

What Does It Mean To Be
Presbyterian in America
Declaration and Constitution:
18th Century America
Part 2

Psalm 33:6-12

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Objectives

By the end of this session you should be able to

- Evaluate the **Declaration of Independence**
- Appraise the **Faith of the Founding Founders**

Faith of our Fathers

“Planting”

Puritan Fathers:

Personal
&
Public

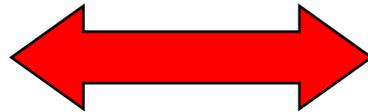
Society

“Founding”

Revolutionary Fathers:

Personal
&
Private

Individual



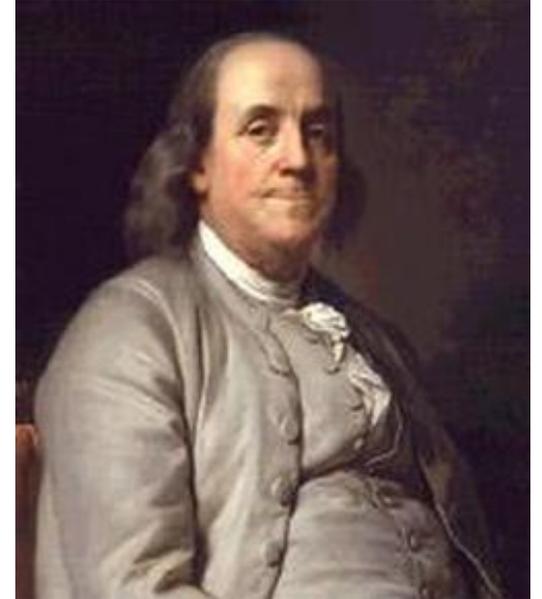
Drafters of Declaration: Committee of 5

- Roger Sherman CT Calvinist
- Robert Livingston NY Anglican
- Benjamin Franklin PA Deist
- John Adams MA Unitarian
- Thomas Jefferson VA Unitarian

- 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** entitles 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*.
- That to secure these rights, governments are instituted *among men*, deriving their *just powers from the consent of the governed*. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the *right of the people* to alter or to abolish it and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.
- 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 the 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...
- 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.

Ben Franklin

- “God governs the affairs of men.”



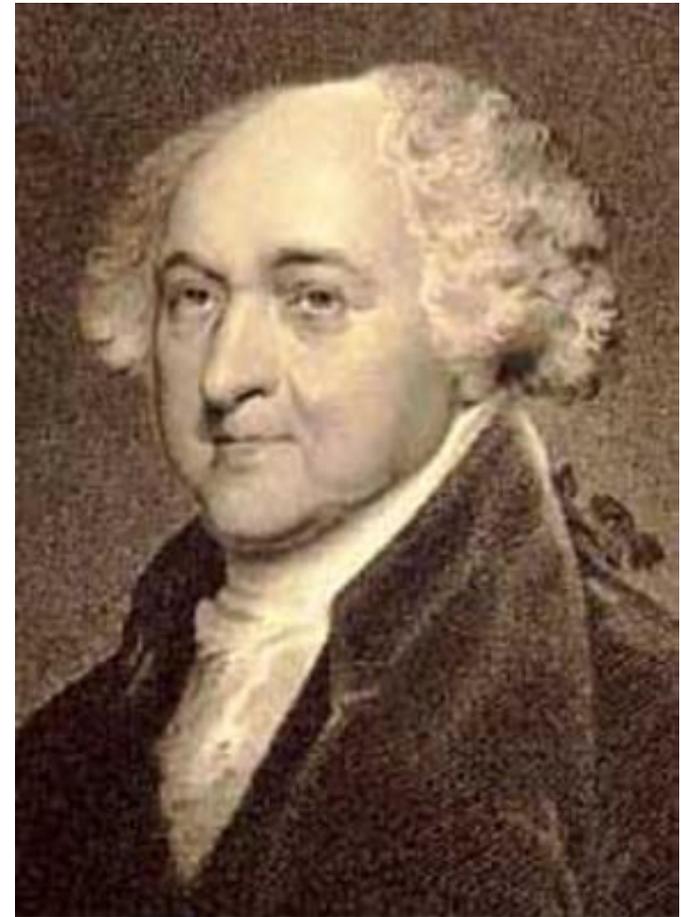
- “I have some doubts as to [Jesus’] divinity...
and think it needless to busy myself with it.”

Ben Franklin's Tombstone



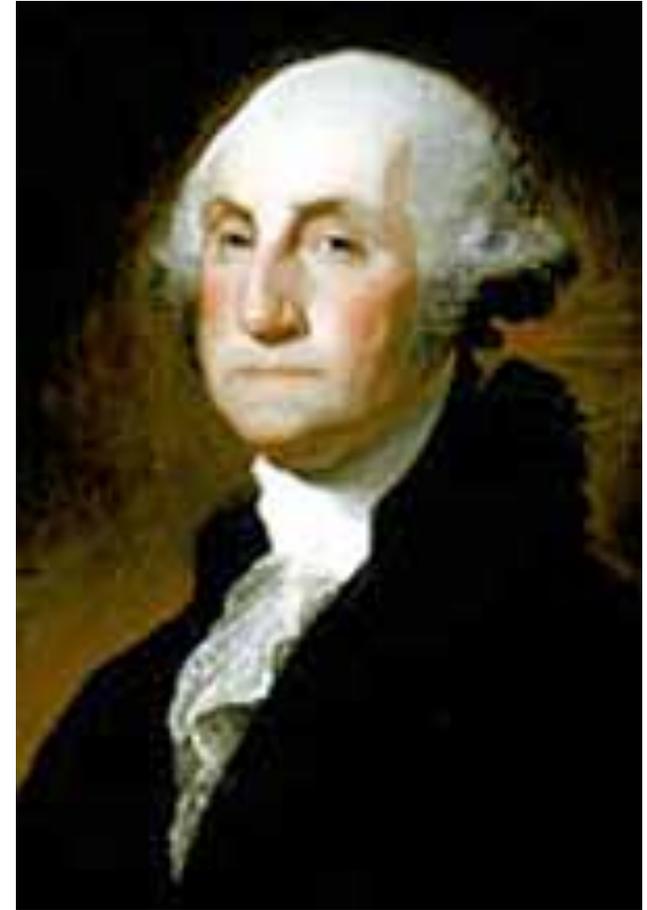
John Adams

- “To be good, and to do good, is all we have to do.”
- *On Predestination*: “If there is no liberty, there is no responsibility. No virtue, no vice, no merit or demerit, no reward and no punishment.”
- “I do not...attach much importance to creeds because I believe he cannot be wrong whose life is right.”
- “The Government is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.”



George Washington

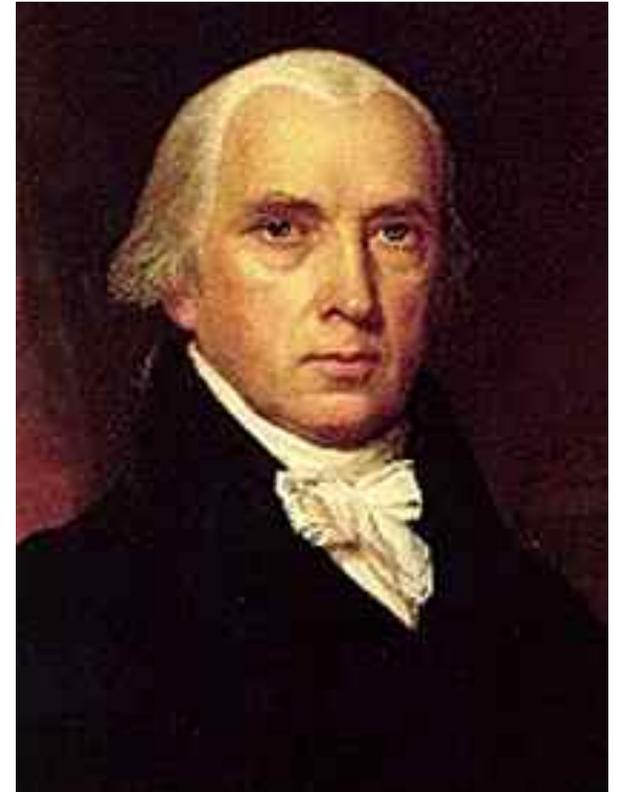
- Personal prayer diary:
 - God would accept him because of “the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ”
- Attended church inconsistently & never took Communion
- On God:
 - "The Grand Architect"
 - "The Governor of the Universe"
 - "The Supreme Dispenser of All Good"



James Madison

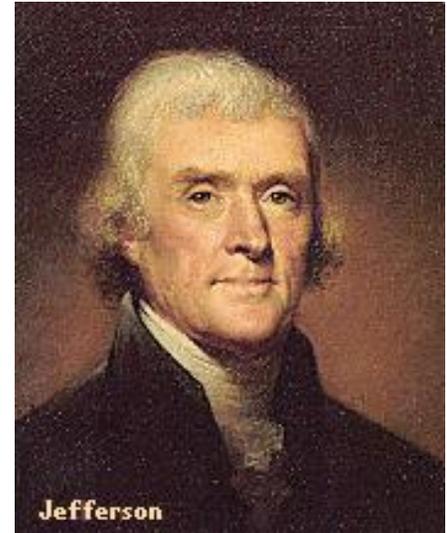
- In 1778 to the Virginia Convention on Ratifying the Constitution:

"Freedom arises from the multiplicity of sects [denominations], which pervades America and which is the best and only security for religious liberty in any society. For where there is such a variety of sects, there cannot be a majority of any one sect to oppress and persecute the rest."



Thomas Jefferson

- For the last 50 years of his life, read NT daily, often in Greek & Latin
- “I am a real Christian...sincerely attached to his doctrines, in preference to all others.”



Thomas Jefferson

- Trinity: “mere abracadabra”
- Jesus’ miracles: “vulgar ignorance... & fabrications”
- Calvin “introduced more new absurdities into the Christian religion than can readily be imagined”
- “The prophecies in Revelation are the ravings of a maniac”
- “I trust that there is not a young man now living in the United States who will not die a Unitarian”
- “I am of a sect by myself, as far as I know.”

Thomas Jefferson on Religion

- “... our rulers can have no authority over such natural rights, only as we have submitted to them (in a social compact.) The rights of conscience we never submitted, we could not submit. We are answerable for them to our God... But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are *twenty gods*, or *no God*.”
- Sept 1800 Election, was called: “an enemy to pure morals and religion, and consequently an enemy to his country and his God.”

Jefferson's Tombstone:

Author of the

- Declaration
of American Independence

of the

- Statute of Virginia for
Religious Freedom

And

- Father of the
University of Virginia



Christianity: Federal and State

- Federal Government: *Article I, Amendments to the Constitution*

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

- State Government: *Article 22, Constitution of Delaware*

“Every person who shall be chosen a member of either house to any office or place of trust... [shall] also make and subscribe the following declaration, to wit: *“I do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.”*

Christianity and Enlightenment: Agreement of Goals for Different Reasons

To Protect the Elect
(Man is Evil)

Christianity

Separation of Church and State

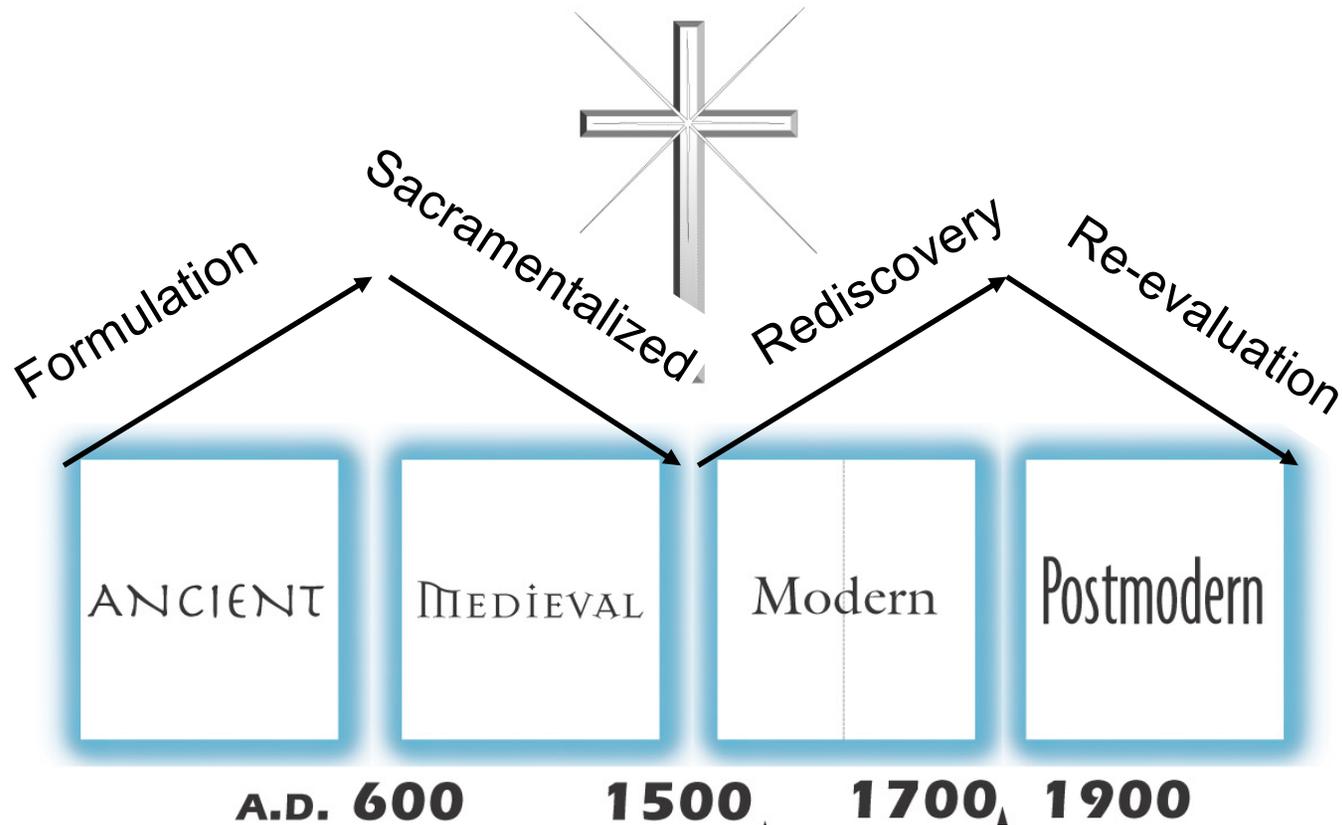
**Enlightenment
Rationalism**

To Permit Man to be Autonomous
(Man is Good)

Alexis de Tocqueville

- The reason America is great is because it has a “**Christian Soul**”
- Dr. David A. Noebel, Summit Ministries:
“America has a **Secular Mind**”

The Divisions of History



Jerome
Augustine

Wycliffe
Huss
Wycliffe
Tyndale

Erasmus
Luther
Zwingli
Calvin
Knox

1-Word Summary

- Catholic Church Merit
- Luther Justification
- Zwingli Sovereignty
- Anabaptists Believer's Baptism
- Calvin Omnipotence
- Arminius Ability
- "Calvinism" TULIP
- Knox Thundering
- Henry VIII Married

1-Word Summary

- Pilgrims
 - Puritans
 - Denominations
 - Whitefield
 - Wesley
 - Edwards
 - Great Awakening
 - Enlightenment
 - Deism
- Separatists
 - Saints
 - Inclusive
 - Dramatic
 - Methodism
 - Glory
 - Fire
 - Rationalism
 - Mechanistic

More?

- What Does it Mean to be Presbyterian:

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- History of the Holidays:

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