



PREPARE THE WAY

The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth.

LUKE 3:5

The Fourth of July: A Celebration of History

Is it important to know the history of our nation's founding?

"History, by apprising them [the citizens], of the past will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men;"

- Thomas Jefferson, 1784

"[T]he American people should know the history and nature of the civil institutions of their Christian republic... and thus be qualified to discharge with fidelity and conscientiousness all the duties of an American citizen!"

- Benjamin F. Morris, *The Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States*, 1864

What happened around the 4th of July or "Independence Day"?

- July 2, 1776: Second Continental Congress voted for independence from Great Britain
- July 4: Congress approved the early draft of the Declaration of Independence
 - Signed by John Hancock, President of Congress, and Charles Thompson, Secretary of Congress
- July 8: Members of Congress read the Declaration at Independence Hall in Philadelphia followed by the ringing of the Liberty Bell on which is inscribed: "Proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all the inhabitants thereof." - Leviticus 25:10
- July 19: Congress votes to produce a beautifully inscribed copy of the Declaration on parchment
- August 2: 56 Founders sign the now famous version of the document

Where do our rights come from?

"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."

- Declaration of Independence

Why was separation from Britain needed?

"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"

- Declaration of Independence

Where do our laws come from?

"Thus when the Supreme Being formed the universe, and created matter out of nothing, he impressed certain principles upon that matter, from which it can never depart, and without which it would cease to be... This **law of nature**, being coeval [coexistent] with mankind and 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 in validity, if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original.... Upon these two foundations, the **law of nature** and the law of revelation [from Scripture], depend all human laws; that is to say, no human laws should be suffered [permitted] to contradict these."

- William Blackstone, (1723–1780), 2nd most cited by the Founders

John Adams to his wife on how Independence Day should be celebrated:

"The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn **acts of devotion to God Almighty**. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more."

- July 3, 1776

The impact of Christianity on our independence:

“The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were...the general principles of Christianity...I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God; and that those principles of liberty are as unalterable as human nature.”
- John Adams to Thomas Jefferson on June 28, 1813

The miraculous nature of our nation's founding:

- “Our rifles were leveled, rifles which, but for you, knew not how to miss – ’twas all in vain, a power mightier far than we shielded you. Seeing you were under the special guardianship of the Great Spirit, we immediately ceased to fire at you... Listen! The Great Spirit protects that man [pointing at Washington], and guides his destinies – he will become the chief of nations, and a people yet unborn will hail him as the founder of a mighty empire. I am come to pay homage to the man who is the particular favorite of Heaven, and who can never die in battle.”
- Indian Chief recounts a battle during the French & Indian War with George Washington, 1770
- 56 men representing 13 states with no army or navy declared their independence from the world's largest military superpower of their day
- “Do you recollect the pensive and awful silence which pervaded the House when we were called up, one after another, to the table of the President of Congress to subscribe to what was believed by many at that time to be our death warrants?”
- Dr. Benjamin Rush (Declaration Signer)

“In the chain of human events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Savior. It forms a leading event in the progress of the Gospel dispensation. The Declaration of Independence first organized the social compact on the foundation of the Redeemer's mission on Earth [and] laid the cornerstone of human government on the first precepts of Christianity.”
- John Quincy Adams, July 4, 1837

Star Spangled Banner, 4th and most important stanza, Francis Scott Key, 1814:

“O! thus be it ever when free men shall stand, Between their lov'd home, and the war's desolation.
Blessed with victory and peace, may the heaven rescued land, Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!

Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just. And this be our motto—‘In God is our Trust’;
And the star spangled banner, in triumph shall wave, O'er the Land of the free and the home of the brave!”

God Bless America, Irving Berlin, 1938:

“God bless America, Land that I love, Stand beside her and guide her, Thru the night with the 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.”

America, The Beautiful by Katharine Lee Bates - 1913

1) 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!

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!

3) O beautiful for heroes proved 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 grain divine!

4) 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!

You' re a Grand Old Flag:

“You' re a grand old flag. You' re a high flying flag, and forever in peace may you wave. You' re the emblem of, the land I love, the home of the free and the brave. Every heart beats true under red, white and blue, where there' s never a boast or brag. But should auld acquaintance be forgot, keep your eyes on that grand old flag.”