



## LECTURE TWO

# AMERICA'S BEGINNINGS:

DISCOVERY, PURPOSE  
& THE FOUNDERS' FAITH

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES

You should understand the value of primary sources in learning history, both the good and the bad. Learn the critical connection between the Framers' Biblical Worldview and the political theory and principles of the American form of government

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ☆ *Connect historical details from primary sources concerning Islam and Columbus as they relate to America's founding.*
- ☆ *Understand the Pilgrims' purpose in founding what would become America, was to advance the Christian faith.*
- ☆ *Understand why the colonies were successful in developing stable, productive, just and prosperous communities and enunciate the basic elements of what is sometimes referred to as Puritan Political Theory.*
- ☆ *Understand the concept of Deism and be able to articulate an opinion as to whether the frequent accusation that the framers were Deists is true and relevant. Combine this accusation with the overwhelming evidence of a Christian majority among the delegates to the Constitutional Convention.*
- ☆ *Identify selected quotations of the Framers demonstrating the authority they quoted and the connection between their Biblical worldview and their political opinions and decisions.*

"It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) to sail to the Indies... There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit because He comforted me with rays of marvelous illumination from the Holy Scriptures."<sup>1</sup>  
—Christopher Columbus

"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."  
—Proverbs 29:2

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Columbus in *The Book of Prophecies* (Circa 1502), *Columbus & Cortez, Conquerors for Christ* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press 1992), p. 90.



## Lecture Two: America's Beginnings:

Discovery, Purpose & the Founders' Faith; follow along with the notes in the following section.

### THE PLAN OF GOD

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- A. To bring the Gospel to the Western Hemisphere
- B. Too many citizens of this country seem to be ignorant of:
  - 1. For the well-being of the people of America
  - 2. As an example and model for the rest of the world
- C. The United States of America
  - 1. Is not the Kingdom of God
  - 2. But is the best the world has to offer
  - 3. Built upon a biblical foundation

### THE AGE OF DISCOVERY (1492-1620)

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- A. Others such as Vikings pre-dated Columbus (around 1000 A.D.), but their presence faded.
- B. Columbus brought together the Eastern and Western hemispheres.

It is a myth that Columbus came to America for the sole purpose of getting rich - "For the

- C. execution of the journey to the Indies I did not make use of intelligence, mathematics, or maps. It is simply the fulfillment of what Isaiah prophesied... The fact that the gospel must still be preached to so many lands in such a short time- this is what convinces me."<sup>2</sup>

- D. Conditions in Europe

- 1. Belief that the return of Christ was near
- 2. Belief Gospel should be spread to Asia/Africa
- 3. Barrier - Islam, who controlled trade routes since 600 A.D.
- 4. Crusades - Muslims controlled the Holy Land
- 5. Rise of Ottoman Turks (Muslims), leading to the fall of Constantinople 1453 A.D.
- 6. Moors (Muslims) driven out of Spain in 1492 A.D., allowing King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to fund Columbus' journey.

2. NEED SOURCE (this is close but wording not exact: <https://books.google.com/books?id=I64wDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA142&dq=columbus,+execution+of+the+journey&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwie6rHHrY7eAhVRaq0KHfYQ6AEILzAB#v=onepage&q=142&f=false>)

## E. Columbus' journey

1. Goal - Bring Gospel to Asia
2. Obstacle - Islamic Empire
3. Method - Reach Asia by sailing West from Spain, going around the Muslim-controlled trade routes.
4. Despite his mistakes and sins, his heart was for the Gospel
5. His Journal, 12 October 1492:



“I, in order that they might develop a very kindly disposition towards us, because I knew that they were a people who could better be freed and converted to our Holy Faith by love than by force, gave to some of them red caps and to others glass beads, which they hung on their necks, and many other things of slight value, in which they took much pleasure. They remained so much our (friends) that it was a marvel... I believe that they would easily be made Christians, because it seemed to me that they belonged to no religion.”<sup>3</sup>

## F. Pilgrims - The Families who founded America (1608-1620)

1. Religious freedom was not the primary reason they came to America.
2. They came as families (not male explorers only). Why? To establish a Christian nation under the God of the universe, not an earthly ruler.
3. The Mayflower Compact united God and government - “...Having undertaken [this voyage to America] for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith...”
4. This principle of self-government under God set the foundation for liberty and prosperity upon Biblical principles.



# THE POSITIVE EFFECT OF A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW ON AMERICAN POLITICAL THEORY, ECONOMY AND CULTURE

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A. Why did the 13 colonies succeed in establishing a system of freedom and stability, justice, and prosperity, while others (even in the Western Hemisphere) failed to do so?

We can cite five principle reasons:

1. The Colonial Charters and later the United States Constitution gratefully acknowledged God and sought to enforce His standard thus providing a unique balance of liberty and stability.
2. The free enterprise system - based on a realistic (Biblical) view of human nature, gives incentive to produce.
3. The theology of the priesthood of all believers.
  - a. Led to widespread literacy.
  - b. Implied concept of equality.
  - c. Provided practical experience in church government.
4. The Biblical work ethic – helped make free enterprise work.
5. The Fixed Standard of God’s Eternal Law (Bible) - loyalty to fixed standard of Oath to Constitution, rather than loyalty to faction.

B. Modern secularist theorists enjoy no such fixed standard. Such loyalty is to faction rather than principle.

## PURITAN POLITICAL THEORY

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A. Government ordained by God – Rule of Law.

B. Government limited by God – Doctrine of Rights:

1. Rev. John Cotton, Puritan preacher:



“Let all the world learn to give to mortall men no greater power than they are content they shall use, for use it they will: and unless they be better taught of God, they will use it ever and anon ... for whatever transcendent power is given, will certainly over-run those that give it, and those that receive it: there is a straine in a mans heart that will sometime or other runne out to excess, unless the Lord restrain it, but it is not good to venture it:

It is necessary therefore, that all power that is on earth be limited, Church-power or other... It is counted a matter of danger to the State to limit Prerogatives; but is a further danger, not to have them limited: A Prince himself cannot tell where he will confine himself, nor can the people tell.

...It is therefore fit for every man to be studious of the bounds which the Lord hath set: and for the People, in whom fundamentally all power lyes, to give as much power as God in His word gives to men: And it is meet that Magistrates in the commonwealth, and so Officers in Churches should desire to know the utmost bounds of their own power, and it is safe for both: All intrenchment upon the bounds which God hath not given, they are not enlargments but burdens and snares: They will certainly lead the spirit of a man out of his way sooner or later. It is wholesome and safe to be dealt withall as God deales with the vast Sea; Hitherto shalt thou come, but there shalt thou stay thou proud waves: and therefore if they be but banks of simple sand, they will be good enough to check the vast roaring Sea.”<sup>4</sup>

2. Richard L. Bushman:

“Puritans were not content to let abject submission totally define their relationship to authority. Even more than persons living in a permissive atmosphere, they felt the need. This inward impulse was expressed in Puritan political philosophy as the doctrine of rights and the rule of law... [Emphasis added]“Angered by the slightest hint of oppression, Puritans jealously defended their rights against attacks from any source. Thus his awe of the rulers did not reduce the Puritan to slavish servitude, for the general respect for power led to stress on the limits of government.”<sup>5</sup>

- C. Liberty of Conscience – Government has jurisdiction over actions, but conscience is between man and God. Therefore, what are referred to as “hate crimes,” are not punishable by civil government.

## THE FRAMERS OF THE CONSTITUTION: CHRISTIANS OR DEISTS?

A. Deism is the belief in an “absentee God.”

B. God created the universe.

1. God established absolute, unchanging laws (physical laws, moral laws) to govern the universe.
2. God retreated from the universe and is no longer involved with His creation.
3. Deists are similar to Christians in view of God’s law. Declaration “Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God.”

<sup>4</sup> NEED SOURCE

<sup>5</sup> *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut 1690 – 1765* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967 – 1980) pp. 20-21

C. In 18th century America, Deists were a very small minority.

D. Church affiliations of Constitutional Convention delegates. (Total 55)

- 28 Episcopalians
- 8 Presbyterians
- 7 Congregationalists
- 2 Dutch Reformed
- 2 Lutherans
- 2 Methodists
- 2 Roman Catholics
- 1 unknown
- 3 Deists (?) *Evidence doesn't support that they were.*<sup>6</sup>

E. 34% of quotations in Framers' writings came from the Bible. - (American Political Science Review, 1984: Dr. Donald Lutz and Dr. Charles Heineman [sic] researched 15,000 writings, letters, diaries, sermons and other works that were written by various leading Americans from 1760-1805 as quoted in *Christianity and the Constitution* by John Eidsmoe.<sup>7</sup>)

F. Bible was chief source of Framers' education, illustrated by their creation of *The New England Primer* as a school book (reprinted by Institute on the Constitution.)

## THE FRAMERS' OWN STATEMENTS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

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A. Ben Franklin: Constitutional Convention, June 28, 1787



“In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. I have lived, Sir, a long time; and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, *that God governs in the affairs of men*. 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, Sir, in the sacred writings that ‘except the Lord build the house, they labor in Vain that build it.’ I firmly believe this; and I also believe that, without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel...”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Source: Dr. M.E. Bradford, *A Worthy Company* (Plymouth Rock Foundation, 1982)

<sup>7</sup> There are some that believe this study has flaws, including Dr. Joel McDurmon from American Vision. To read more, visit: [www.americanvision.org/9760/christian-american-friends-please-stop-citing-lutz-study/#sthash.AiZisvD2.dpuf](http://www.americanvision.org/9760/christian-american-friends-please-stop-citing-lutz-study/#sthash.AiZisvD2.dpuf)

<sup>8</sup> Franklin, B. and Sparks, J., Editor (1837). *The Works of Benjamin Franklin; Containing Several Political and Historical Tracts Not Included in Any Former Edition, and Many Letters, Official and Private, Not Hitherto Published; with Notes and a Life of the Author, Volume 5*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Tappan, Whittemore, and Mason, p.154.

B. Thomas Jefferson: 2nd Inaugural Address, 1805



“I shall need ... the favor of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our forefathers, as Israel of old, from their native land, and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessaries and comforts of life; who has covered our infancy with His providence, and our riper years with His wisdom and power; and to whose goodness I ask you to join with me in supplications, that He will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils, and prosper their measures, that whatsoever they do shall result in your good, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship, and approbation of all nations.”<sup>9</sup>

C. George Washington: Speech to Delaware Chiefs May 12, 1779



“You will do well to wish to learn our ways of life, and above all, the religion of Jesus Christ. These will make you a greater and happier people than you are.” In a Letter to 13 Governors, 8 June 1783, he refers to Jesus Christ as “the Divine Author of our blessed Religion.”<sup>10</sup>

D. Alexander Hamilton: Urged formation of the “Christian Constitutional Society” to preserve values essential to this nation: Deathbed, July 11, 1804



“I have a tender reliance on the mercy of the Almighty, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>11</sup>

E. John Jay: First Chief Justice, U.S. Supreme Court; Founder and President of the American Bible Society: His description of a gathering of French Atheists



“They spoke freely and contemptuously of religion. I took no part in the conversation. In the course of it, one of them asked me if I believed in Christ. I answered that I did, and that I thanked God that I did. Nothing further passed between me and them or any of them on that subject.”<sup>12</sup>

9 NEED SOURCE  
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- F. Roger Sherman: Connecticut Puritan, author of Great Compromise by which Congress has two houses, Elder in Church pastored by Jonathan Edwards, Jr.



“(The) threatenings of the law against impenitent sinners... are (as important) as the promises of the Gospel.”<sup>13</sup> In the words of John Adams, Sherman was “an old Puritan, as honest as an angel and as firm in the cause of American independence as Mount Atlas.”<sup>14</sup>

- G. Patrick Henry: Last Will and Testament



“This is all the inheritance I can give to my dear family. The religion of Christ can give them one which will make them rich indeed.”<sup>15</sup>

## CONCLUSION

- A. An overwhelming majority of Framers believed basic doctrines of Christianity and were active in Christian churches.
- B. Even those who did not believe the basic doctrines of Christianity, nonetheless believed the basic values of Christianity were true and were good for society.



### BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES: BASIS FOR AMERICA’S LAWS

Principle	Legal Document	Bible Source
Sovereign authority of God, not sovereignty of the state or sovereignty of man	Mayflower Compact, Declaration, Constitution, currency, oaths, All 50 state constitutions, Pledge of Allegiance	Ex. 18:16, 20:3, Dt. 10:20, 2 Chron. 7:14, Ps. 83:18, 91:2, Isa. 9:6-7, Dan. 4:32, Jn 19:11, Acts 5:29, Rom 13:1, Col 1:15-20, 1 Tim. 6:15
Existence of objective moral values, fixed standards, absolute truth, sanctity of life	Declaration (“unalienable” rights - life, etc., “self-evident” truths)	Ex. 20:1-17, Dt. 30:19, Ps. 119:142-152, Pr. 14:34, Isa. 5:20-21, Jn. 10:10, Rom. 2:15
Ruler of law rather than authority of man.	Declaration, Constitution	Ex. 18-24, Dt. 17:20, Isa. 8:19-20, Mat. 5:17-18
All men are sinners	Constitutional checks and balances, separation of powers	Gen. 8:21, Jer 17:9, Mk. 7:20-23, Rom. 3:23, 1 Jn 1:8
All men created equal	Declaration	Acts 10:34, 17:26, Gal 3:28

13 NEED SOURCE

14 NEED SOURCE

15 NEED SOURCE

Principle	Legal Document	Bible Source
Judicial, legislative, and executive branches	Constitution	Isa. 33:22
Religious freedom	First Amendment	1 Tim 2:1-2
Church protected from state control (& taxation), but church to influence the state	First Amendment	Dt. 17:18-20, 1 Kgs. 3:28, Ezra 7:24, Neh. 8:2, 1 Sam. 7:15-10:27, 15:10-31, Mat. 14:3-4, Lk. 3:7-14
Republic - Electing leaders	Constitution (Art. 2, Sec 4)	Ex. 18:21, Dt. 1:13, Jud. 8:22, 9:6
Importance of governing self and family as first level of governance	First, Second, Ninth, and Tenth Amendments	Mat. 18:15-18, Gal. 5:16-26, 1 Cor. 6:1-11, 1 Tim. 3:1-5, Tit. 2:1-8, 1 Tim 5:8
Establish justice	Declaration	Ex. 23:1-9, Lev. 19:15, Dt. 1:17
Fair trial with witnesses	Sixth Amendment	Ex. 20:16, Dt. 19:15, Pr. 24:28
Private property rights	Fifth Amendment	Ex. 20:15, 17, Jer. 32:9-15
Biblical liberty, Free enterprise	Declaration	Lev. 25:10, Jn. 8:36, 2 Cor. 3:17
Creation not evolution	Declaration	Gen 1:1
Biblical capitalism not Darwinian capitalism (service and fair play over strict survival of the fittest)	Anti-trust laws	Ex. 20:17, Mat 20:26, 25:14-30, 2 Thes. 3:6-15, 1 Pet. 2:16
Importance of the traditional family	State sodomy laws, few reasons for divorce	Ex. 20:12, 14, Mat. 19:1-12, Mk. 10:2-12, Rom. 1:18-2:16
Religious education encouraged	Northwest Ordinance	Dt. 6:4-7, Pr. 22:6, Mat 18:6, Eph. 6:4
Servanthood not political power	Concept of public servant	Ex. 18:21, Rom. 13:4, Php. 2:7
Sabbath day holy	"Blue laws"	Ex. 20:8
Restitution	Restitution laws	Lev. 6:1-5, Num. 5:5-7, Mat. 5:23-26
Uniform Immigration Laws	Constitution (Art. 1, Sec 8)	Lev. 19:34
President Natural Born Citizen	Constitution (Art. 2, Sec 1)	Dt. 17:15

	Principle	Legal Document	Bible Source
	Witnesses and Capital Punishment	Constitution (Art. 3, Sec. 3)	Dt. 17:6
	Provision Against Attainder <sup>16</sup>	Constitution (Art. 3, Sec. 3)	Ez. 18:20
	Instructions for Judge		2 Chr. 19:6-7, Ezra 7:25



## LECTURE TWO

### OPTIONAL READING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Continue reading *The Law* by Frederick Bastiat. Start at “A Fatal Tendency of Mankind” and read to “The Results of Legal Plunder” on pages 240-242.

## LECTURE REVIEWS

1. Complete Lecture Two Review Worksheet.
2. Complete Property Ownership, Lecture Two Worksheet 2
3. Complete Lecture Two Quiz, including True & False Questions.

## GOING DEEPER: SUPPLEMENTAL READING & VIDEO OPTIONS



Found at [www.theamericanview.com/constitution-course-supplemental-assignments](http://www.theamericanview.com/constitution-course-supplemental-assignments) which can also be found at the bottom of TheAmericanView.com under Resources.

What is a Republic Anyway? by Scott T. Whiteman, Esq. which will be accessible by visiting the homework section of the IOTC website. This article will give you the seven distinctives which are essential for a Republic to exist. These are drawn from our Founders, primarily from the *Federalist Papers*.

<sup>16</sup> Defined by 1828 Webster's Dictionary as 8: 1. Literally a staining, corruption, or rendering impure; a corruption of blood. Hence,

2. The judgment of death, or sentence of a competent tribunal upon a person convicted of treason or felony, which judgment attaints, taints or corrupts his blood, so that he can no longer inherit lands. The consequences of this judgment are, forfeiture of lands, tenements and hereditaments, loss of reputation, and disqualification to be a witness in any court of law...