

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR AMERICA

“The only assurance of our nation’s safety is to lay our foundation in morality and religion” – President Abraham Lincoln

One of the most important step Christians can take for their country today is to understand the relevance of America’s Biblical foundation and God’s Word to their freedoms. We focus on politics, pending legislation and constitutional amendments, but very little emphasis is placed on who we are, where we came from, and what brought us here. We mourn for the loss of morals and virtues, but do we understand their importance to our legal system, our culture, our prosperity, and our freedom? It is timely that we learn to fully appreciate the great and precious freedoms God has wrought for our nation. We must never forget the oppression from which He has delivered us and the right of self-government His victory has procured for us. We must understand that, while we have freedom of speech to proclaim our rights, those rights originate not from government but from Almighty God. Through God we overcame the spirit of tyranny and obtained independence. If it is God, then, who bestows our rights and who gives us freedom, we must understand our responsibilities to maintain them.

Yes, we must be involved politically. We must participate in petition drives and we must vote. More importantly, however, Christians must identify with their Christian heritage and the foundation of their government. According to the Bible, people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). As we begin to understand God’s hand in our history, we will likewise begin to understand that God worked through people who believed His promises, and gave them the liberty to achieve self-government. He can again work through the people to restore our foundation. In fact, that is our only hope. Unbelief is the greatest precursor to the loss of our freedoms because we refuse to act upon the power God has given us through representative government to stand for principles of absolute truth. Failure to identify with our Christian heritage will lead to a state of oppression in which the only rights we have will be those approved by the government, because it is not possible to separate rights from God’s justice and maintain freedom.

Exposure to a humanistic belief system has blinded many Christians to the anti-God agenda advanced by the liberal media. As a result, more and more people (including Christians) can now justify circumventing God’s moral laws to maintain freedom of choice. We make decisions in our finite minds on the value of life based upon the expert witness of lawyers and doctors. We take comfort in believing that we possess the power and right to relieve the suffering of ourselves or others, when we are in fact bypassing God’s sovereign authority and supernatural power of intervention.

This new world-view is intent upon overthrowing our Christian foundation. In its place is a humanistic philosophy based on individual preferences of what is moral for the moment. Such thinking is called *situational ethics*. The humanistic philosophy is

designed to remove God from our culture, which will open the door to unrestrained immorality and unimaginable evil. We see court decisions affirming the right to abortion, same-sex marriage, pornography and profane speech.

The day prophesized by Isaiah is upon us: *“Justice is turned back and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter”* (Isaiah 59:14). We must boldly proclaim truth to surmount the humanistic belief system that is taking our country. We need to fight for America’s foundation because America is our country, an inheritance from God.

To start, we need to go back to our roots and identify the great pillars upon which America was established. In this chapter, we will talk about one pillar: the freedom of self-government. This Bible study will show the Biblical responsibility of Christians to get involved in the restoration of America’s foundation. Why is this chapter so important to teach to our generation? Because, *“if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”* (Psalm 11:3). Everything we do to restore America begins at the foundation. If we lose the foundation, we have lost America.

What is a Foundation?

*“1: the act of founding
2: a basis (as a tenet, principle, or axiom) upon which something stands or is supported.
3 a: funds given for the permanent support of an institution: ENDOWMENT b: an organization or institution established by endowment with provision for future maintenance
4: an underlying base or support; especially: the whole masonry substructure of a building*

What is the underlying base or support sustaining America? To get that answer, we have to go back in history and look at our heritage. You will find that, because the colonists established a government based upon God’s Word, America’s underlying base or support is the Ten Commandments as will be presented in the third chapter. This heritage has passed down from generation to generation by a covenant.

“As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and forever” (Is 59:21).

[A covenant is a solemn agreement between two or more persons or groups; in the Bible the covenant was between God and man. More in-depth coverage of the Biblical covenant is provided in Chapter 3.]

The words that were spoken solemnly by our colonial fathers to the Lord have not passed away. The Christian traditions continue, with President to President laying their hands upon the Bible, swearing to uphold the laws of the land, which are derived from God's Word. John Adams, the second President of the United States, said, "*Religion and virtue are the only foundations, not only of republicanism and of all free government, but of social felicity under all governments and in all the combinations of human society.*"¹

This Biblical foundation supports not only the whole structure of U.S. government—our U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence – but the whole human family.

How did America's Biblical foundation come to be?

Impact of Legal Philosophers & Democratic Theorists on America's Foundation

America's government began with the Mayflower Compact, although the roots of the colonists go back to the English Magna Carta and England's Common Law tradition, which is based on Mosaic Law and Christianity. (The English Magna Carta documented the rights and liberties of the people. By affixing his seal to the document in 1215, King John of England bound himself and future sovereigns to the rule of law. The impact on the American colonies during the American Revolution is that they were fighting not for new freedoms, but to preserve the liberties that dated back to the 13th century.)

In the Mayflower Compact (discussed in Chapter 3), the colonists covenanted with God to form a just politic, one that would embody just laws. In the process of time, God raised up certain Christian philosophers and political theorists who would play a critical role in the preservation of the original intent of the colonial covenants. These theorists were the most often quoted by the Founding Fathers in laying the foundation for America's government. They included:

WILLIAM BLACKSTONE—English Jurist. Blackstone's Legal Commentaries established the base for America's legal system until the mid 1940's.

BARON CHARLES de SECONDAT MONTESQUIEU—French legal philosopher and professor. Montesquieu's concept of three branches of government was derived from the Bible (Isaiah 33:22). Montesquieu believed society must be governed by principles that do not change and that the Christian religion contains the most superior civil and political laws.

JOHN LOCKE—English Democratic Theorist. Locke's treatises on civil government addressed inalienable rights, the separation of powers, and the right to resist unlawful authority.

¹ Federer, William. *America's God and Country*, p.12.

All the above agreed upon one essential component to be found in the founding documents—Judeo-Christian principles. This clearly Christian worldview gave direction to the Founding Fathers in their deliberation over the values that would represent the will and intent of the people as well as the form of government that would best achieve those values. The Founding Fathers were not just concerned about declaring independence from England, but establishing a sound foundation that would secure rights and liberties for succeeding generations of Americans. They believed that our republican form of government would be wholly inadequate under any other world-view.

Out of this foundation, came the following pillars of America's freedom:

- Popular sovereignty or a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

(This principle is demonstrated Biblically in the Nehemiah Covenant which will be discussed in Chapter 3.) In America, people are guaranteed a voice and freedom to seek redress and make laws through leaders they choose. This is contrasted to the “divine right of kings” who alone decided laws, and under which people had few personal rights and no greater purpose than to serve the King.

- Natural Law with God as the Supreme Judge.

Significantly, the two greatest commandments, the sovereignty of the One True God and love for our neighbor as our self (Mark 12:29-31) lay the foundation for America. As theories they are clearly seen in the principles of Natural Law! Natural Law is featured prominently in the Declaration of Independence, which speaks of the will and laws of our Creator. This acknowledgment of the One True God aligns itself with the first commandment and was applied within our culture and legal system. (See John Locke's comments under “Claiming Rights” in Chapter 7.) Natural Law then goes on to establish the rights and responsibilities of God's creatures to one another (the second commandment). Out of the second commandment emanates the regard for the individual, including inalienable rights, justice, and equality under the law, and other tenets of our freedom, such as free speech and free conscience.

- Inalienable rights as children of God vs. government-ordained rights such as found in socialist countries.
- Ten Commandments, which established system of justice based on God's moral laws to defend and advocate for the rights of its citizens and uphold the law.
- Separation of powers to keep the process of government accountable to the people.

What distinguishes America from other democracies is its Judeo-Christian foundation, out of which flows the proper role of government—to serve the people—to give the

people a voice in the laws and values that govern them and the leaders that represent them. Americans must never underestimate their responsibility to make their voices heard if their right of self-government is to be preserved. Once they cease to speak out on moral and social issues, they have relinquished their rights.

Natural Law

Natural law is specifically the eternal moral law of God, the Creator of the universe common to all men; it is the immutable law of good and evil. As God is our sovereign, there is no higher authority. The founders considered God to be the author and giver of Natural Law. Although advocates of secular philosophy define Natural Law as a loftier philosophy or a higher humanistic state of mind without the acknowledgment of God as the Supreme Being, that view is inconsistent with our founding documents.

Natural Law establishes man's dependence upon God as well as the foundational principles for human behavior. Out of these principles flow inalienable rights, citizens' responsibilities to God and the human family, and the establishment of justice and righteous judgment so vital for freedom.

William Blackstone, a 17th century jurist, taught the principles of natural law. Two components of natural law identified by Blackstone are incorporated in the Declaration of Independence: the law of nature and the revealed Word of God. According to Blackstone, the will of our Maker is called the "law of nature":

"Man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the laws of his Creator, for he is entirely a dependent being...And, consequently, as man depends absolutely upon his Maker for everything, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his Maker's will...this will of his Maker is called the law of nature. These laws laid down by God are the eternal immutable laws of good and evil...This law of nature dictated by God himself is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this.

*The doctrines thus delivered we call **the revealed or divine law**, and they are to be **found only in the holy scriptures**...[and] are found upon comparison to be **really part of the original law of nature**. Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws; that is to say, no human laws should be suffered to contradict these."*