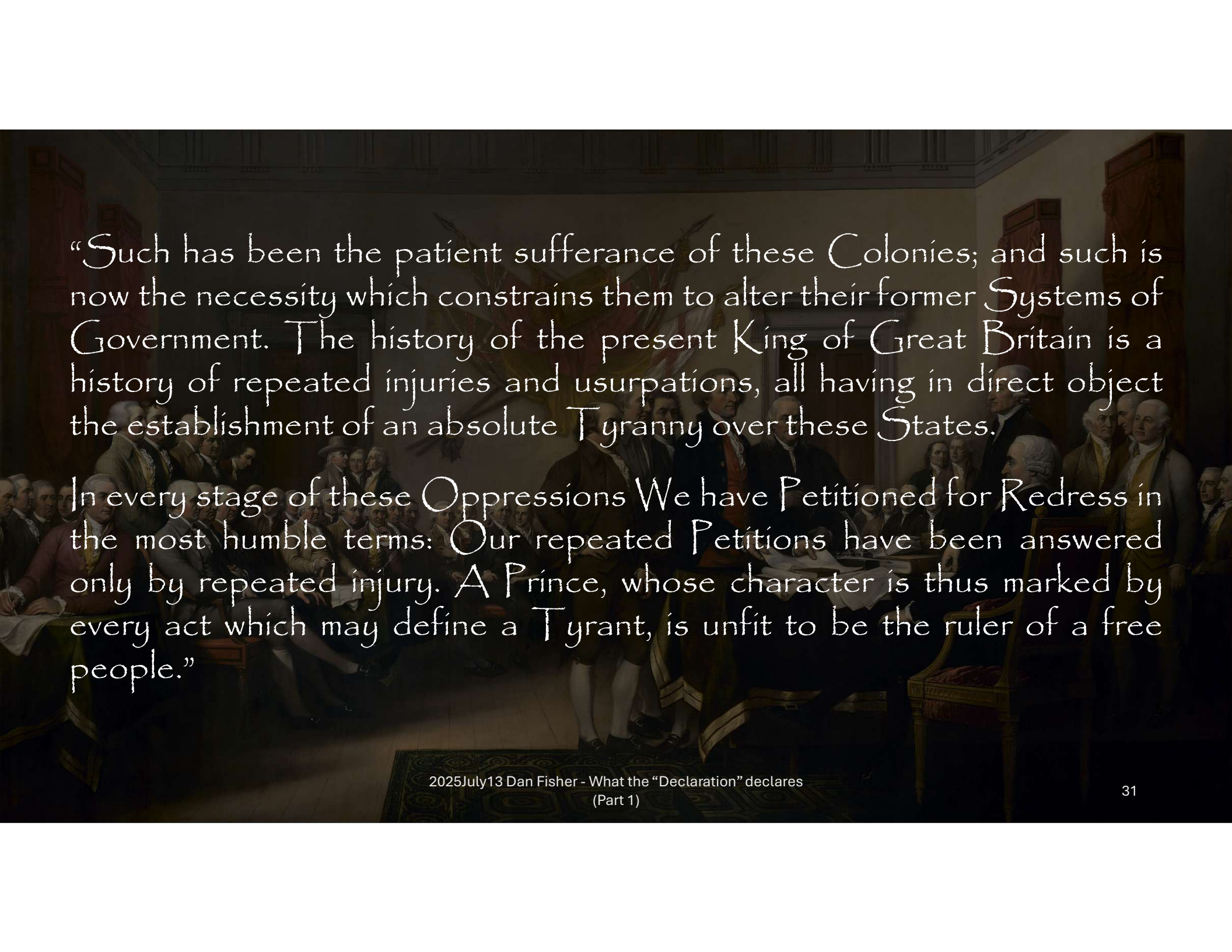
“Peace, peace, we ardently wish; but not upon terms dishonorable to ourselves, or dangerous to our liberties; and our enemies seem not yet prepared to allow it upon any other. At present the voice of providence, the call of our still invaded country, and the cry of everything dear to us, all unite to rouse us to prosecute the war with redoubled vigor; upon the success of which all our free constitutions, all our hopes depend.”

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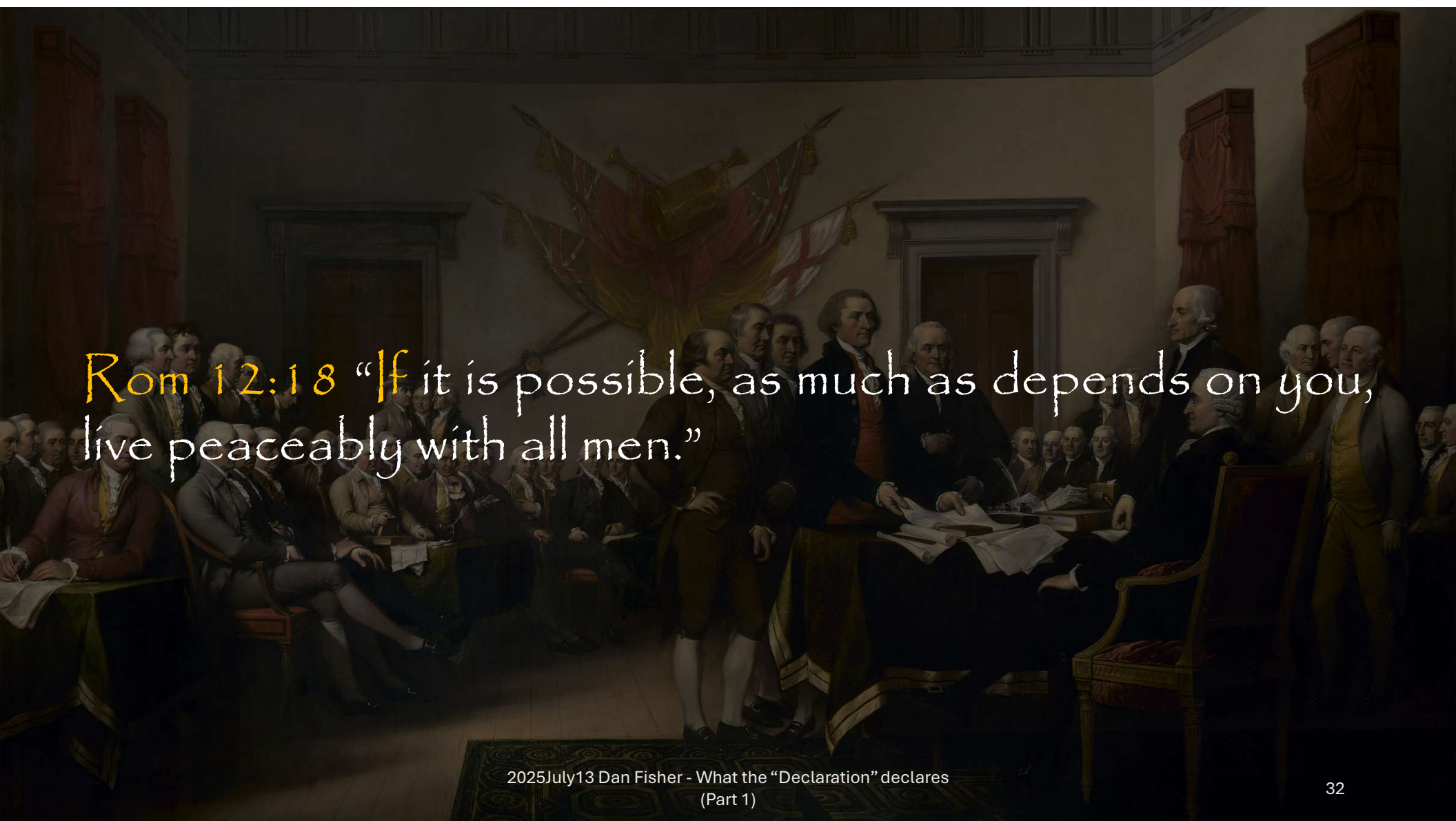


However, they believed they had exhausted all options
for a peaceful solution



“Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.”



Rom 12:18 “If it is possible, as much as depends on you,
live peaceably with all men.”

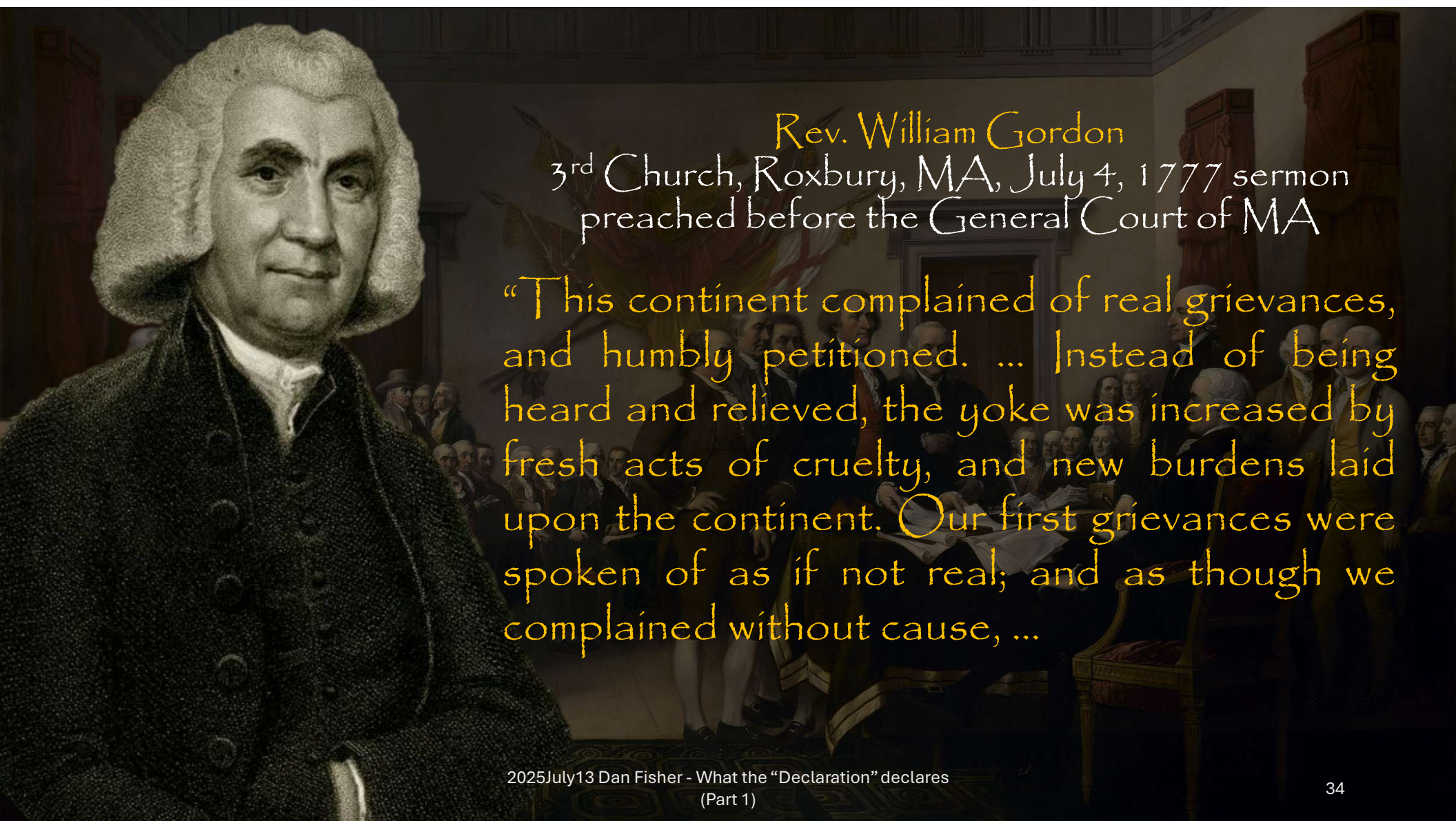
A circular portrait of Abraham Keteltas, a man with long, wavy, light-colored hair, wearing a dark coat with a white cravat. The background of the portrait is a soft, light greenish-yellow. The portrait is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the background image of a historical assembly.

Abraham Keteltas

BRR preacher in NY, NJ, CT, MA, & member
NY Provincial Congress, 1777 sermon:

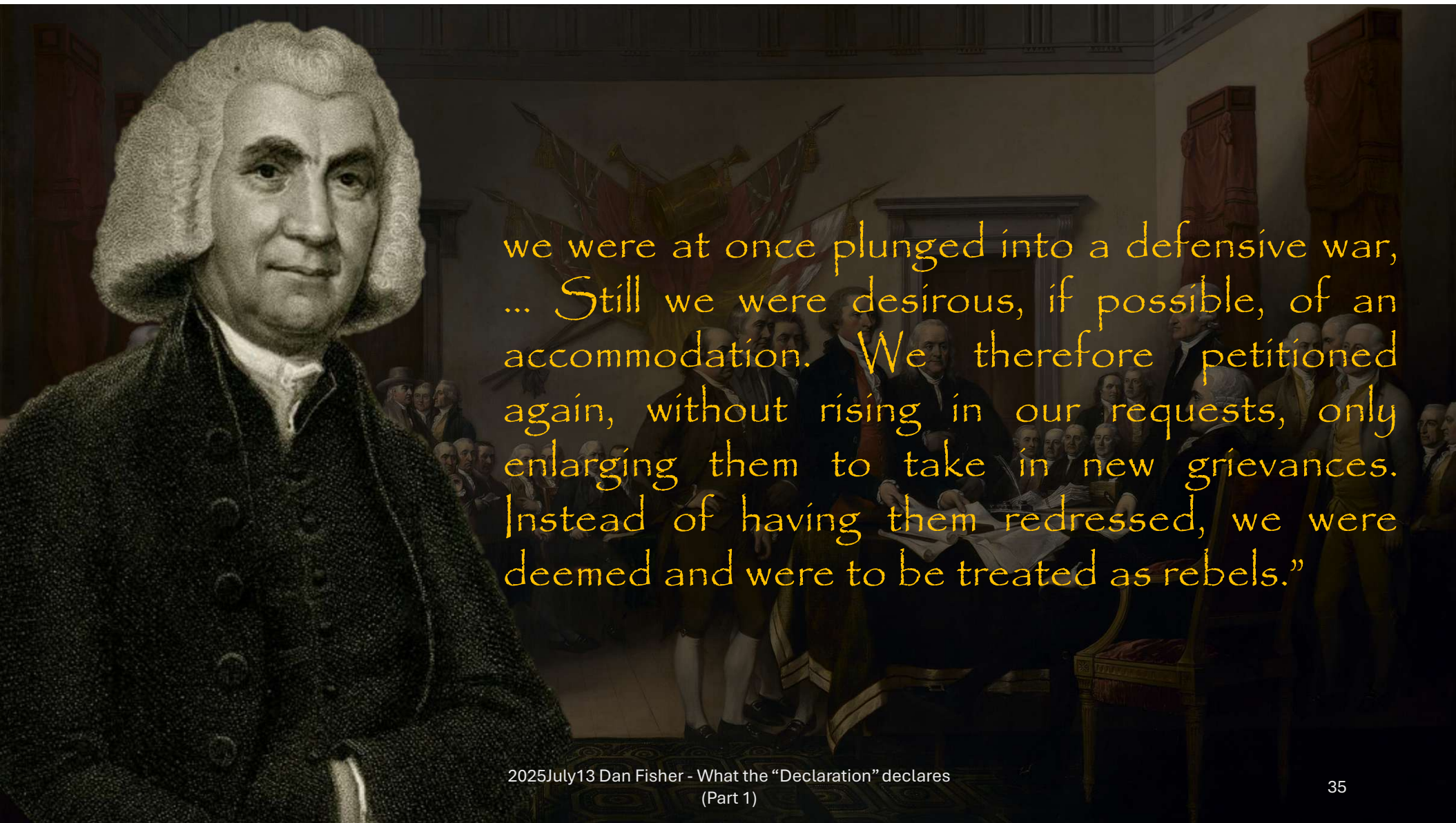
“... all our assemblies ... have endeavored, by the most humble and earnest petitions to the throne, to prevent the fatal war, which now rages and desolates our land. ... and it was not until every pacific measure failed, and our petitions were scornfully treated, and rejected, and a powerful fleet and army had actually invaded us and shed our blood; that we took up arms, in behalf of our lives and liberties.”

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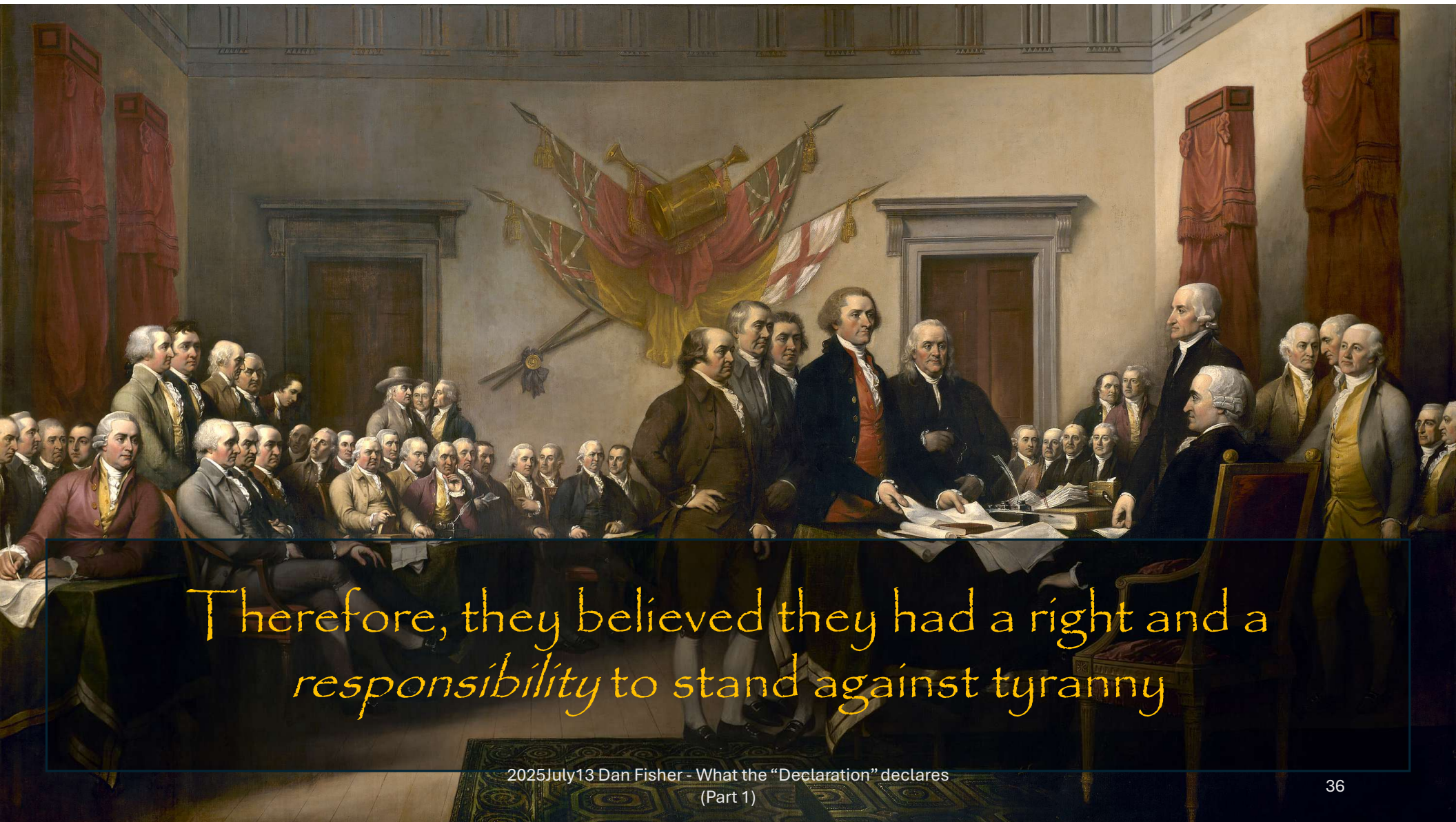


Rev. William Gordon
3rd Church, Roxbury, MA, July 4, 1777 sermon
preached before the General Court of MA

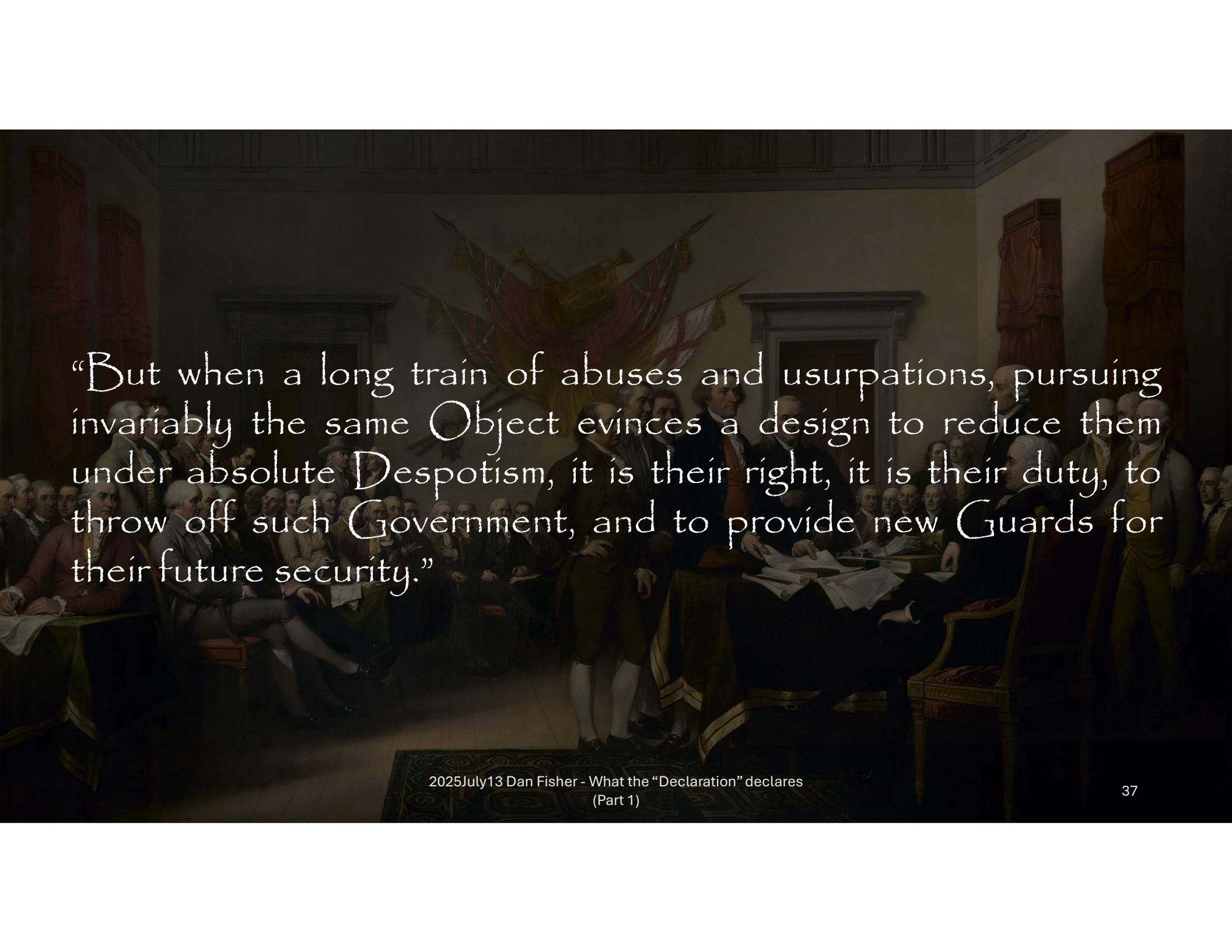
“This continent complained of real grievances,
and humbly petitioned. ... Instead of being
heard and relieved, the yoke was increased by
fresh acts of cruelty, and new burdens laid
upon the continent. Our first grievances were
spoken of as if not real; and as though we
complained without cause, ...



we were at once plunged into a defensive war,
... Still we were desirous, if possible, of an
accommodation. We therefore petitioned
again, without rising in our requests, only
enlarging them to take in new grievances.
Instead of having them redressed, we were
deemed and were to be treated as rebels.”



Therefore, they believed they had a right and a
responsibility to stand against tyranny



“But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.”

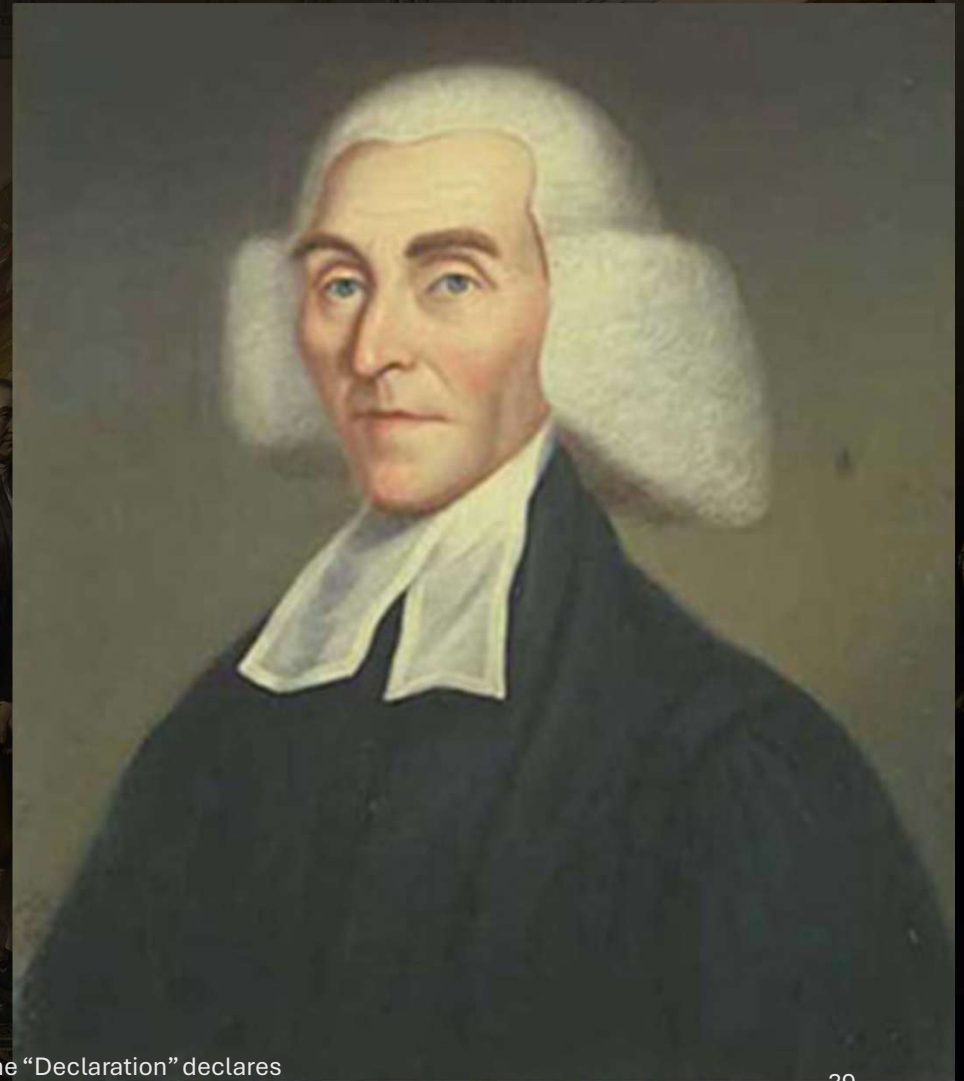


“Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission
and Non-Resistance To The Higher Powers,”
Jan 31, 1749-50

“Common tyrants and public oppressors
are not entitled to obedience from their
subjects ... For a nation thus abused to
arise unanimously and resist their prince,
even to dethroning him, is not criminal, but
a reasonable way of vindicating their
liberties and just rights.”

George Duffield
Pine Street Presbyterian
Philadelphia, PA, Dec 11, 1784

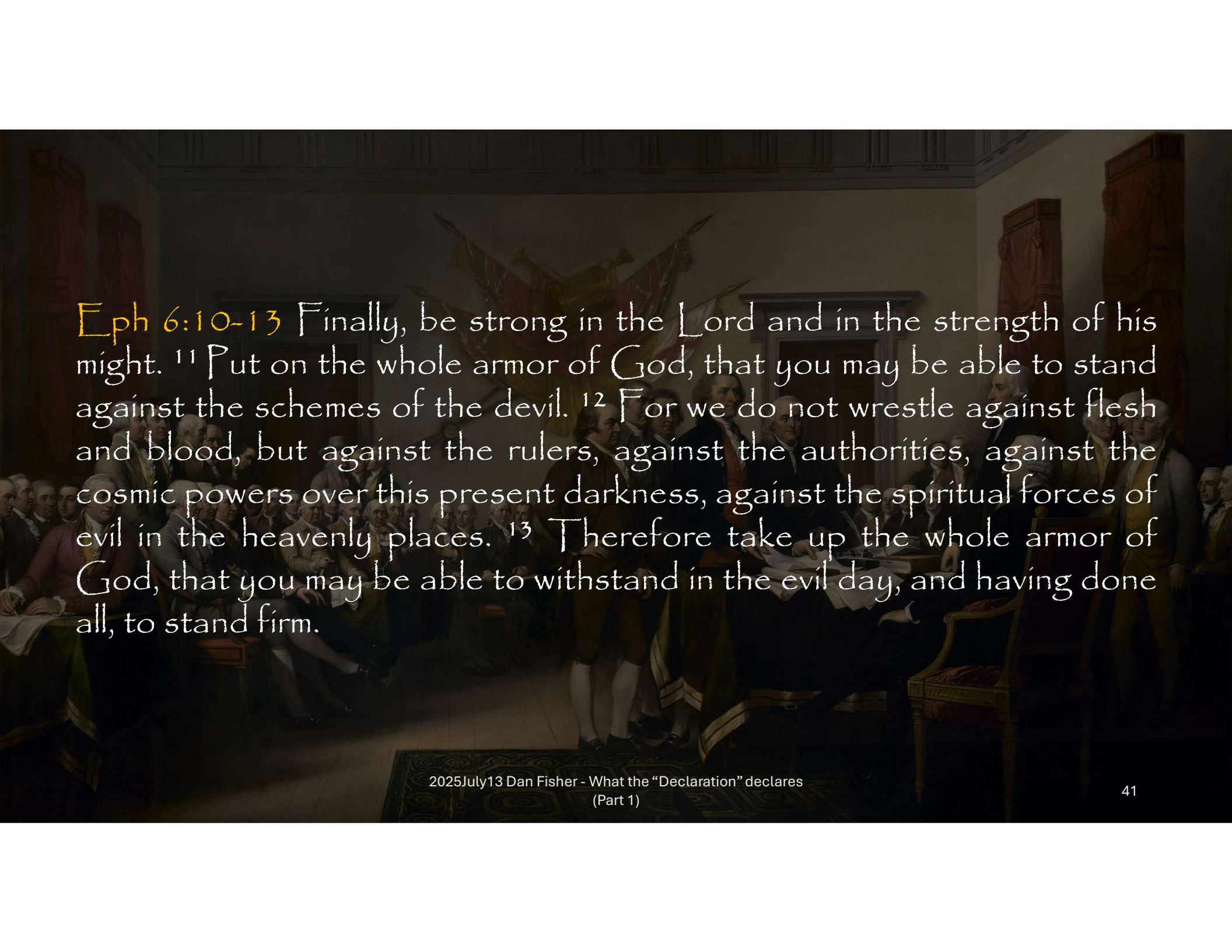
“Hard alternative! To resign liberty or wage this hazardous war. And yet none other remained. ... But *Liberty* was the prize. She chose “Freedom or Death” as her motto; and nobly resolved on war with all its horrors; that at least, her last expiring groan might breathe forth freedom.”



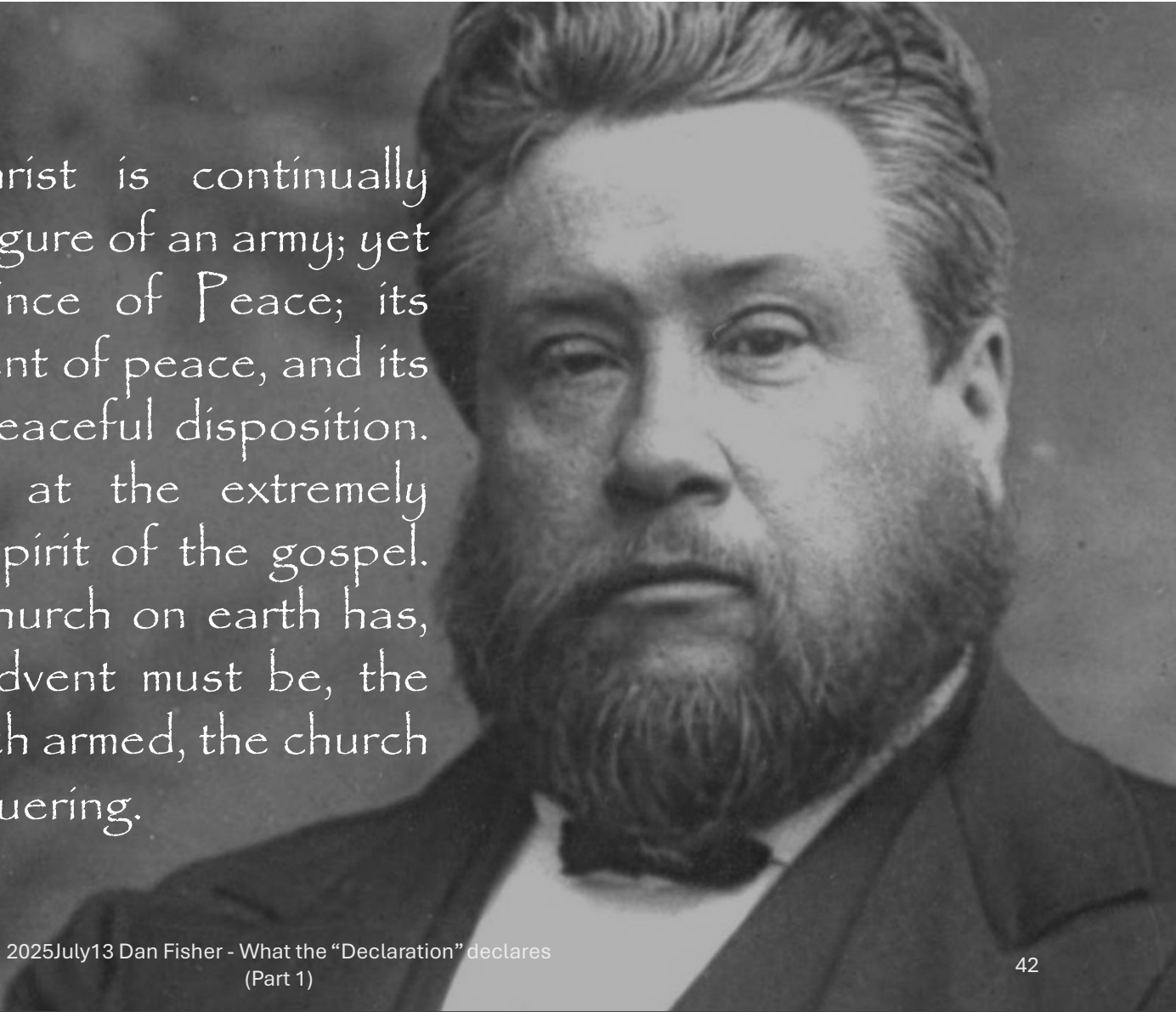
National seal proposed
to Congress on
Aug 20, 1776, by
Thomas Jefferson,
Benjamin Franklin, &
John Adams

Drawing by Benson Lossing, for *Harper's
New Monthly Magazine*, July 1856,
General Collections, Library of Congress (106)






Eph 6:10-13 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.



“The Church of Christ is continually represented under the figure of an army; yet its Captain is the Prince of Peace; its object is the establishment of peace, and its soldiers are men of a peaceful disposition. The spirit of war is at the extremely opposite point to the spirit of the gospel. Yet nevertheless, the church on earth has, and until the second advent must be, the church militant, the church armed, the church warring, the church conquering.

A black and white portrait of C.H. Spurgeon, a man with a full beard and mustache, wearing a suit and bow tie. The portrait is positioned on the right side of the image, partially overlapping the text.

And how is this? It is in the very order of things that so it must be. Truth could not be truth in this world if it were not a warring thing, and we should at once suspect that it were not true if error were friends with it. The spotless purity of truth must always be at war with the blackness of heresy and lies."

C.H. Spurgeon