

THANKSGIVING SERVICE 2007

RESTORING AMERICA'S AWARENESS OF GOD
AND HIS PRESENCES IN THE FORMATION OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

MESSAGE # JHX207 - NOVEMBER 18, 2007

THE TITLE OF THE MESSAGE:

"WHAT AMERICANS REMEMBER"

*THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA
AND THE CHRISTIANS CALL TO THANKSGIVING.*

SUBJECT TOPICALLY REFERENCED UNDER:

Thankfulness, Gratitude, Providence, America

Introduction to the Text; Psalm 116:17

Statement of Textual Summation and Theme

Psalms 116:17

I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the LORD.

Psalms 103:1-5

Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name! :2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: :3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, :4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies, :5 Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*, So *that* your youth is renewed like the eagle's

What Americans Remember

1.) Is the Providence of God

1a.) He called for the birth of a nation

American History is under Attack Today.
Because It Is a History That Honors God.

America has been the most...
productive, influential, involved, compassionate,

1b.) He called for a spiritual awakening

America has been used by God in these last 300 years
to be a light to the world and defender of Christianity

The Great Awakenings of the Last 300 years...

1c.) He called for a Christian witness

Up Until the last 50 years, America was Known as a Christian Nation,

"a patriot must be a religious man." wrote Thomas Jefferson.

"God who gave us life gave us liberty," again "And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the Gift of God?"

James Madison (acclaimed as "The Father of the Constitution") declared that **"religion is the basis and Foundation of Government,"** and later (1825, after retiring from the Presidency) wrote that **"the belief in a God All Powerful, wise and good.... is essential to the moral order of the World and the happiness of men."**

Psalms 144:15

Happy *are* the people who are in such a state; Happy *are* the people whose God *is* the LORD!

What Americans Remember

2.) Is the Faithfulness of God

The Faithfulness of God

2a.) Having ordained the pilgrims search

As to their purpose in going to America,

Pastor John Robinson compared the Pilgrim's Vision
to the exiled Jews of Ezra and Nehemiah's day:

Known as the Pilgrims Pastor John Robinson Wrote

"Now as the people of God in old time were called out of Babylon, the place of their bodily bondage and were to come to Jerusalem and there build the Lord's temple, so we are the people of God now to go out of this spiritual Babylon to a America a new Jerusalem for us and there to build ourselves as lively stones into a spiritual house or for the Lord to dwell in." - **Pastor John Robinson**

From that time on, William Bradford began to refer to the church members as "Pilgrims." The Greek word for Pilgrim in the New Testament means a stranger, a

foreigner, an exile residing in a country not his own. The word appears three times (Heb. 11:13; 1 Peter 1:1, 2:11), but Bradford specifically recalled upon Hebrews 11:13-16: ***“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”***” The next verse he adds: ***“For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country”*** Heb. 11:14. With their confidence in God, they prepared themselves spiritual for the departure. Bradford continued with, ***Hebrews 11:16 adds: “But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”***

The Faithfulness of God

2b.) Having ordained the founding fathers hope

John Adams and John Hancock: We Recognize No Sovereign but God, and no King but ***Jesus!*** [April 18, 1775]

John Adams: “ The general principles upon which the Fathers achieved independence were the general principals of Christianity... I will avow that I believed and now believe that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.”• “[July 4th] ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty.”—*John Adams in a letter written to Abigail on the day the Declaration was approved by Congress*

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, 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.**" --*October 11, 1798*

“ He who made all men hath made the truths necessary to human happiness obvious to all... Our forefathers opened the Bible to all.” – Samuel Adams

The Pilgrims

In a letter applying for financing for this venture to America, Pastor Robinson and Elder Brewster expressed their reasons for their confidence in making the move to America:

1. We verily believe and trust that the Lord is with us, unto Whom and Whose service we have given ourselves, in many trials, and that He will graciously prosper our endeavors according to the simplicity of our hearts.
2. We are well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother country, and accustomed to the difficulties of a strange and hard land, which yet in a great part we have by, patience overcome.
3. The people are, for the body of them, [as] industrious and frugal; we think we may safely say, as any company of people in the world.
4. We are knit together as a body in a most strict and sacred bond and in covenant with the Lord, with the desecration whereof we make with great conscience, and by virtue whereof, we do hold ourselves straightly tied to the care of each others good, and of the whole by everyone and so mutually.
5. Lastly, it is not with us as with other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontentment's cause to wish themselves at home again...ⁱ

Simply Put,
 “We’re Leaving and we’re not coming back”

Of this event, One of the great paintings in the Rotunda of the U. S. Capitol depicts this moving scene of pastor Robinson and people in prayer on board the Speedwell before departing for America. Clearly seen in the painting is a Geneva Bible opened to John 3:16 and The name of Jesus Christ plainly seen on the open page of a large Bible. This painting in the Capitol is further proof of our nation’s Christian heritage.

The Faithfulness of God

2c.) Having ordained a Christian nation

John Jay: “ Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.” Source: October 12, 1816. The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay,

Benjamin Franklin: | Portrait of Ben Franklin “ 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 in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel” –*Constitutional Convention of 1787 | original manuscript of this speech*

“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... do we imagine we no longer need His assistance?”

What Americans Remember

3.) Is the Mercy of God

3a.) In times of war

George Washington, 1st President of the U.S.; was the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War. After the Battle of Monongahela in 1755, in which George Washington's life had been spared while everyone else was killed, wrote to his brother, John:

"But by the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, although death was leveling my companions on every side of me."

June of 1779, at the headquarters, General Washington's wrote in his prayer book: "And now Almighty Father, if it is Thy holy will that we shall obtain a place and name among the nations of the earth, grant that we may be enabled to show our gratitude for Thy goodness by our endeavors to fear and obey Thee. Bless us with Thy wisdom in our consuls, success in battle, and let all our victories be tempered with humanity. Endow, also, our enemies with enlightened minds, that they become sensible of their injustice and willing to restore our liberty and peace. Grant the petition of Thy servant, for the sake of Him whom Thou hast called Thy beloved Son; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done."

Is the Mercy of God

3b.) In times of difficulty

Is the Mercy of God

3c.) In times of national disobedience

What Americans Remember

4.) Is the Word of God

4a.) The Bible in American government

At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, James Madison proposed the plan to divide the central government into three branches. He discovered this model of government from the Perfect Governor, as he read *Isaiah* 33:22; "For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us."

- In 1812, President Madison signed a federal bill which economically aided the Bible Society of Philadelphia in its goal of the mass distribution of the Bible. “ An Act for the relief of the Bible Society of Philadelphia”
Approved February 2, 1813 by Congress

Robert Treat Paine

Signer of the Declaration of Independence

I desire to bless and praise the name of God most high for appointing me my birth in a land of Gospel Light where the glorious tidings of a Savior and of pardon and salvation through Him have been continually sounding in mine ears.

James Madison “ We’ve staked our future on our ability to follow the Ten Commandments with all of our heart.”

“We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We’ve staked the future of all our political institutions upon our capacity...to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.” [1778 to the General Assembly of the State of Virginia]

4b.) The Bible in American schools

Benjamin Rush:• “I lament that we waste so much time and money in punishing crimes and take so little pains to prevent them...we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government; that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible; for this Divine Book, above all others, constitutes the soul of republicanism.” “By withholding the knowledge of [the Scriptures] from children, we deprive ourselves of the best means of awakening moral sensibility in their minds.” [Letter written (1790’s) in Defense of the Bible in all schools in America]• “Christianity is the only true and perfect religion.”• “If moral precepts alone could have reformed mankind, the mission of the Son of God into our world would have been unnecessary.”

In Benjamin Franklin's **1749 “plan of education for public schools in Pennsylvania**, he insisted that schools teach "the Excellency of the Christian religion above all others, ancient or modern."

In 1787 when Franklin helped found Benjamin Franklin University, it was dedicated

as "a nursery of religion and learning, built on Christ, the Cornerstone."

Benjamin Rush

Patriot and Signer of the Declaration of Independence

My only hope of salvation is in the infinite, transcendent love of God manifested to the world by the death of His Son upon the cross. Nothing but His blood will wash away my sins. I rely exclusively upon it. Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!

4c.) The Bible in American culture

The United States Capitol (Church)

Thomas Jefferson: "The doctrines of Jesus are simple, and tend to all the happiness of man."

"Of all the systems of morality, ancient or modern which have come under my observation, none appears to me so pure as that of Jesus."

"I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus."

"God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are a gift from God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, and that His justice cannot sleep forever." (excerpts are inscribed on the walls of the Jefferson Memorial in the nation's capital) [Source: Merrill . D. Peterson, ed., *Jefferson Writings*, (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984), Vol. IV, p. 289. From *Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia*, 1781.]

Harvard's Entrance Exam

Samuel Adams

Known at the "Father of the American Revolution", he instigated the Boston Tea Party, signed the Declaration of Independence, and served in Congress. He was Governor of Massachusetts and he wrote the "The Rights of the Colonists" in 1772. At signing of the Declaration of Independence was being signed, he stated:

"We have this day restored the Sovereign to Whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come."

What Americans Remember

5.) Is the Blessings of God

5a.) America – unique among the nations

The longest lasting, free, constitutional society in human history
A nation not afraid to honor the Lord
The most powerful nation was a democracy
Open arms to the dreams of all

5b.) America – prosperous beyond comprehension

Agriculture
Economics
Industry
Natural resources

5c.) America – generous like no other

The first national Thanksgiving occurred in 1789. According to the *Congressional Record* for Thursday, September 25, 1789 immediately after approving the Bill of Rights:

The bulletin insert George Washington

Did You Know That...

The first Continual Congress appointed the day of thanksgiving and praise so that the people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts and join in prayers that it may please God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to forgive us our sins and to enlarge His kingdom which consists of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The Continental Congress, 1777

Signed by Samuel Adams and Richard Henry Lee.

Did You Know That...

“I, Thomas Jefferson appoint a day of public Thanksgiving to the Almighty God and to ask Him that He would pour out His Holy Spirit on all ministers of the Gospel; that He would spread the light of Christian knowledge through the remotest corners of the earth; . . . and that He would establish these United States upon the basis of religion and virtue. (***Signed Thomas Jefferson, 1779***)

Did You Know That...

I appoint this day of public thanksgiving and praise to render to God the tribute of praise for His unmerited goodness towards us by giving to us the Holy Scriptures which are able to enlighten and make us wise to eternal salvation. And to pray that He would forgive our sins and cause the religion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be known, understood, and practiced among all the people of the earth.

(Signed, John Hancock, 1790)

Did You Know That...

I, FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, President of the United States of America, do set aside and appoint Thursday, the thirtieth day of November 1933, to be a Day of Thanksgiving for all our people. May we on that day in our churches and in our homes give humble thanks for the blessings bestowed upon us during the year past by Almighty God.

Did You Know That...

I therefore recommend that on Thursday, the 30th day of November next, the people meet in their respective places of worship, and there, make the usual acknowledgments to Almighty God for the blessings He has conferred upon us; for the merciful exemption from evil, and invoke His protection and kindness...

President, Ulysses S. Grant.

Did You Know That...

That in 1941, the 77th. Congress permanently established the fourth Thursday of each November as a national holiday.

Declaring, ***“Lets us celebrate the Thanksgiving observance, remembering to retain the original gratefulness to God that has always been the spirit of this, the oldest of all American holidays”***

Psalms 116:17

I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the LORD.

Psalms 103:1-5

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