

America and Christianity: Part 1

Christianity's part in the founding and revival of America

This series is based on the book The Rebirth of America

Psalm 33.8–12

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • March 31, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2019

Scripture Reader and Reading: Billy Henshall – Psalm 33.8–12

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – No Suggestions

Prelude:

I. Tonight I am beginning a series of messages about America and Christianity.

A. Let us take a serious look at why God has blessed this land.

B. My purpose is not to promote Americanism, but

1. to show what has made America what she is.

2. If we can see how and why

a) she has acquired her good traits,

b) we shall be drawn to that source.

(1) By uplifting that source and

(2) encouraging others to do so,

(a) we make America an even better place.

(b) Can America be better?

i) Yes, because the bad things can be removed,

ii) the good improved, and

iii) more good things added.

(1) How much better America will be then!

(2) Brethren, do you know what or who can do these things?

iv) There are many organizations in our nation

(1) both in the government and out of the government

(2) that are attempting to do these things.

v) However, only the church

- (1) has the full range of power
- (2) to effect those three things:
 - (a) Removing the bad,
 - (b) Improving the good, and
 - (c) Adding good.

C. Other nations can enjoy our same blessings

1. when the church is strong in those places.
2. It is the church that will make the difference.

II. Think of what the church is and what it has

A. Matthew 5 gives the declaration of Jesus Christ

1. of the influence that His followers have in the world.
 - a) There is nothing else that can surpass
 - b) what we are and what we have:

13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

– Matthew 5.13–16

B. In Proverbs 14 a former king tells what blesses a nation.

1. He wrote this before there were
2. Republicans or Democrats or anything American:

**34 Righteousness exalts a nation,
But sin is a reproach to any people.**

– Proverbs 14.34

- (1) What organization did God set up
 - (a) to teach righteousness and
 - (b) to teach against sin?
- (2) It is the church.
 - (a) This is why we are
 - (b) the salt of the earth and
 - (c) the light of the world.
 - i) When churches taught God's righteousness unashamedly
 - ii) Americans believed the message and became strong.

C. We have the message

1. that changes the hearts of men and women.
2. There are many things the world tries to make life better,
 - a) promoting right behavior, and
 - b) ceasing wrong behavior.
3. Have they succeeded?

III. Here are some crucial passages.

A. It is because of the truth of these passages that I bring you this series.

B. Exodus 9 states a truth that had application for a nation and

1. a leader that God punished.
2. You will see the same truth applies for the nation He blesses:

16 "But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."

– Exodus 9.16

- a) God's power is shown by the strength of the church in America,
- b) resulting in the unhindered declaration of His name

- c) in all the earth by American Christians.
- C. Psalm 33 makes it explicit as to who is responsible

1. for any nation's existence and prosperity.
2. The Lord rules in our nation:

**10 The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.**

**11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart to all generations.**

**12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.**

**13 The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men.**

**14 From the place of His dwelling He looks
On all the inhabitants of the earth;**

**15 He fashions their hearts individually;
He considers all their works.**

**16 No king is saved by the multitude of an army;
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.**

**17 A horse is a vain hope for safety;
Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.**

**18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him,
On those who hope in His mercy,**

**19 To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.**

**20 Our soul waits for the LORD;
He is our help and our shield.**

**21 For our heart shall rejoice in Him,
Because we have trusted in His holy name.**

**22 Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us,
Just as we hope in You.**

– Psalm 33.10–22

- D. Psalm 75 makes equally clear who blesses America.

1. Please listen to the warning that a nation not boast:
- 2 **"When I choose the proper time,
I will judge uprightly.**

- 3 **The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved;
I set up its pillars firmly. Selah**
- 4 **I said to the boastful, 'Do not deal boastfully,'
And to the wicked, 'Do not lift up the horn.**
- 5 **Do not lift up your horn on high;
Do not speak with a stiff neck."**
- 6 **For exaltation comes neither from the east
Nor from the west nor from the south.**
- 7 **But God is the Judge:
He puts down one,
And exalts another.**

– Psalm 75.2–7

E. Jeremiah 27 teaches a truth also found in the Book of Daniel.

1. This passage speaks of the world's great power in those days, and
2. the truth prevails with the existence of the world's great power today:

**5 "I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground,
by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to
whom it seemed proper to Me. 6 And now I have given all these lands
into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and
the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. 7 So all nations
shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land
comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve
them."**

– Jeremiah 27.5–7

IV. Grandeur, grace, power and liberty

A. The epitome of freedom for Americans is the eagle.

1. He flies away and
2. goes high enough that he practically passes out of our sight.
 - a) What happens when he encounters hot strong winds?
 - b) He uses them to fly higher.

B. Interestingly, America has chosen the bald eagle as its symbol.

1. Both the liberty and fierceness of the bald eagle are seen in America.
 2. We want liberty for our country and for other countries.
 - a) Therefore, the Gospel has flourished here.
 - b) The Gospel has blessed America and
 - c) America has blessed the Gospel
 - (1) by providing a quiet and peaceable life
 - (2) in all godliness and reverence
 - (a) that all men may come to the knowledge of the truth
 - (b) that sets them free.
 3. The Gospel has flourished because
 - a) we are guaranteed freedom of religion in America.
 - b) The average American believes that means freedom *from* religion.
 - (1) However, freedom from religion
 - (2) will lead to bondage of the worst kind.
- C. This is why life has the supreme purpose of glorifying God in all that we do.
- D. Philippians 2 lays it out for us.
1. There is something about the feeling of liberty
 - a) that we want others to experience it.
 - b) Thus, Americans,
 - (1) perhaps in part from the influence of the churches,
 - (2) want others to know freedom.
 2. As Christians, Paul says we are to:

15 ...become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

– Philippians 2.15

- E. May God raise up men, women and young people
 - 1. who will walk with God whatever the cost.
 - 2. When this happens it is contagious.

Persuasion:

I. America Yesterday: A Nation Established

A. Let us remember our past.

- 1. President Woodrow Wilson said:

“A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about.”

B. Why did our forefathers put on our money: “In God we trust”?

- 1. They fought and sacrificed for a nation in which
- 2. Liberty would be the primary reason for existing.
 - a) They saw God’s hand
 - (1) in their past,
 - (2) in their current endeavors, and
 - (3) in the future of the nation.
- 3. The words “In God we trust” remind us
 - a) every time we use our money
 - b) wherein our strength lies.
- 4. Deuteronomy 8 reminded the Israelites of the source of their wealth:

18 “And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”

– Deuteronomy 8.18

C. One of America's most popular songs acknowledges this truth:

**Oh, 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.**

II. Men Paid Freedom's Price

A. On July 4, 1776, The Declaration of America was signed in Philadelphia.

1. It was a declaration of *independence*

a) from a tyrannical power in the form of *Great Britain*.

2. It also made a declaration of *dependence* upon *God*.

3. In the first paragraph, congress declared,

...the separate and equal station to which the Laws of nature and of Nature's *God* entitle them...

4. In the second paragraph, congress affirmed,

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...

a) They focused upon being created *equal and*

b) and that their Creator endowed us with *unalienable Rights*.

(1) Now we have to remind our fellow Americans that:

(a) We are equal because we have been *created*.

(b) We have unalienable Rights because the *Creator* endowed us with them.

5. The closing paragraph, begins with this dependence upon the One Abraham called the Judge of all the earth in Genesis 18.25,

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, *appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world...*

6. That same paragraph closes with these words of reliance upon God,

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.

- B. The 56 men who signed that document suffered for their stand.

1. Some were killed.
2. Some had sons killed in the war.
3. Many had their homes ransacked.

- C. Interestingly, they were all wealthy men.

1. They had good lives.
2. However, they believed freedom was greater.
3. We enjoy the freedom for which they paid a heavy price.

- a) John Adams said:

“I am well aware of the toil, and blood, and treasure, that it will cost to maintain this declaration, and support and defend these states; yet, through all the gloom I can see the rays of light and glory. I can see that the end is worth more than all the means.”

(1) His words have been fulfilled more than he ever imagined.

(2) I do not think he could hold back the tears

(3) if he could see the greatness of America today.

- b) John Quincy Adams spoke accurately,

Posterity—you will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve our freedom. I hope you will make good use of it.

III. One Nation Under God

A. A woman asked Benjamin Franklin:

**“Well, Dr. Franklin. What have you given us?”
“You have a republic, madame. If you can keep it.”**

B. There is an erroneous notion that our nation is a democracy.

1. Actually it is a republic.
2. This comes from biblical influences.

a) Exodus 23 warns:

2 “You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.”

– Exodus 23.2

- (1) This is why in our system of government
- (2) the majority does not always rule.

C. This is why both the Bible and our own Declaration and Constitution affirm

1. that there have to be laws.
2. Daniel Webster said:

“Let the religious element in man’s nature be neglected, let him be influenced by no higher motives than low self-interest, and subjected to no stronger restraint than the limits of civil authority, and he becomes the creature of selfish passion or blind fanaticism.”

IV. What Is So Great about America?

A. Other nations also have great

1. resources,

2. technological advances,
3. engineering feats, etc.

B. In many ways America has acknowledged God and

1. practiced what His word teaches.
2. There are exceptions, of course.

V. Plymouth Rock

A. The majority who landed at Plymouth Rock were Bible-believers.

1. It was primarily for religious reasons that they left Europe.
2. They wanted to worship in the way that the Scriptures taught,
 - a) not as the Church of England commanded.
 - b) This is similar to the history of the Churches of Christ.

B. The Puritans are often made fun of by modern Americans, but

1. the Puritans are the ones who established
 - a) education and
 - b) our form of representative government.
2. They gave America a respect for learning, and they gave us
 - a) our first books,
 - b) our first college, and
 - c) a sense of moral direction.

C. Concerning church matters,

1. the Pilgrims and the Puritans did not believe
2. that the Reformation went far enough.
 - a) The Pilgrims believed that separating from the Church of England
 - (1) was the way to go back to the Bible.
 - b) The Puritans believed that change should come from within the Church of England.

- (1) Both groups saw a strong reliance upon the Scriptures.
- (2) This is the kind of thinking that started the United States!

D. Daniel Webster said:

“Lastly, our ancestors established their system of government on morality and religious sentiment. Moral habits, they believed, cannot safely be trusted on any other foundation than religious principles, nor any government be secure which is not supported by moral habits.”

Exhortation:

I. What does this say about America and Christianity?

- A. Without the influence of the Bible,
- B. America would not be what it is today.
 1. There would be a nation here, but
 2. who knows what character it would be.

II. Where would you be without the influence of the Bible?