



THE IMPACT OF FAITH ON AMERICA'S FOUNDING AT OUR 250TH ANNIVERSARY

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THERE ARE MANY FOUNDING FATHERS

We will consider
only a few.

And there may be
some you didn't
expect.



EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY

A timeline of important events at America's Founding

1682-1789

[1682-1684;
1699-1701]
William Penn
in
Philadelphia

[1739-40]
George
Whitefield's
first visits to
Philadelphia

[1765]
Stamp Act

[1776]
Declaration of
Independence

[1787-1789]
US
Constitution



WILLIAM PENN ESTABLISHES PENNSYLVANIA AND PHILADELPHIA

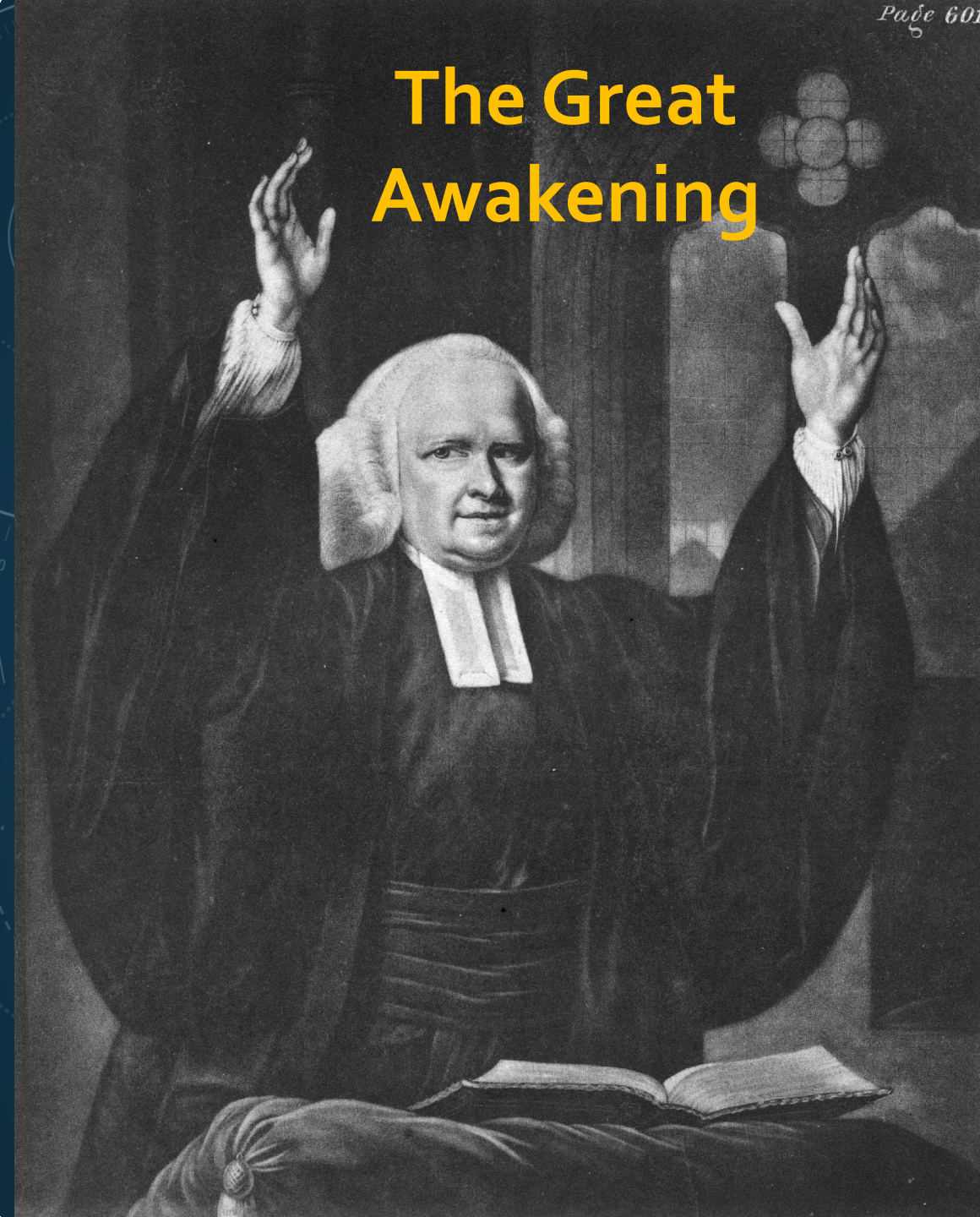
Penn Names His City

Who Is Our State Named for?

Charter of Privileges (1701)

Liberty Bell (1751)

The Great Awakening

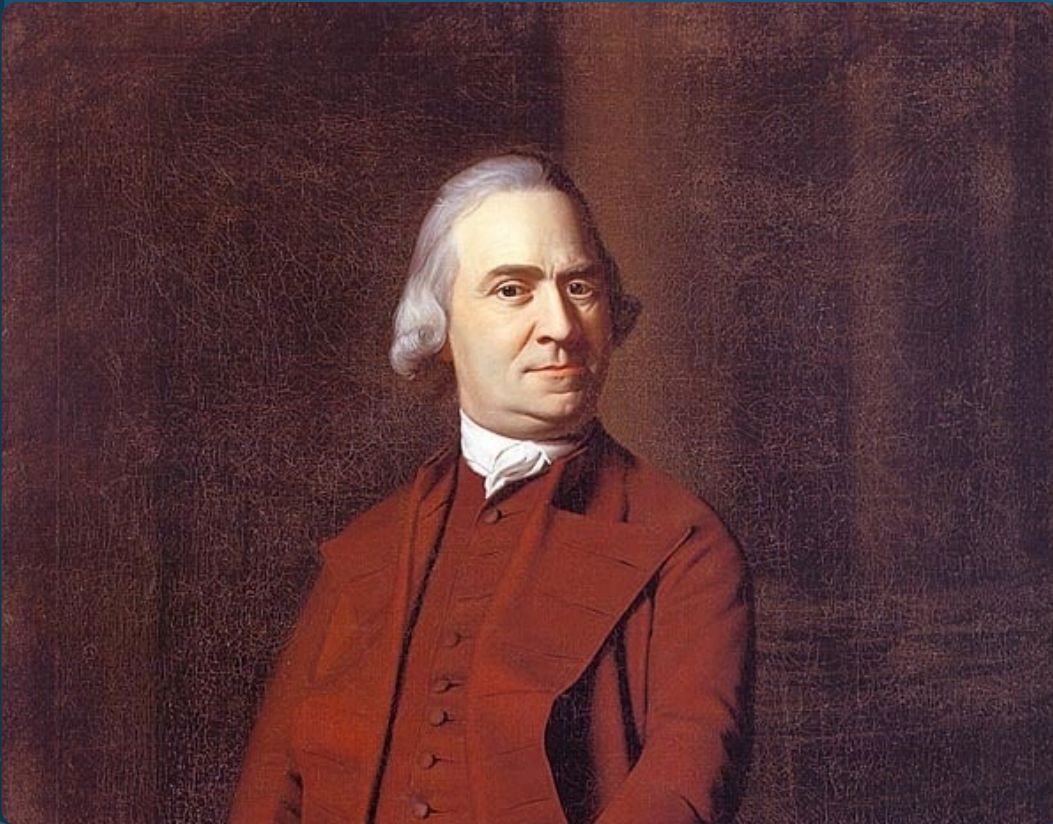


EVANGELIST GEORGE WHITEFIELD

Benjamin Franklin



SAMUEL ADAMS: THE STAMP ACT, THE SONS OF LIBERTY, THE LIBERTY TREE



THE COLONISTS UNDER LIBERTY TREE.

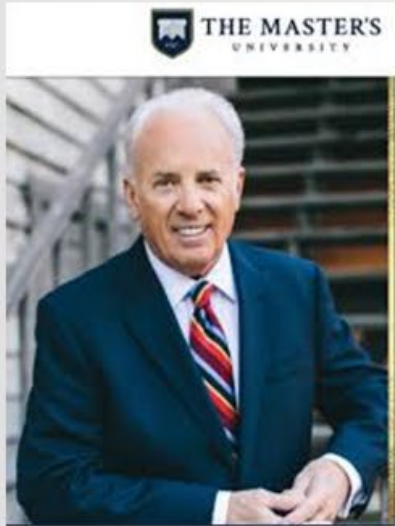
THE MAIN INTERPRETATIVE ASPECTS OF ROMANS 13 AND HOW THE AMERICAN FOUNDING FATHERS ENGAGED ROMANS 13.

- After all these years, Paul's teaching on the civil magistrate remains a fascinating historical and biblical context for interpreting the crisis between America's colonial governments and the British crown and parliament.
- Both sides of the civil strife were compelled to explicate the apostle's claims in Romans 13 as their controversy escalated from the Stamp Act of 1765 to the American Revolution birthed in 1776.
- Simply put, did the quest for American independence violate Scripture's teachings?



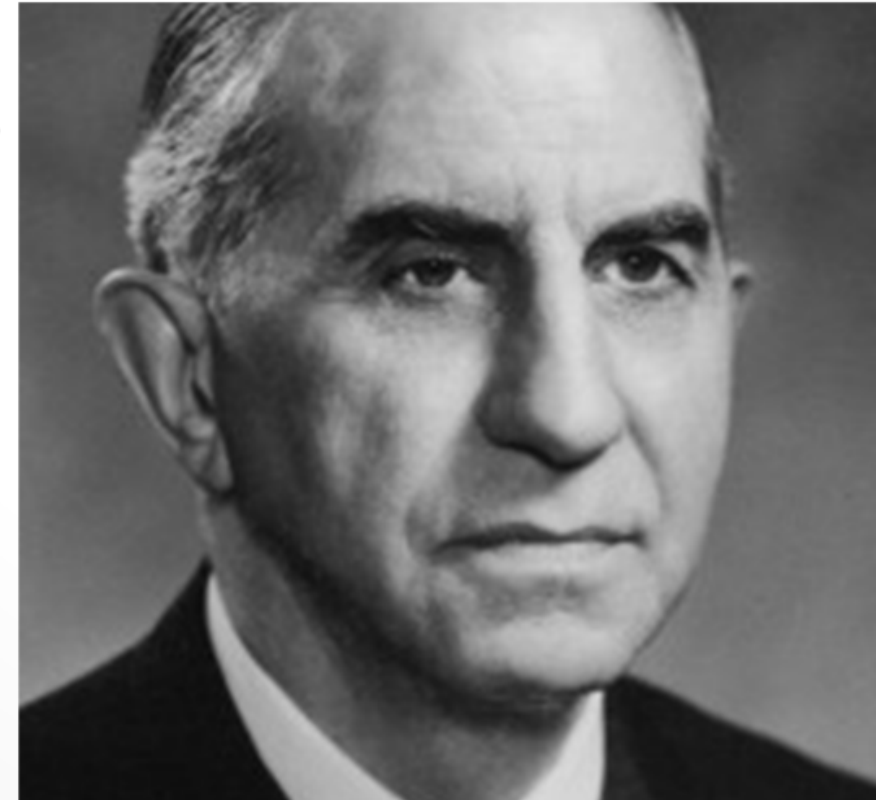
WAS THE WAR WITH ENGLAND IN THE COLONIAL ERA A REBELLION AGAINST GOD-GIVEN AUTHORITY AND THEREFORE A VIOLATION OF ROMANS 13?

- **John MacArthur:** “So the United States was actually born out of a violation of New Testament principles, and any blessings God has bestowed on America have come in spite of that disobedience by the Founding Fathers.”



- There are many questions which arise in actual practice with which Paul does not deal. In these verses there are no expressed qualifications or reservations to the duty of subjection. It is, however, characteristic of the apostle to be absolute in his terms when dealing with a particular obligation. At the same time, on the analogy of his own teaching elsewhere or on the analogy of Scripture, we are compelled to take account of exceptions to the absolute terms in which an obligation is affirmed. It must be so in this instance. We cannot but believe that he would have endorsed and practiced the word of Peter and other apostles: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29; cf. 4:19, 20). The magistrate is not infallible nor is he the agent of perfect rectitude. When there is conflict between the requirements of men and the commands of God, then the word of Peter must take effect.

CLASSIC REFORMED COMMENTATORS: JOHN MURRAY



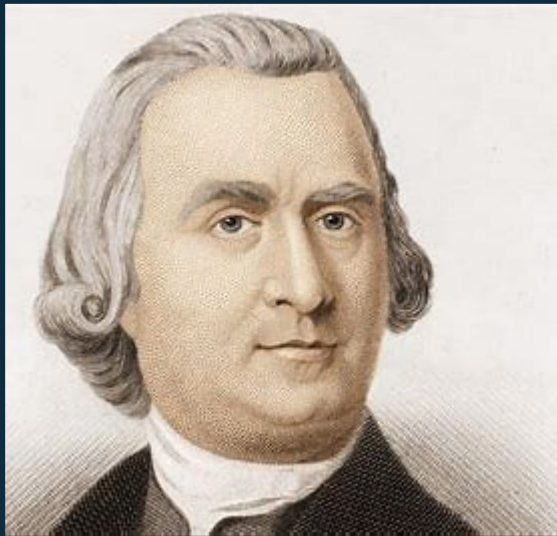
CALVIN: “POPULAR MAGISTRATES APPOINTED TO CURB THE TYRANNY OF KINGS”

- For when popular magistrates have been appointed to curb the tyranny of kings (as the Ephori, who were opposed to kings among the Spartans, or Tribunes of the people to consuls among the Romans, or Demarchs to the senate among the Athenians; and perhaps there is something similar to this in the power exercised in each kingdom by the three orders, when they hold their primary diets). So far am I from forbidding these officials to check the undue license of kings, that if they connive at kings when they tyrannise and insult over the humbler of the people, I affirm that their dissimulation is not free from nefarious perfidy, because they fraudulently betray the liberty of the people, while knowing that, by the ordinance of God, they are its appointed guardians.

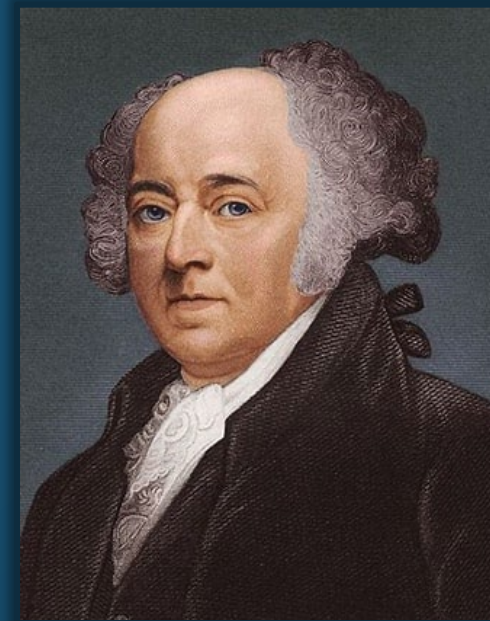


OPENING IN PRAYER AT THE FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS?

Samuel Adams—"I am no bigot. I can pray with any man who loves his God and his country."



John Adam's letter home to Abigail Adams about the opening prayer by Congress in Carpenter's Hall.



THE PUBLIC WITNESS OF GENERAL AND PRESIDENT GEORGE WASHINGTON

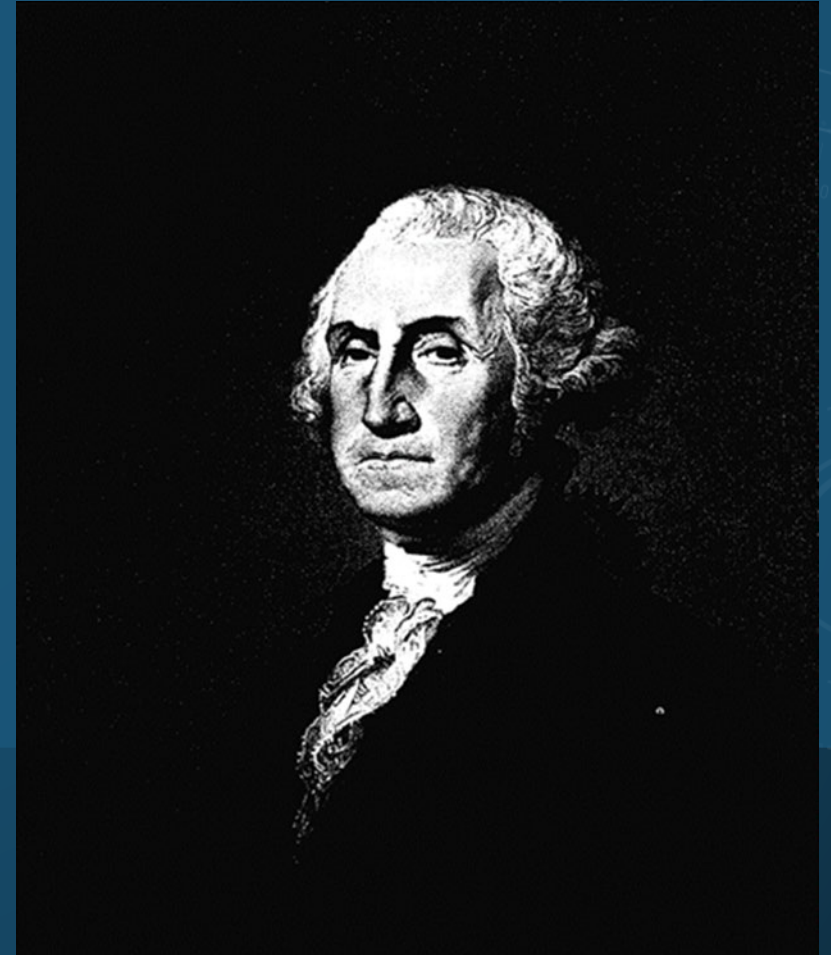
- General Washington



“Unless we imitate the Author of our blessed Religion, we can never hope to be a happy nation.”

“Religion and morality are indispensable supports for our political prosperity.”

- President Washington



Congress' Thanksgiving Proclamation—1777

IN CONGRESS – November 1, 1777

Forasmuch as it is the indispensable duty of all men to adore the superintending providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with gratitude their obligation to him for benefits received, and to implore such farther blessings as they stand in need of; and it having pleased him in his abundant mercy not only to continue to us the innumerable bounties of his common providence, but also smile upon us in the prosecution of a just and necessary war, for the defense and establishment of our unalienable rights and liberties; particularly in that he hath been pleased in so great a measure to prosper the means used for the support of our troops and to crown our arms with most signal success:



Congress' Thanksgiving Proclamation—1777

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive powers of these United States, to set apart Thursday, the 18th day of December next, for solemn thanksgiving and praise; that with one heart and one voice the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts, and consecrate themselves to the service of their divine benefactor; and that together with their sincere acknowledgments and offerings, they may join the penitent confession of their manifold sins, whereby they had forfeited every favor, and their humble and earnest supplication that it may please God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of remembrance; that it may please him graciously to afford his blessings on the governments of these states respectively, and prosper the public council of the whole; to inspire our commanders both by land and sea, and all under them, with that wisdom and fortitude which may render them fit instruments, under the providence of Almighty God, to secure for these United States the greatest of all blessings, independence and peace; that it may please him to prosper the trade and manufactures of the people and the labor of the husbandman, that our land may yield its increase; to take schools and seminaries of education, so necessary for cultivating the principles of true liberty, virtue and piety, under his nurturing hand, and to prosper the means of religion for the promotion and enlargement of that kingdom which consisteth in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.



PRINCETON'S PUBLIC THEOLOGIAN REV. DR. JOHN WITHERSPOON— "THE DOMINION OF PROVIDENCE OVER THE PASSIONS OF MEN"



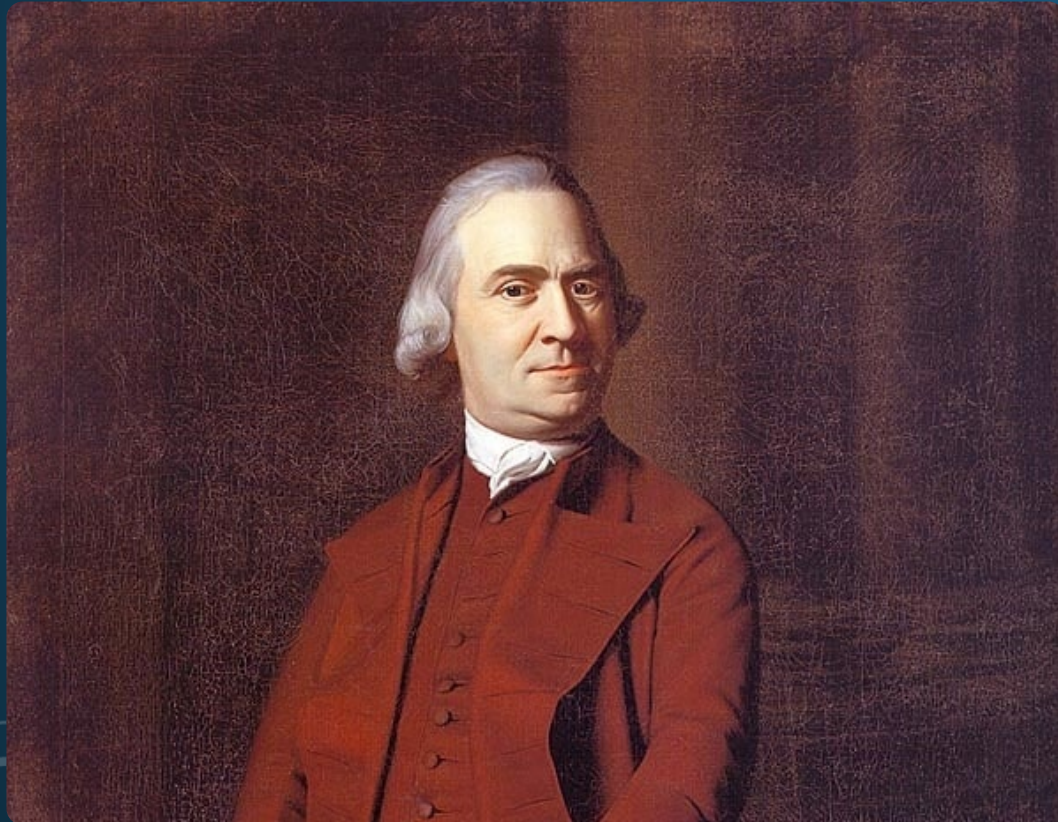
"SUFFER me to beseech you, There can be no true religion, till there be a discovery of your lost state by nature and practice, and an unfeigned acceptance of Christ Jesus, as he is offered in the gospel. Unhappy they who either despise his mercy, or are ashamed of his cross! Believe it, there is no salvation in any other. There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Unless you are united to him by a lively faith, not the resentment of a haughty (19) monarch, but the sword of divine justice hangs over you, and the fulness of divine vengeance shall speedily overtake you. I do not speak this only to the heaven-daring profligate, or grovelling sensualist, but to every insensible secure sinner; to all those however decent and orderly in their civil deportment, who live to themselves, and have their part and portion in this life; in fine, to all who are yet in a state of nature, for except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ...but nothing less than the sovereign grace of God can produce a saving change of heart and temper, or fit you for his immediate presence." **His Sermon before going to congress to vote for independence.**

The background is a dark blue gradient. In the top right corner, there is a white magnifying glass icon. Behind it and across the right side are several concentric white circles, some of which have numerical markings (0, 90, 180, 270) and arrows, resembling a compass or a clock face. In the bottom left corner, there are more faint concentric circles and arrows.

THERE ARE **FOUR** REFERENCES TO **GOD** IN *THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE*

- “Endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights”
- “The Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God”
- “The Supreme Judge of the World”
- “And with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to one another our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor”

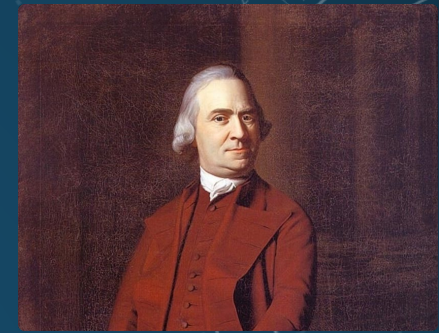
OUR FOREFATHERS THREW OFF THE YOKE OF POPERY IN RELIGION; FOR YOU IS RESERVED THE HONOR OF LEVELING THE POPERY OF POLITICS. THEY OPENED THE BIBLE TO ALL, AND MAINTAINED THE CAPACITY OF EVERY MAN TO JUDGE FOR HIMSELF IN RELIGION. ... HEAVEN HATH TRUSTED US WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF THINGS FOR ETERNITY, AND MAN DENIES US ABILITY TO JUDGE OF THE PRESENT, OR TO KNOW FROM OUR FEELINGS THE EXPERIENCE THAT WILL MAKE US HAPPY.



- Samuel Adams was selected to explain why the Congress had voted for independence on August 1, the day before Congress would sign the document that they had voted for on July 2, 1776, a month before. He spoke on the steps of what we call today, Independence Hall.

“

Samuel Adams Continued:



"This day, I trust, the reign of political protestantism will commence. We have explored the temple of royalty, and found that the idol we have bowed down to has eyes which see not, ears// that hear not our prayers, and a heart like the nether millstone.

We have this day restored the Sovereign to whom alone men ought to be obedient. He reigns in Heaven, and with a propitious eye beholds his subjects assuming that freedom of thought and dignity of self-direction which he bestowed on them. From the rising to the setting sun, may his kingdom come!"

Washington's Orders at Valley Forge

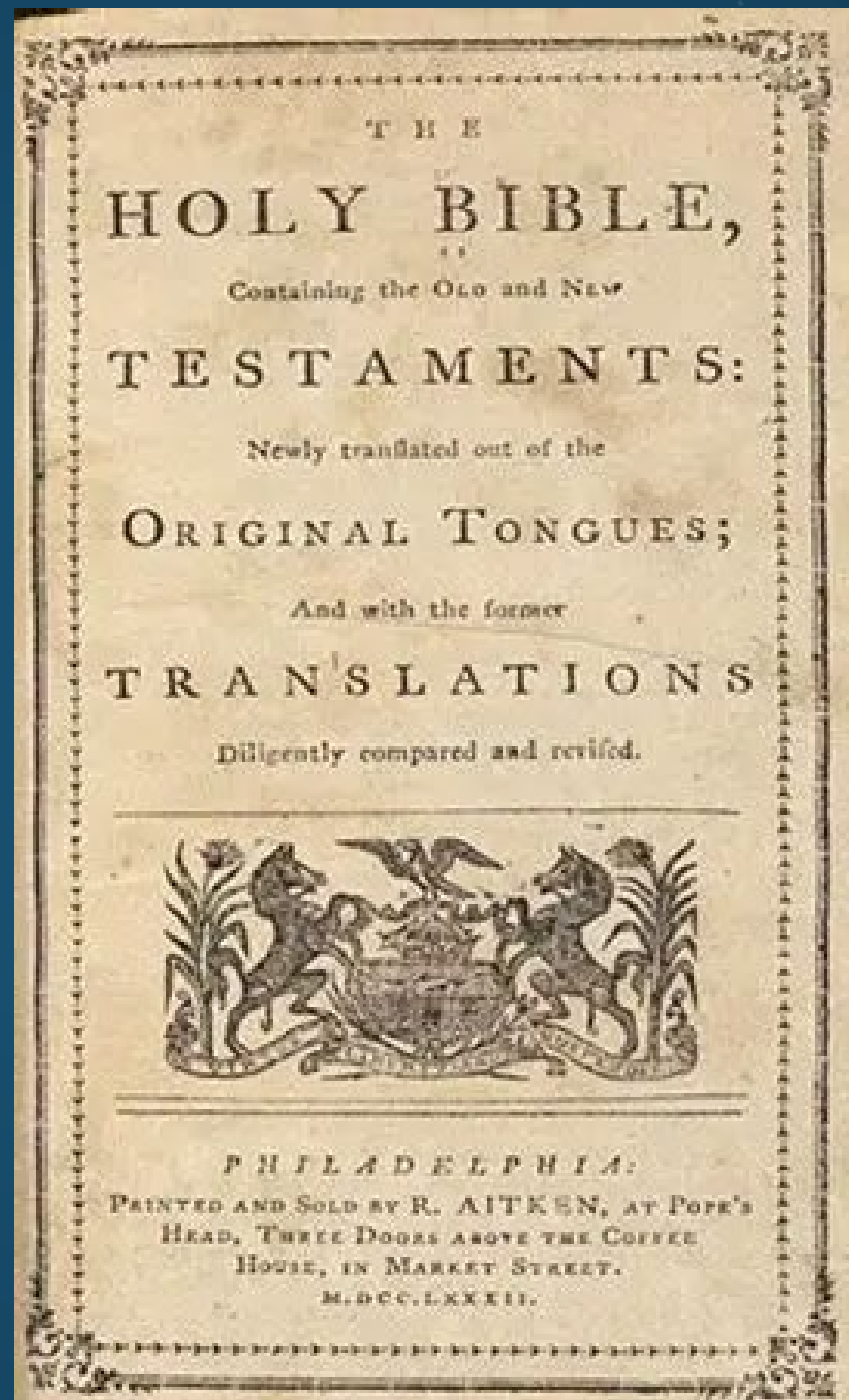
July 9, 1776, GW had called on his men to be "Christian soldiers". Nearly two years later at Valley Forge he declared on May 2, 1778, in his general orders, "The Commander in Chief directs that divine Service be performed every Sunday at 11 oClock in those Brigades to which there are Chaplains—those which have none to attend the places of worship nearest to them—It is expected that Officers of all Ranks will by their attendance set an Example to their men.

While we are zealously performing the duties of good Citizens and soldiers we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of Religion—**To the distinguished Character of Patriot, it should be our highest Glory to add the more distinguished Character of Christian**—The signal Instances of providential Goodness which we have experienced and which have now almost crowned our labours with complete Success, demand from us in a peculiar manner the warmest returns of Gratitude & Piety to the Supreme Author of all Good.



CONGRESS' BIBLE—1782

- Cover page of The Aitken Bible



CONGRESS' BIBLE—1782—ROBERT AITKEN'S BIBLE

- Congress gave Aitken a ringing endorsement in the form of a congressional resolution to “publish this Recommendation in the manner he shall think proper” to help sell and circulate the Bible. The complete text of this Congressional resolution is:
- Whereupon,
RESOLVED,
THAT the United States in Congress assembled highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the interest of religion, as well as an instance of the progress of arts in this country, and being satisfied from the above report of his care and accuracy in the execution of the work, they recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States, and hereby authorize him to publish this Recommendation in the manner he shall think proper.

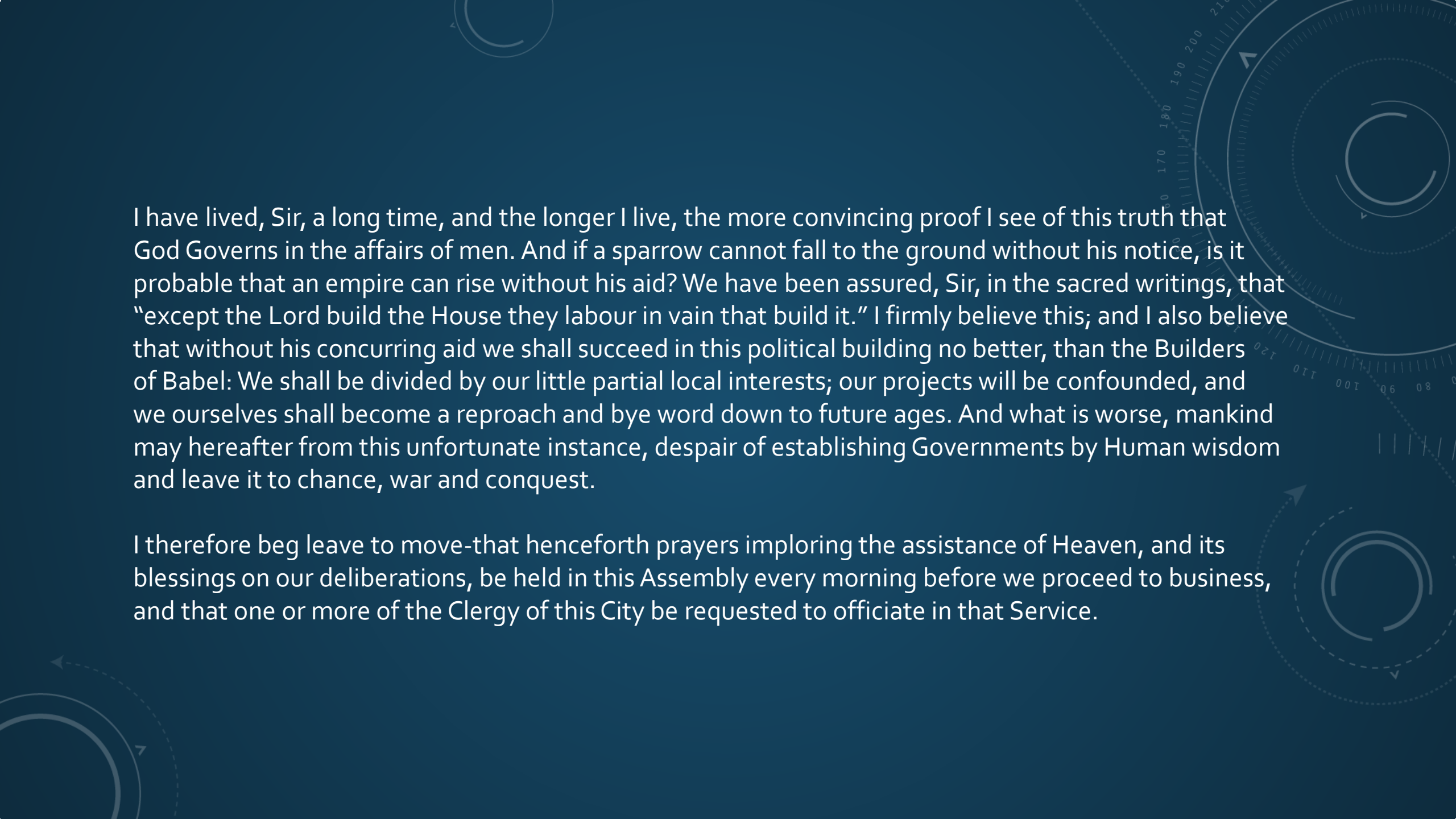
**BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN'S
CALL FOR PRAYER
AT THE
CONSTITUTIONAL
CONVENTION
JUNE 28, 1787**



Mr. President:

The small progress we have made after four or five weeks close attendance & continual reasonings with each other—our different sentiments on almost every question, several of the last producing as many noes as ayes, is methinks a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the Human Understanding. We indeed seem to feel our own want of political wisdom, since we have been running about in search of it. We have gone back to ancient history for models of Government, and examined the different forms of those Republics which having been formed with the seeds of their own dissolution now no longer exist. And we have viewed Modern States all round Europe, but find none of their Constitutions suitable to our circumstances.

In this situation of this Assembly, groping as it were in the dark to find political truth, and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us, 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 Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger we had daily prayer in this room for the divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, & they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending providence in our favor. To that kind providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful friend? Or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance?



I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proof 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: We shall be divided by our little partial local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and bye word down to future ages. And what is worse, mankind may hereafter from this unfortunate instance, despair of establishing Governments by Human wisdom and leave it to chance, war and conquest.

I therefore beg leave to move—that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the Clergy of this City be requested to officiate in that Service.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

- The Preamble
- Checks and Balances—Human Depravity
- “Sundays excepted”
- Provision to affirm rather than an oath.
- Concluding Date Unanimously Affirmed, “In the Year of **Our Lord, 1787**”

CONSIDER THE BIBLICAL VALUES OF THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION

- We the People of the United States, = Unity and Community, **Psalm 133:1**
- in Order to form a more perfect Union, = Realistic, not Utopian, **Psalm 119:96**
- establish Justice, = “Do Justice, love mercy, walk humbly” **Micah 6:8**
- insure domestic Tranquility, = “Live at peace with all men” **Romans 12:18**
- provide for the common defence, **Psalm 82:3**, “Defend the weak and fatherless”
- promote the general Welfare, = “Do good to all men” **Galatians 6:10**
- and secure the Blessings of Liberty, “Proclaim Liberty” **Leviticus 25:10**
- to ourselves and our Posterity, “to us and to our children” = covenant **Gen. 17:7**
- do ordain and establish = “do all things decently and in good order” **1 Cor. 14:40**
- this Constitution for the United States of America = *a fortiori*—God’s Constitution is **Deuteronomy**

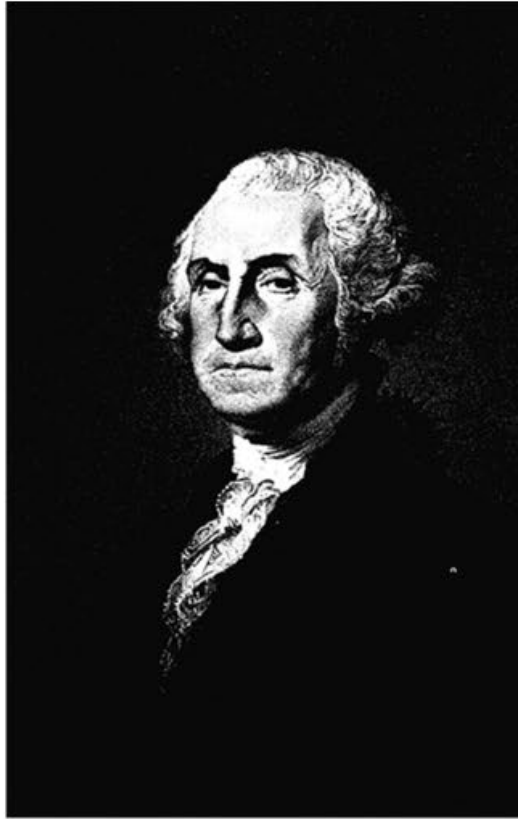
IS THERE AN “OFFICIAL” AMERICAN THEOLOGY?

- 1. God is over the Nation—“One nation under God”. (Pledge of Allegiance.)
- 2. God is Creator—“Endowed by our Creator”. (Declaration of Independence.)
- 3. Rights are from God—“Endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights.” (D.I.)
- 4. God is a Law-Giver—“the laws of nature and of nature’s God”. (D.I.)
- 5. God is Supreme Judge—“appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions.” (D.I.)
- 6. God governs in the affairs of men—“With a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence.” (D.I.)
- 7. Self Government under God—“Religion and Morality are indispensable supports for political prosperity.” (President George Washington and President John Adams.)
- 8. Purpose for America—“Blessings of Liberty” see the biblical values listed in the Preamble of the Constitution.
- 9. God is to be trusted—“In God We Trust” (The National Motto.)
- 10. “Imitate the Divine Author of our blessed Religion”—General George Washington .



THE LOGIC OF LIBERTY

- Do you want to be **free**? You need a **Republic**.
- Do you want a **Republic**? You need a **Constitution**.
- Do you want a **Constitution**? You need **Moral People**.
- Do you want **Moral People**? You need **religion**.
- Washington's Farewell Address, "Religion and Morality are indispensable supports for our political prosperity."



President Washington to the Clergy of Philadelphia

- “Believing, as I do, that Religion and Morality are the essential pillars of civil society, I view, with unspeakable pleasure, that harmony and brotherly love which characterizes the Clergy of different denominations, as well in this, as in other parts of the United States; exhibiting to the world a new and interesting spectacle, at once the pride of our country and the surest basis of Universal Harmony.”

POLITICAL PROSPERITY?

George Washington's, Farewell Address:

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. ...reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”



From (President) John Adams to Massachusetts Militia, 11 October 1798


To the Officers of the first Brigade of the third Division of the Militia of Massachusetts

Quincy October 11. 1798

Gentlemen

I have received from Major General Hull and Brigadier General Walker your unanimous Address from Lexington, animated with a martial Spirit and expressed with a military Dignity, becoming your Characters and the memorable Plains, in which it was adopted.

While our Country remains untainted with the Principles and manners, which are now producing desolation in so many Parts of the World: while she continues Sincere and incapable of insidious and impious Policy: We shall have the Strongest Reason to rejoice in the local destination assigned Us by Providence. But should the People of America, once become capable of that deep simulation towards one another and towards foreign nations, which assumes the Language of Justice and moderation while it is practicing Iniquity and Extravagance; and displays in the most captivating manner the charming Pictures of Candour frankness & sincerity while it is rioting in rapine and Insolence: this Country will be the most miserable Habitation in the World.



Because We have no Government armed with Power capable of contending with human Passions unbridled by morality and Religion. Avarice, Ambition, Revenge or Galantry, would break the strongest Cords of our Constitution as a Whale goes through a Net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other

An Address so unanimous and firm from the officers commanding two thousand Eight hundred Men, consisting of such substantial Citizens as are able and willing at their own Expence, compleatly to arm, And cloath themselves in handsome Uniforms does honor to that Division of the Militia which has done so much honor to their Country. Oaths, in this Country, are as yet universally considered as Sacred Obligations. That which you have taken and so solemnly repeated on that venerable Spot is an ample Pledge of your sincerity, and devotion to your Country and its Government.

John Adams

ALEXIS DE TOQUEVILLE

(1805-1859)



"It is religion which has given birth to Anglo-American societies; one must never lose sight of that; in the United States religion is thus intimately linked to all national habits and all the emotions which one's native country arouses; that gives it a particular strength.... Christianity has therefore maintained a strong sway over the American mind and—something I wish to note above all—it rules not only like a philosophy taken up after evaluation but like a religion believed without discussion. In the United States, Christian sects are infinitely varied and are endlessly modified, while **Christianity itself is an established and unassailable fact** which no one undertakes either to attack or defend. The Americans, have accepted without question the main teachings of the Christian religion, are obliged to accept in the same way a great number of moral truths which derive from it and hold it together." (*Democracy in America*.)