



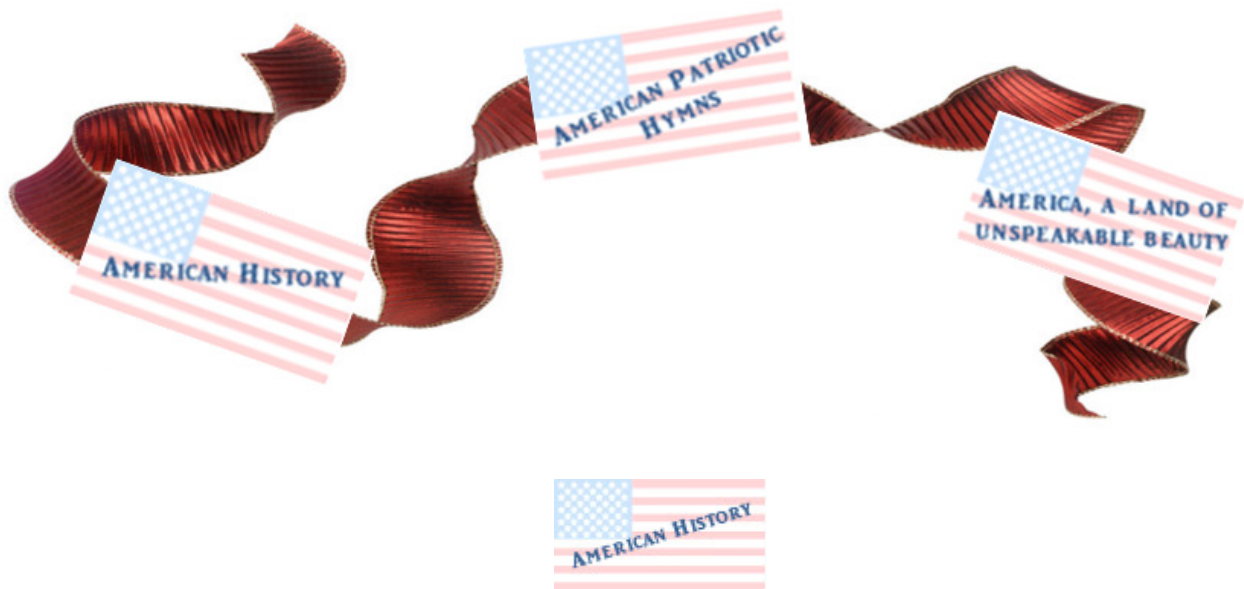
Does God Bless America?

1 Peter 2:16: (NASB) *Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.*



Tomorrow is America's birthday - it was on the 4th day of July in 1776 that a document was signed in Congress that would inevitably change the course of world history - that document was the Declaration of Independence. What was it? It was a series of statements and decisions made to declare that God has given all men the right and freedom to pursue "life, liberty and happiness." This call to freedom rang out here in America and has been ringing ever since. As we look back today, we ought to ask ourselves about our freedom - is it still the same kind of freedom the founders envisioned or has it become something else? Stay with us as we look into America, freedom, choices and God's role in all of these things!

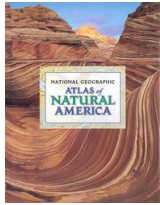
We will weave today's program with three distinct threads aside from the scriptures:



William Bradford was one of the pilgrims of the 1600's:

William Bradford through age 12, ColdWaterMedia.com

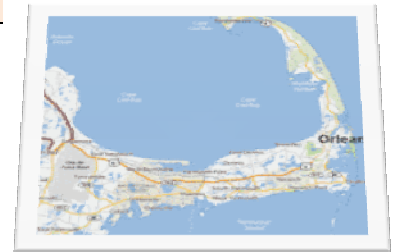
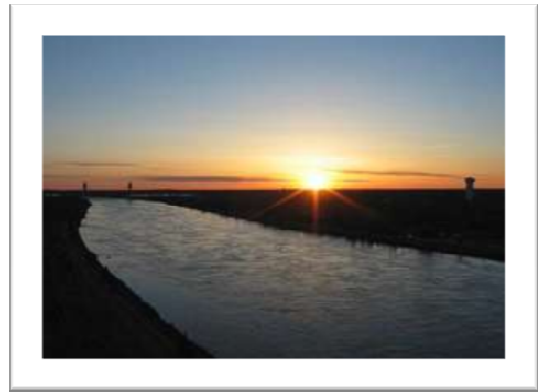
- Born in England, an orphan early on.
- Saw an unusual church service at age 12 and kept returning to its fervor of reform.




Cape Cod: Change is a constant on Cape Cod, despite laws and control measures.

The terrain here is young, in geologic terms: It was covered by glaciers toward the end of the last ice age, about 18,000 years ago, and it displays the capricious disposition of youth. Waves, winds, and storms continually reshape the peninsula, gnawing away at the beach in one spot, creating new land elsewhere, cutting off a spit to make an island here, joining one to the mainland there. Thoreau estimated that beaches on the

eastern shore were disappearing at the rate of a few feet a year, and that observation remains true today. In 1996, two historic lighthouses, Highland Light and Nauset Light, were moved inland from eroding cliffs; without that human intervention, they would have collapsed before long as their foundations were eaten away.



 William Bradford, father figure to the colony, ColdWaterMedia.com

- *He became governor of the colony in 1621 and served for eleven consecutive years...he became a beloved father figure to the colony.*



The Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4th, 1776, and was read publicly four days later in the Philadelphia State House Yard. After its reading, the Liberty Bell rang out, announcing America's freedom.

Inscribed on the bell is a quote from this scripture:

Leviticus 25:10: (ASV) And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and **proclaim liberty throughout the land** unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.



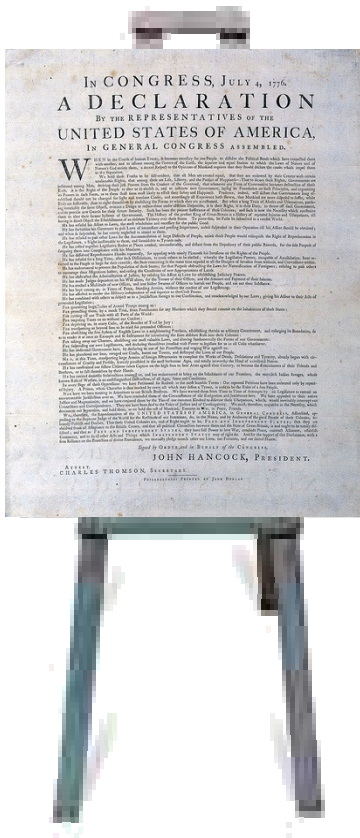
IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776, The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

The last paragraph of the Declaration:

...We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

The Declaration of Independence was a God-honoring document that shows the founders were God-honoring men.



Are all of America's most patriotic songs just about America?

Who was the source of inspiration, principle and courage for the founders?

(Source: Wikipedia) "America the Beautiful" is an American patriotic song. The lyrics were written by Katharine Lee Bates and the music composed by church organist and choirmaster Samuel A. Ward.

In 1893, at the age of thirty-three, Bates, an English professor at Wellesley College, had taken a train trip to Colorado Springs, Colorado, to teach a short summer school session at Colorado College. Several of the sights on her trip inspired her, and they found their way into her poem, including the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the "White City" with its promise of the future contained within its alabaster buildings; the wheat fields of America's heartland Kansas, through which her train was riding on July 16; and the majestic view of the Great Plains from high atop Zebulon's Pikes Peak.

On the pinnacle of that mountain, the words of the poem started to come to her, and she wrote them down upon returning to her hotel room at the original Antlers Hotel. The poem was initially published two years later in *The Congregationalist* to commemorate the Fourth of July. It quickly caught the public's fancy. Amended versions were published in 1904 and 1913.

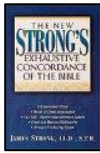
Ward had originally written the music, *Materna*, for the 19th century hymn *O Mother dear, Jerusalem* in 1882. Ward's music combined with the Bates poem was first published in 1910 and titled, *America the Beautiful*.



"America the Beautiful (Verse 1)," Ray Charles

"O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!"

There are three New Testament words for freedom:



Strong's #1658 eleutheros (el-yoo'-ther-os); unrestrained (to go at pleasure),
i.e. (as a citizen) not a slave, or (genitive case)
exempt (from obligation or liability): KJV-free (man, woman), at liberty.

Strong's #1659 eleutheroo (el-yoo'-ther-o'-o); to liberate, i.e. (figuratively) to exempt (from
moral, ceremonial or mortal liability): KJV-deliver, make free.

Strong's #1657 eleutheria (el-yoo'-ther-ee'-ah); freedom (legitimate or licentious,
chiefly moral or ceremonial): KJV- liberty.

The first word for freedom carries a physical or civil sense of being free - not a
slave, not being held under: (physical freedom)

1 Corinthians 12:13: *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be
Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or **free <1658>**; and have been all made to drink into
one Spirit.*

Galatians 3:28: *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor **free <1658>**,
there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Regardless of your physical condition, spiritually you are not a slave.



Buffalo National River in the Ozarks of Arkansas: As you drift
along you may pass through actual clouds of fragrance from pink
clumps of wild azaleas clinging to a bluff. Algae-covered rocks on the
streambed will appear to slide beneath as you pass, and water snakes
may wriggle across the river, hoisting their heads out of the water.
On the bank, willows gnawed off a few inches above the ground
and sticks cleaned of their bark tell of beavers. You will seldom
be without the sound of birdsong or the sight of a dozen tints of
green in the forested hills. Minnows may go skimming near the
surface with big black shadows right behind them. Snakes and
turtles sun themselves along the banks, and bright red cardinals
flit through the forest. Bobwhites call their names from the
ridges. In the night, whippoorwills sing and bullfrogs bellow while
coyotes howl. Fireflies mingle with the stars overhead.



What kind of focus did the founders have on God and the Bible?



"It cannot be emphasized too clearly and too often that this nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religion, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason, peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here." - Patrick Henry, May 1765 Speech to the House of Burgesses

"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." - Benjamin Franklin, Constitutional Convention of 1787 original manuscript of this speech



First American Bible, US Capitol tour with David Barton

- The first Bible printed in America was printed by Congress for the express use in schools. This edition is formally recommended to the "inhabitants of the United States."

The founders were focused on the separation of church and state, but their definition wasn't that religion can't exist in the same context as state. They were saying the two should be separate powers and entities. The states should not be ruled by a church, but powers should overlap in certain areas.



"America the Beautiful," United States Army Brass Band

Verse 2:

"O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassion'd stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness.
America! America! God mend thine ev'ry flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law."



Saguaro National Park, Arizona:

They have starred in more Western movies than John Wayne. Throwing long shadows across celluloid horizons, saguaro cactuses have come to symbolize the American Southwest. But in fact, these elegant long-limbed plants live only in a limited portion of the Sonoran Desert, including southwestern Arizona and adjacent areas of northern Mexico.

Their home is one of the hottest, driest, and botanically most interesting parts of the continent. Summer daytime temperatures rise well above 100 degrees F for weeks at a time. Annual rainfall averages only 12 unreliable inches - in many places less. A good portion of that comes during summer thunderstorms that pour down too suddenly for the thin, rocky soil to absorb much water. You might expect few living things to survive in such a difficult place, yet the Sonoran Desert is a rich environment blessed with more than 2,700 plant species placed neatly across the desert.

In spring, if winter rains have been sufficient, the desert erupts in dense carpets of orange poppy, blue lupine, globemallow, scorpion weed, primrose, and brittlebush. The air fills with an intoxicating blend of floral perfume and birdsong, and it is hard ever again to think of the desert as a barren place.





The second New Testament word for freedom carries a very full sense of being made free - not merely "not a slave," but rather being liberated. (Civil freedom)

Romans 8:2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath **made** me **free** <1659> from the law of sin and death.

Galatians 5:1: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath **made** us **free** <1659>, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

The third word for freedom carries the personal application of being liberated - the ability to make personal decisions. (Spiritual freedom)

Galatians 5:1: Stand fast therefore in the **liberty** <1657> wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

*There can never be freedom from consequence,
laws, or responsibility.*

There can never be freedom without contribution.

Theme Text: 1 Peter 2:16: As **free** <1658>, and not using your **liberty** <1657> for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

Even though this isn't specifically for America, it sure is appropriate!

There are consequences to not maintaining a high standard.



"America the Beautiful (Verse 3)," Kelly Clarkson

"O beautiful for heroes prov'd,
In liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved,
And mercy more than life.
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness,
And ev'ry gain divine."

What kind of freedom did Jesus come to deliver?

Luke 4:16-20: (NASB) ¹⁶And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as was his custom, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. ¹⁷And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. And he opened the book and found the place where it was written, ¹⁸The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are oppressed, ¹⁹To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. ²⁰And he closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

John 8:32-36: (NASB) ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. ³³They answered him, We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that you say, You will become free? ³⁴Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵The slave does not remain in the



house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Jesus and the Apostles' teachings regarding freedom were very focused on the second and third words in our New Testament list. They were not nearly as concerned with physical freedom, as they understood servitude, etc., to be a temporary condition, contrasted with the deeper personal freedom to be gained in Christ. Their primary concern seemed to be grasping "freedom with responsibility" on a spiritual level.



Zion National Park, Utah:

The monumental scale of the formations in Zion National Park inspired a local Methodist minister to think of heaven's glory and to name the features accordingly. The Great White Throne, the Three Patriarchs, the Sentinel, the Watchman, the East Temple, Mount Majestic, and other monoliths tower thousands of feet above narrow Zion Canyon. At its bottom, the North Fork of the Virgin River slides over boulders and rock ledges in the shade of venerable cottonwood trees, its gentle music mingling with birdsong. In spring, wildflowers scent the air, and the loud chirps of canyon tree frogs echo from ponds and dripping springs.



(Source: Excerpts from "Death and Freedom," a sermon by Dr. Neil Chadwick found on www.webedelic.com) On July 4 each year, Independence Day, we celebrate what for many has become the "Supremum Bonum" - the highest good, which of course in America is "freedom." Why is this? The foundation of our country was built on the sacrifices of men who were willing to lay down their lives for the sake of freedom. Let me give you a few examples from the little known histories of the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts and died in rags.

Thomas McKean was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr. noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. He quietly urged General George Washington to open fire. The home was destroyed and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his gristmill were laid to waste. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later he died from exhaustion and a broken heart. Norris and Livingston suffered similar fates.

In addition, five signers were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died, and nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the Revolutionary War.



"America the Beautiful (Verse 4)," Lee Greenwood

"O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears.
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea"

Freedom is a great revealing process. Its purpose, from God's standpoint, is to reveal men's hearts. He already knew the evil men are capable of - it is not a surprise to Him, but it is a surprise to us. With freedom, humanity can see how much they need God and His righteousness. This is a great responsibility. The world will be blessed and this is just the beginning. Don't lose hope!

A small glimpse of what Jesus paid:

Isaiah 53:3-7: (NASB) ³He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we did not esteem him. ⁴Surely our griefs he himself bore, and our sorrows he carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced through for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon him, and by his scourging we are healed. ⁶All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him. ⁷He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so he did not open his mouth.



The Great Northwest

The enormous scale and diversity of Far West landscapes - from Mount McKinley of the Alaska Range, whose vertical rise surpasses the highest in the Himalaya and can be seen 200 miles away; a waterfall that plummets 14.5 times farther than Niagara; thundering wild rivers; vast soggy plains of tundra; ice fields so large they generate their own weather; and North America's largest collection of fitfully sleeping volcanoes - makes this a region apart, a Brobdingnagian kingdom that tends, by comparison, to make most other North American landscapes seem almost Lilliputian. Like its terrain, the Far West's wildlife is frequently oversized. Its biggest bears weigh in at 1,500 pounds and stand more than nine feet tall. Its wilderness ponds are browsed by 1,300-pound moose with antlers extending six feet across. Some of its oldest trees were growing when pharaohs ruled Egypt.



The price has been paid for us...

George Washington - the day of his swearing in as America's first President:

(4/30/1789 to 3/3/1797) www.eadshome.com "No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which we have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency."

During his inauguration, Washington took the oath as prescribed by the Constitution but added several religious components to that official ceremony. Before taking his oath of office, he summoned a Bible on which to take the oath, added the words "So help me God!" to the end of the oath, then leaned over and kissed the Bible.

Alexander Hamilton: *1787 after the Constitutional Convention* "For my own part, I sincerely esteem it (the Constitution) a system which without the finger of God, never could have been suggested and agreed upon by such a diversity of interests."

Liberty is the ability to make choices - God gives us that liberty.

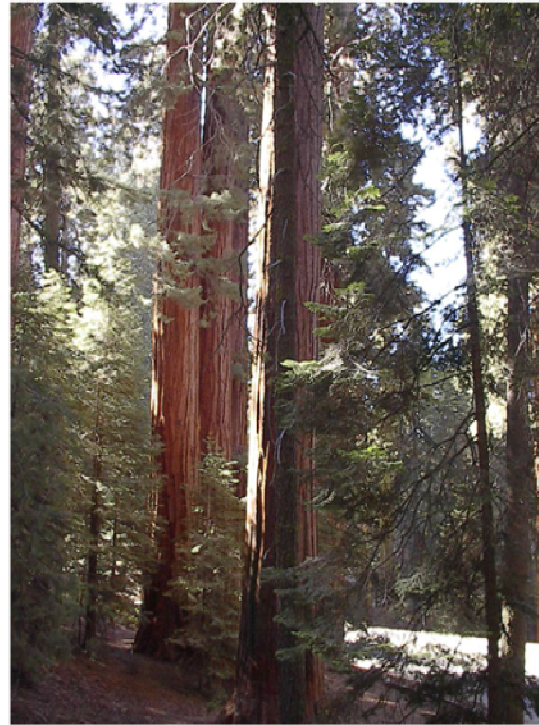


"God Bless America," Mormon Tabernacle Choir (Words and music by Irving Berlin)

"While the storm clouds gather far across the sea,
Let us swear allegiance to a land that's free,
Let us all be grateful for a land so fair,
As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer.
God Bless America
Land that I love
Stand beside her,
and guide her
Through the night with a light from above
From the mountains,
to the prairies,
To the oceans, white with foam
God bless America,
My home sweet home.
God bless America,
My home sweet home."

The Great Sequoias, Kings Canyon National Park, CA

Of all the things on Earth that exhibit some form of what we call life, one of the largest is the sequoia tree, perhaps named after the Cherokee who devised an alphabet for his tribe. Thirty-six groves of this member of the redwood family cluster in these parks, including seven of the tallest and broadest trees known to exist. Sequoias have grown as tall as 26-story buildings and have achieved a girth at their base of 113 feet. Nineteenth-century loggers sometimes labored more than a week to fell just one sequoia. In 1876, a section of one mammoth was shipped to Philadelphia for exhibition, where astonished viewers took it for a hoax.



Micah 6:6-8: (NASB) ⁶With what shall I come to the LORD and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? ⁷Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? ⁸He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

In the end, what is important? Burnt offerings? Our firstborn? The answer is simple - justice, kindness and humility.

We looked at this subject from three different perspectives: America was founded on Godly principles by men who looked to God for their guide. They



weren't perfect, but they sought God's wisdom and His way. Songs of America were written to praise and honor God. The beauty of America also praises and honors God. As we celebrate this 4th of July, make sure that among all the other things we do, we thank God for all that He has done for us. We want to serve Him first and foremost.

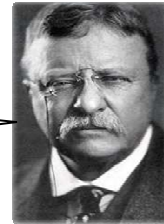
*So does God bless America...?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



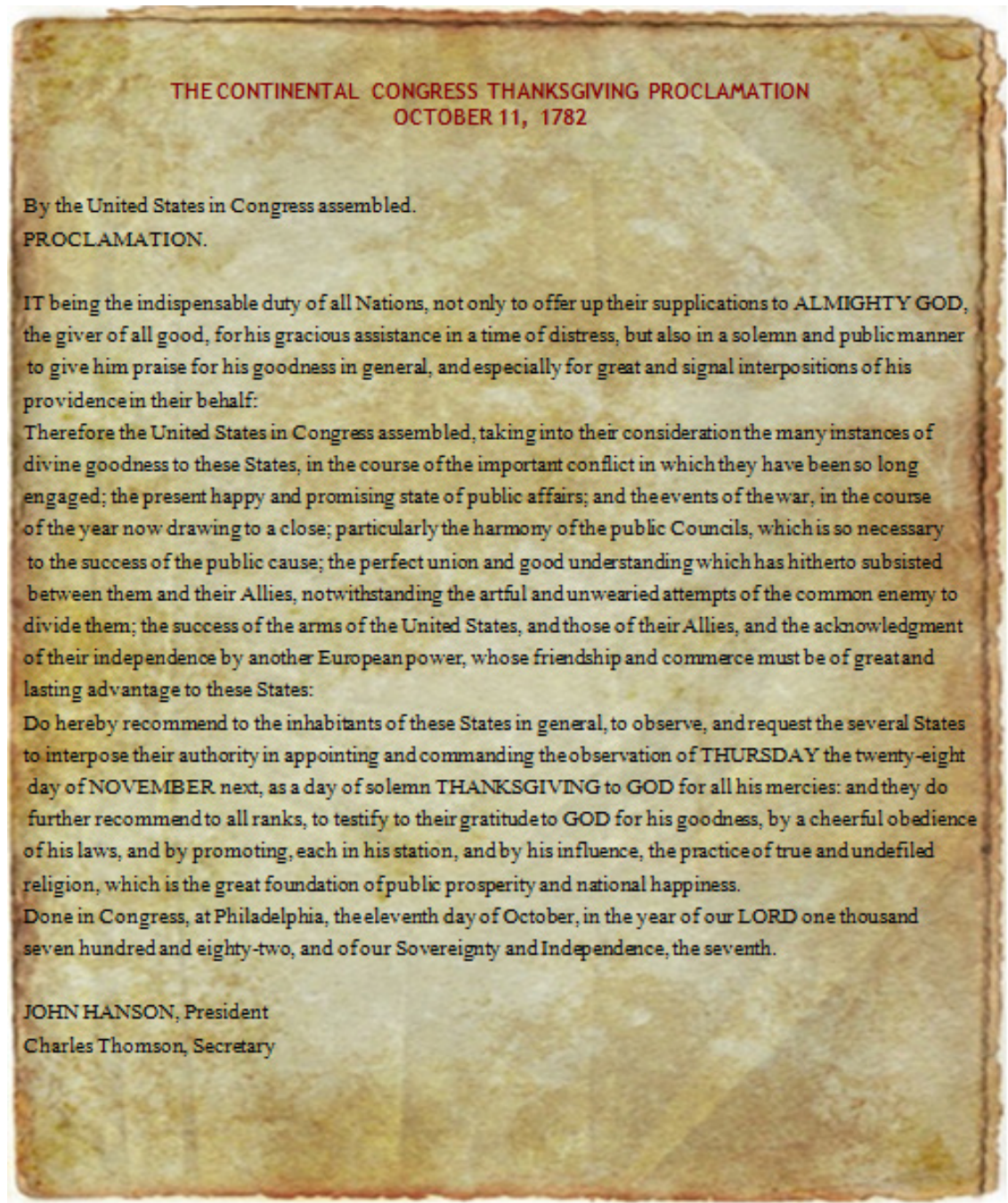
"We must not be free because we claim freedom, but because we practice it." *William Faulkner*

"Order without liberty and liberty without order are equally destructive." *Theodore Roosevelt*



"He that would make his own liberty secure, must guard even his enemy from opposition; for if he violates this duty he establishes a precedent that will reach himself."
- *Thomas Paine*

True freedom, no matter what the circumstances, comes with a cost and with consistency.



Let's move forward in American History almost 100 years after the Declaration:

(Excerpt from Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, Washington, D.C., March 4, 1865) ...Neither (the North or the South) anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offences!



For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him?....

When we say "In God we Trust," let's be sure that we REALLY mean it!

2 Samuel 22:1-7: (NKJV) ¹Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. ²And he said: The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; ³The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; my Savior, You save me from violence. ⁴I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies. ⁵When the waves of death surrounded me, the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. ⁶The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me. ⁷In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry entered His ears.

Psalms 16:1-8: (NKJV) ¹Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust. ²O my soul, you have said to the LORD, You are my Lord, my goodness is nothing apart from You. ³As for the saints who are on the earth, They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight." ⁴Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, nor take up their names on my lips. ⁵O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot. ⁶The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; yes, I have a good inheritance. ⁷I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons. ⁸I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.

Proverbs 3:5-6: (NKJV) ⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

1 Timothy 4:10: (NKJV) For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.