

AMERICA'S CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

PART 6

2/19/2017

It is important that we remember our Biblical and spiritual heritage. In this our sixth study we look at the part Scriptures played in our foundation.

I. WHAT PRESIDENTS HAVE SAID ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES.

- A. President Andrew Jackson—"That book, sir, is the rock upon which our republic rests."
- B. President Calvin Coolidge—"The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible."
- C. President Franklin Roosevelt—"We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a nation, without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic..Where we have been the truest and most consistent in obeying its precepts, we have attained the greatest measure of contentment and prosperity."
- D. President Thomas Jefferson—"I have examined all religions, as well as my narrow sphere, my straightened means, and my busy life, would allow; and the result is that the Bible is the best Book in the world. It contains more philosophy than all the libraries I have seen."
- E. President John Quincy Adams—
 - 1. "The first and almost the only Book deserving of universal attention is the Bible."
 - 2. "The Bible carries with it the history of the creation, the fall and redemption of man , and discloses to him, in the infant born at Bethlehem, the Legislator and Saviour of the world."

- F. President Dwight Eisenhower—“The purpose of a devout and united people was set forth in the pages of the Bible.. (1) to live in freedom (2) to work in a prosperous land and (3) to obey the commandments of God...This Biblical story of the Promise Land inspired the founders of America. It continues to inspire us.”
- G. President Woodrow Wilson—“A man had deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of this, a knowledge of the Bible. When you have read the Bible, you will know it is the Word of God, because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness and your own duty.”
- H. President Ronald Regan--“Within the covers of the Bible are the answers for all the problems men face.”

II. THE BIBLE’S ROLE IN FOUNDING AMERICA

- A. Newsweek magazine in an article published in 1982 stated; “Historians are discovering that the Bible, perhaps even more than the Constitution, is our founding document.”
- B. Our Founders quoted sources which quoted the Bible.
1. Locke, in his Second Treatise on Civil Government, “Laws must be made according to the general Laws of Nature, and without contradiction to any positive Law of Scripture, otherwise they are ill made.”
 2. Montesquieu, in his classic 1748 treatise, The Spirit of the Laws; “We owe to Christianity, in government, a certain political law.”
 3. Blackstone, in his Commentaries on the Laws of England wrote, “Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws.”
- C. The Chaplain of the Continental Congress recommended to them that they import 20,000 copies of the Scriptures into this nation. Their resolution stated; “The use of the Bible is so universal and its importance so great

that your committee refers the above to the consideration of Congress, and if Congress shall not think it expedient to order the importation of types and paper, the Committee recommends that Congress will order the Committee of Commerce to import 20,000 Bibles from Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere, into the different parts of the States of the Union.”

D. Robert Aitken a publisher in Pennsylvania petitioned Congress for permission to print Bibles since there was a shortage in America.

1. The Continental Congress gave their approval on September 10, 1782 and stated that the Bible would be “a neat edition of the Holy Scriptures for the use of schools.”

2. Congress also stated; “Whereupon, Resolved, That the United States in Congress assembled...recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States, and hereby authorize Robert Aitken to publish this recommendation in the manner he shall think proper.”

III. SCRIPTURES SATURATED THE THINKING OF OUR FOREFATHERS

A. Constitution signer James McHenry from Maryland stated, “The Holy Scriptures...can alone secure to society, order and peace, and to our courts of justice and constitutions of government, purity, stability, and usefulness.”

B. James Madison and the constitution.

1. Madison proposed a “separation of powers” dividing the government into three separate branches

2. His idea came from Isaiah 33:22—For the Lord is our judge (judicial), the Lord is our lawgiver (legislative), the Lord is our king (executive)

3. Madison recognized the sinfulness of human nature and said; “It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to

control the abuses of government...If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”

- C. The Constitution gave deference to America’s Christian traditions.
 - 1. An illustration is found in Article I, Section 7 which specifies that the President has ten days to sign a bill into law, “Sundays excepted.”
- D. The founders acting on the Scriptures wanted to ensure that Sunday was honored by the nations’ government.

IV. WHAT CONGRESS OF LATE HAS STATED ABOUT THE BIBLE.

- A. On October 4, 1982 President Ronald Reagan signed a Joint Resolution of the 97th Congress in the “Year of the Bible,” stating; “Whereas the Bible, the Word of God, has made a unique contribution in shaping the United States as a distinctive and blessed nation and people; Whereas deeply held religious convictions springing from the Holy Scripture’s led to the early settlement of our Nation; Whereas Biblical teachings inspired concepts of civil Government that are contained in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States...Now, Therefore, be it Resolved...to designate 1983 as a national “Year of the Bible” in recognition of both the formative influence the Bible has been for our Nation, and our national need to study and apply the teachings of the Holy Scriptures.”
- B. In 1954 both houses of Congress in a joint resolution set aside; “ A room with facilities for prayer and meditation for the use of Members of the Senate and House of Representatives.”
 - 1. In that room there is an open Bible upon an altar.
 - 2. There is also a stained glass window showing George Washington kneeling in prayer.
 - 3. Etched in the glass is a verse from Psalm 16:1—“Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I put my trust.”