

The First Baptist Church of Columbus

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Sermon Notes Outline for video posted July 10, 2022

T I T L E: THE BIBLICAL HERITAGE OF AMERICA AND THE SPIRITUAL OBLIGATION IT INVOLVES

T E X T: Psalm 33:12; Proverbs 14:34

I. A HISTORY LESSON RELATIVE TO THE SPIRITUAL AND/OR BIBLICAL HERITAGE OF THE UNITED STATES

THE BIBLICAL HERITAGE OF OUR NATION DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT ALL OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS WERE CHRISTIANS, BUT IT DOES MEAN THEY BELIEVED IN GOD AND ESTABLISHED OUR NATION ON PRINCIPLES ROOTED IN SCRIPTURE.

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed in the city of Philadelphia, marking the birth of our nation. We often forget that, in declaring independence from an earthly power, our forefathers made a forthright declaration of dependence upon Almighty God. The closing words of this document solemnly declare: "With firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

Eleven years later, in the summer of 1787 representatives met in Philadelphia to write the constitution of the United States. After they had struggled for several weeks and had made little or no progress, eighty-one-year-old Benjamin Franklin rose and addressed the troubled and disagreeing convention that was about to adjourn in confusion.

"In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine Protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard and 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... have we now forgotten this powerful friend? Or do we imagine we no longer need His assistance.?"

"I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of man. 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 a house, they labor in vain that build it. I passionately believe this.

"I therefore beg leave to move that, henceforth, prayer imploring the assistance of heaven and its blessings on our deliberations be held in this assembly every morning."

The very purpose of the Pilgrims coming to America in 1620 was to establish a government based on the Bible. The New England Charter, signed by King James I, confirmed their goal as, "to advance the enlargement of Christian religion, to the glory of God almighty..." The Mayflower Compact begins with the words, "In ye name of God, amen."

One of George Washington's early official acts was the first Thanksgiving Proclamation, which reads, "Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits and humbly implore his protection and favor..." And then he goes on to call the nation to thankfulness to God for his blessings.

—Gary DeMar President of American Vision and author of Americas Christian History — The Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States — Benjamin Franklin Morris' Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States has been out of print for more than one hundred years. It you can find an original copy; it is only because you have looked in the deep recesses of university libraries where the volume is collecting dust on dimly lit library shelves. Organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State have done their best to ignore the content of the massive compilation of original source material found in this book. If Americans ever become aware of the content assembled by the author, the arguments for a secular founding of America will turn to dust."

Benjamin Franklin Morris We have a noble historic life' for our ancestors were the worthies of the world. We have a noble nation full of the evidence of the molding presence of Christian truth and of the power and goodness of Divine wisdom in rearing up a Christian republic for all time. That this was the spirit and aim of the early founders of our institutions, the facts in this volume fully testify.

Do you still have doubts about the spiritual heritage of our nation?

II. A SHOW AND TELL MOMENT REFLECTING THE BIBLICAL HERITAGE OF OUR NATION.

Look, then, at a one-dollar bill. In the middle of the bill, you will find our motto, "In God we trust." On the right side is the seal of the United States. On the left side is the back side of that seal, a pyramid with a gigantic eye at the top of it. The eye represents the eye of God. Above the pyramid is the inscription in Latin, "He smiles on our beginnings." And beneath it in Latin are these words, "A new order of the ages."

Our founding fathers labored under the conviction that they were beginning something new, something unique, and that it was being done under the watchful eye of God. It is that faith that makes us strong and it is that faith that will keep us strong.

III. A BIBLICAL HERITAGE NATION-WISE OR PERSONAL-WISE OBLIGATES ITS RECIPIENTS WITH A RESPONSIBILITY TO HOLY BEHAVIOR OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES.

A. It is a holy behavior involving a responsible stewardship of the gospel.

I share the conviction of Charles Haddon Spurgeon who said in 1884, "I assuredly believe that England has been raised up as a nation and brought to her present unique position that she may be a means of spreading the gospel throughout the nations of the earth, I judge that God has blessed two great nations of Anglo-Saxon race, England and the United States, and given them

preeminence in commerce and in liberty on purpose that in such a time as this they may spread abroad the glorious knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

B. It is a holy behavior involving a practical, personal, and Christ-like behavior that encourages a lost and dying world to faith in Jesus Christ.

I like the poem of Edgar A. Guest entitled, "A Living Sermon." He wrote: I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day; I'd rather one walk with me than merely tell me the way; The eye's a better pupil, and more willing, than the ear; Fine counsel is confusing, but example always clear; The best of all preachers are the men who live their creeds, For to see good put in action is what everybody needs. I soon can learn to do it if you will let me see it done; I can watch your hand in action, but your tongue too fast may run. The lectures you deliver may be incredibly wise and true, But I would rather get my lessons by observing what you do. I may not understand the high advice you give, but there is no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

Conclusion: In 1831 the French government sent Alexis de Tocqueville to examine our prisons and penitentiaries. But he became intrigued by our system of government and its institutions and therefore devoted considerable time to analyzing life in America.

On his return Tocqueville wrote his classic, "Democracy in America," which scholars feel is the greatest book of any on national policy and culture. In it he said, "I sought for the greatness and genius in America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there ... I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her democratic congress and her matchless constitution, and it was not there ...

"Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power.

America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great." He was right: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is the reproach of any people."