

## **"To Preserve the Nation"**

A weekly e-mail message from the Constitution Party of Utah to those who love liberty and wish to preserve it.

Scott N. Bradley

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### **Week Three Message**

#### Fasting and Prayer for the Cause of Liberty and Proper Government

Much of what is currently written, said, and promoted in the popular media contradicts the principles upon which the United States was founded and, consequently, throughout the Nation there is a general lack of understanding of many critically important concepts. There are many widely held beliefs that contradict the fundamentals that were defined and embraced as the Nation was established. The place that God held within this Nation, and in the hearts of the people from the outset, is one of the critically important truths. It is not only widely misunderstood today, but often maligned and distorted into a position that destroys America's Godly heritage. If followed to its logical conclusion, it literally removes God and morality from the future of the Nation.

An honest and exhaustive study of the people and events that culminated in the birth of this Nation leads the sincere truth seeker to the unequivocal conclusion that there is a single "foundation principle" upon which this Nation was established. It is that God's hand was the sustaining influence overarching and under-girding every significant event that led to the Nation's establishment, and that the founders of the Nation recognized that influence and gave Him their thanks and faith. Those who founded this Nation, with very few exceptions, were godly people who sought, to the best of their ability, to know God's will and to serve Him.

The "First American State Document," the Mayflower Compact, was signed by the Pilgrims while aboard the Mayflower in 1620. It began with the words "In the name of God, amen...," thus indicating the sacred covenant the signers were entering into as they disembarked onto the shores of America. They bound themselves together in the name of God as they established their new government. The Mayflower Compact documented the purposes for which the Pilgrims embarked on their journey. It stated that, among other reasons, they had come to America "for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith." The 20,000 Puritans who followed the Pilgrims to America between 1630 and 1640 were motivated almost solely by a desire to be free to worship and serve God according to the dictates of their conscience.

At the outset of the Revolutionary War, in his monumental speech in which he exclaimed "give me liberty, or give me death!," Patrick Henry encouraged his fellow patriots with the admonition: "...we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of Nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us."

Thomas Jefferson, in The Declaration of Independence, makes multiple mention of divinity. The Declaration recognizes not only the Nation's reliance upon divine influence and protection but also appeals to the Supreme Judge to endorse the action taken by the Nation in seeking independence.

During a particularly trying time during the Constitutional Convention of 1787, Benjamin Franklin pled with the delegates to the Constitutional Convention that they must seek God's will through prayer as they deliberated the momentous decisions they were making. He said, "...if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"

James Madison saw and documented God's hand in the vicissitudes and trials experienced during the formulation of the Constitution of the United States during the Constitutional Convention of 1787. In Federalist Number 37, James Madison spoke of the challenges faced and overcome during the Constitutional Convention of 1787:

"The real wonder is that so many difficulties should have been surmounted, and surmounted with a unanimity almost as unprecedented as it must have been unexpected. It is impossible for any man of candor to reflect on this circumstance without partaking of the astonishment. It is impossible for the man of pious reflection not to perceive in it a finger of that Almighty hand which has been so frequently and signally extended to our relief in the critical stages of the revolution."

In his personal writings, George Washington noted the hand of God and His divine intervention over sixty times as the Nation struggled to break away from England and establish itself as a free and independent nation. And on many occasions after the war had concluded, Washington continued to refer to the critical role God has in this Nation's existence. He often wrote of the "finger of Providence," and how he could "trace the fingers of Providence" in the birth of this nation.

And in his First Inaugural Address, George Washington said:

"In tendering this homage to the great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own; nor those of my fellow-citizens at large, less than either. 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 they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency."

In the early years of the Nation, the United States Congress sought to foster a recognition of the hand of God in the affairs of the Nation, and to encourage the Nation to give thanks to God for His goodness. At the request of Congress, and in accord with his own inclinations, President George Washington issued the following proclamation:

"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 to implore His protection and favor; and

"Whereas both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:"

"Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the

favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

"And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally, to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

"Given under my hand, at the city of New York, the 3d day of October, A. D. 1789. GO.  
WASHINGTON."

After 45 years of dedicated, selfless, devoted service, George Washington departed public life. He offered a loving plea to the Nation to "stay the course" established in the beginning. A major portion of this monumental Farewell Address was dedicated to the critical role religion and morality was to play in the preservation of the Nation. He said in part:

"Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion, and Morality are indispensable supports.-In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens."

During the trying times experienced as this Nation sought to gain its freedom, the great leaders of the day often called upon individuals, families, and congregations throughout the land to participate in a day of fasting and prayer in an offering to God as they sought His Divine intervention on behalf of the cause of liberty. And this effort was not confined to the religious leaders of the day. Legislative bodies often called upon the people to fast and pray for their freedom. Of the many instances which could be cited, the following statement by Thomas Jefferson is perhaps the most brief:

"The Legislature of Virginia happened to be in session... The House of Burgesses, thereupon, passed a resolution, recommending to their fellow-citizens, that that day should be set apart for fasting and prayer to the Supreme Being, imploring him to avert the calamities then threatening us, and to give us one heart and one mind to oppose every invasion of our liberties." ---The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Bergh, Vol 1, p.181

And throughout their struggle for freedom during the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress regularly admonished the new nation to fast and pray, as reflected in the following "general order" issued by General Washington:

"The Continental Congress having ordered Friday to be observed as a day of 'fasting, humiliation and prayer, humbly to supplicate the mercy of Almighty God, that it would please him to pardon all our manifold sins and transgressions, and to prosper the arms of the united colonies, and

finally, establish the peace and freedom of America upon a solid and lasting foundation'-the General commands all officers and soldiers to pay strict obedience to the orders of the Continental Congress, and by their unfeigned and pious observance of their religious duties, incline the Lord, and Giver of Victory, to prosper our arms."---Writings of George Washington, General Orders. Fitzpatrick 5:43. (1776.)

In keeping with this national tradition, many of the early Presidents of the Nation frequently proclaimed days of national fasting and prayer in expressions of thanksgiving to God for the blessings of liberty that the nation enjoyed, and in supplication to God for His continued sustaining influence.

The cause of liberty is truly God's cause. There are many similarities between the trying times in which we currently live and the times in which liberty hung in the balance as this Nation was established. The need for modern days of fasting and prayer in supplication of God's divine assistance in the preservation of liberty, and the restoration of proper government, is apparent to many. Perhaps, within your circle of influence among friends and family, among those of noble character with whom you associate, you may encourage a day of fasting and prayer on behalf of the principles of liberty and the proper government, which were originally divinely established for this Nation. Perhaps we may fast and pray that the foundation principles upon which this Nation was established may be restored and preserved. Such an act of faith is desperately needed at this time!

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