

## ***“God in the Fourth”***

{Men’s Sunday, James Harper, Guest Speaker}

***Ezekiel 11:2, 20:19-20; II Corinthians 6:16***

July 5, 2020

What does Christianity and the Bible have to do with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and the Declaration of Independence? Before we go there, let’s take a look at why we are here on this continent.

A few months back, Mike Stanford gave us a lesson on the Pilgrims. Were you paying attention?

We learned in school that the Pilgrims came here in 1620 for religious freedom. They had already found this freedom in Holland in 1618, but they also found something else. They found out that the people in Holland also had a very liberal view of the Bible. In 1620 the Pilgrims went back to England because they were afraid their children would learn this liberal view. They gathered supplies and sailed for America. I believe they were some of the first evangelist here.

On the first Thanksgiving there were about 100 Indians and 55 Pilgrims. Don’t you think those Pilgrims explained why they were giving thanks and who they were thanking? The things we say and do and the way we react to different situations are led by our beliefs. As Christians, our belief in God and Jesus Christ has an effect on our lives and the way we deal with the world around us.

This was the same for the Pilgrims and for our founding fathers. We can see this in the wording of the Declaration of Independence.

In 1946 a 29-year-old Kennedy said in a speech: “The informing spirit of the American character has always been a deep religious sense. Throughout the years down to the present, a devotion to fundamental religious principles has characterized American thought and action.”

To explain this, he said “Our government was founded on the essential religious idea of integrity of the individual. It was the religious sense which inspired the authors of the Declaration of Independence. We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.”

In 1960 at his inaugural address he said: “The same revolutionary beliefs for which our forefathers fought are still at issue around the globe – the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.”

He was right. The Declaration of Independence has four separate references to God. Endowed by their Creator, the laws of nature, God, an appeal to the Supreme Judge of the world, and firm reliance on the protection of divine providence. These references to God aren’t a fluke, this shows who these men were.

They had a strong belief in God and they studied the Bible. Not just read it, studied it.

When George Washington announced the Declaration to his troops he wrote: “The General hopes and trusts that every officer and man, will endeavor to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country.”

After the signing of the Declaration, the Liberty Bell was rung. On this Bell is the inscription: “Proclaim Liberty Throughout the Land and To All Inhabitants Thereof.” This is Leviticus 25:10.

John Adams said “The general principals on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity.” Adams also said the 4<sup>th</sup> of July should be celebrated as a religious holiday to commemorate the day as a “day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty.”

The last paragraph says “and for the support of this Declaration with a firm reliance of the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

Who were these men? Of the 56 signers, 27 were trained as ministers. As I said earlier, they didn’t just read the Bible, they studied it, and they also believed what it said.

William Samuel Johnson said “Remember – that you are the redeemed of the Lord (Ephesians 1:7); you are bought with a price (Corinthians 6:20).”

James Wilson, signer of the Constitution and the Declaration said “Our all Gracious Creator, Preserver and Ruler has been pleased to discover and enforce His laws by a revelation given to us immediately and directly from Himself. This revelation is contained in the Holy Bible.”

I could go on with quote after quote from our founding fathers that point to the same thing.

God and His Holy Word had a large influence on our founding fathers and the forming of this great nation.

Wars have mottos. Remember Pearl Harbor, Remember the Alamo? This war's motto was no king but King Jesus.

So, what did God and the Bible have to do with our independence? A group of ordinary men and women with a devout belief in God were able to do an extraordinary thing. Farmers, merchants and the like were able to defeat the strongest army and nation in the world at that time. They relied on God to help them and gave thanks to God for what they did.

In the 1830's a Frenchman came here looking for what makes America great. He looked in the harbors and rivers, the fertile fields, the boundless forest, the rich mines, world commerce, the public schools and institutions and it was not there. The genius of Congress and the matchless Constitution and it wasn't there.

“Not until I went into the churches of America and heard the pulpits flame with righteousness, did I understand the secret of the genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.”

Congress of 1854, the great, vital and conservative element in our system, is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and the divine truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Congress, U.S. House of Judiciary Committee of 1854, had the people, during the Revolution, had a suspicion of any attempt to war against Christianity, that revolution would have been strangled in its cradle.

In this age, there can be no substitute for Christianity. That was the religion of the founders of the Republic and they expected it to remain the religion of their descendants.

About 4 years ago during a discussion on prayer in public, one of our Congressman said, “You can pray, just pray to a generic God.”

Do you think our founding fathers prayed to a generic God? I don't.

***“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.”*** Psalm 33:12

Amen.