



# The Blessed Nation

by Scott Huckaby - key verse: Psalm 33:12

Note: A brochure by Dennis Pollock of Lamb & Lion Ministries titled, "America's Christian Heritage" was used for a portion of this message. The Scripture references in these Sermon Notes are taken from the New King James Version.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to share a message with you on Independence Day! 228 years ago today, the United States declared independence from Great Britain.

On July 4<sup>th</sup> it is easy to let our pride swell up and think that America is great because we labored to make it great. But we need to give credit to Whom credit is due... this country is great because God made it great.

Psalm 33:12 says,

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD

God has greatly blessed this nation enabling it to be founded by Christians on Christian principals. God has used Christians from the United States to serve as missionaries who spread the gospel through-out the world. But when you look at the direction society in this country is headed, you have to wonder how long the Lord will continue to bless us.

It is no longer politically correct to consider the Christian heritage of our nation. The religious motivations of our founders have been edited out of the history books our children study in the public schools. Those who love the Lord know that spiritual warfare is at work trying to drive Jesus Christ out of the public arena.

With the ACLU at the forefront, the liberal cultural elite, has been continuously beating the drum of "no mixture of church and state." They justify their position with the first amendment to the Constitution which says in part:

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

Some seemingly intelligent individuals such as judges, lawyers, and educators have interpreted the First Amendment to say that it mandates "separation of Church and state." And we have heard the term "separation of church and state" so often most Americans now believe that it comes directly from our constitution.

But this is not what the authors of the Constitution had in mind when they wrote the Bill of Rights. To really understand what they meant, it is helpful to acquaint ourselves with these men and understand their deepest convictions and beliefs.

There is enough information about the men who signed the Constitution that we can get a pretty good feel for what motivated them. Their writings are still with us and entire biographies have been written about many of them. It is not necessary to guess at what we think they could have meant by the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment, or to use some Supreme Court ruling from the 1960's to tell us what it must mean, we can go back to their writings which reflected their characters to see clearly what it did mean.

The anti-Christian forces in our nation would have us to believe that our founding fathers were mostly deists and skeptics. The last thing they would want to admit is that the majority of these men were fervent, evangelical Christians. Yet of the 55 men who worked on the Constitution, one count reveals that 52 of them were orthodox, evangelical Christians. Most of these men were just the sort that Hollywood so despises today: Bible reading, God-fearing, men who believed that the Bible is the inerrant word of God.

Nearly every American has heard of Patrick Henry and his famous "Give me liberty or give me death" speech, but he made another statement which, for some reason, we don't hear so much about:

"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians... not on religions but on the gospel of Jesus Christ."

In our nation, there has been a controversy about whether Supreme Court nominees should have to undergo a "litmus test" concerning their views on abortion. Actually the first "litmus test" was suggested by John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and one of the three men most responsible for the writing of the constitution. Listen to his views on who should be able to serve in public office:

"Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers."

Our first Supreme Court Justice and one of the primary authors of the U. S. Constitution said it is our DUTY to choose Christians as our Representatives, Senators, and Presidents.

If the first amendment really is a ban on any Christian contamination of our government, we should expect that in

the days of its composition, or at least shortly thereafter there would have been a vigorous attempt to rid America of every trace of Christianity in government. But that is not what happened...

For example, at the time of the Constitutional Convention, the Delaware State Constitution had its own "litmus test" for public officeholders. In order to serve in a public capacity in those days in Delaware one was required to first acknowledge:

"I do profess faith in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ his only Son, and in the Holy Ghost."

Not content with that, it was also required that potential officeholders confess a belief that the Scriptures were given by divine inspiration. This is something quite a few of our modern day preachers wouldn't be able to do.

One more example... In those days most schools used the "New England Primer" to teach children to read. This textbook taught syllables first, then words, and then phrases and sentences. It is most enlightening to read their list of sentences which correspond to the twenty-six letters of the alphabet:

**A** --- A wise son maketh a glad father.

**B** --- Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

**C** --- Come unto Christ, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest.

**D** --- Do not the unclean thing, which I hate, saith the Lord.

And so-on... These Scriptures come from a public textbook which was the major vehicle for teaching America's children to read for over 150 years!

When the first amendment was adopted, did our nation's leaders run right out and tell Delaware and the other states that had similar "litmus tests" to strike them from their constitutions? Did they immediately remove all New England Primers from America's schools? Of course not! Ridding America of every trace of Jesus Christ was absolutely the last thing they had in mind.

Listen to what John Quincy Adams, the second president of the U.S. had to say about the American Revolution:

"The highest glory of the American Revolution was that it connected, in one indissoluble bond, the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."

Mr. Adams tells us that the greatest effect of the American Revolutionary War was that it enabled us to combine Christianity with civil government. Today we are hearing from everywhere that government must at all costs be completely separated from Christianity. People who say these things ignore such obvious contradictions such as the

fact that the U.S. Senate has a paid chaplain, our coins state, "In God we trust," and our Declaration of Independence declares that all men are CREATED equal.

The authors of our constitution certainly didn't believe in evolution. People make the mistake today of looking at all our technology and concluding that mankind must be smarter than we used to be. This is a logical conclusion if you buy into evolution as a truth. People may have more data at their fingertips today but this doesn't mean they are any smarter or any wiser.

So what exactly does the first amendment really say? It says two things:

1. Congress is not to establish a state religion... it is not to place one Christian denomination above another.
2. That Congress is not to hinder the practice of religion.

The First Amendment was written to keep us from doing what happened in England where the government established a national church, the Church of England. It also was intended to keep the government from interfering with the church.

If the First Amendment was written to remove Christianity from all government institutions, as the ACLU suggests, isn't it odd that it took the government nearly two hundred years to figure that out? Why didn't they right then start telling the schools not to allow any Bible reading or prayer? Why didn't they immediately go to work on removing manger scenes and Scriptural scenes from all public places? Strange, isn't it that it wasn't until the 1960's that we finally figured out what the first amendment really meant?

It is pretty obvious what the anti-Christian forces are trying to do in our nation today. Rather than trying to revise history and re-interpret the Constitution, it would be much more honest if they just admit that they do not love Christ and want Him out of their sight! Jesus said in Mark 8:38...

"He who is ashamed of Me and My words in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes into the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Considering the tremendous effort that is going on in this generation to remove every trace of Him and His words from the sight of the American people, I can't help but think that He is ashamed of this country today.

I believe the Lord has been trying to shake us awake about the path away from Him that this nation is on. Our nation is at war today with terrorists who hate America. This war is only a physical manifestation of a spiritual battle. Islamic terrorists hate America because this nation, more than any other represents Christ in the world.

Now Moslems do have respect for Jesus considering Him to be an important teacher and prophet, but they reject His deity. So Moslems appear to accept Jesus but they reveal the superficiality of this acceptance by hating the freedoms we have as a result of God's blessing.

We have gotten complacent about the liberties we have in this country forgetting that the liberties we enjoy are from God...

2 Corinthians 3:17 - where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty

It is God who gave us our liberties and He will take them away if we continue to turn away from Him as a nation. This nation received a great wake-up call from God on September 11, 2001. This is the day that the Lord lowered His hedge of protection around us...

Psalms 127:1 - unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

The September 11th attack on our nation shook up our sense of security for a time though I think most Americans have been successful in putting it out of their mind today. But despite our complacency, we live in an age which is now characterized by terrorism. And the terrorist attack on September 11<sup>th</sup> didn't just shake up America, it rippled through the world...

Those who hate the United States also hate the freedom and democracy that this country has labored for other countries to have. Islamic terrorists do not just attack the U.S., they are against any who seek freedom and democracy, so most of the world is now involved one way or another in the war on terrorism.

The Bible tells us that the events leading up to the return of Jesus will be a series of world-shaking events like we had on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Jesus said the events leading up to His return will be "*the beginning of sorrows*" (Matthew 24:8). The Greek word translated "sorrows" here refers to birth pangs. As birth pangs, world-shaking events will increase in frequency and severity.

Jesus also said that in the time-frame prior to His return, there would be "*wars and rumors of wars*" (Matthew 24:6). I believe that the term "*rumors of wars*" is a reference to the modern conflicts we have today where we hear about wars going on but we go about our business as usual because it does not directly affect us. Those with loved ones in Iraq or Afghanistan are affected emotionally but in general, American life styles have not been changed by the war on terrorism. Every time I hear in the news about a terrorist act, I think about how desperately this fallen world needs the Prince of Peace to come.

I believe that the growing threat of terrorism is a trend that will eventually bring the world together to more effectively deal with this common problem. Our president has been under intense political pressure to work through the United Nations from the beginning of the Iraq war. The Bible tells in Revelation 17:12-13 that sovereign nations will give their power and authority to the coming world leader the Bible calls the Antichrist in 1 John 4:3.

The increasing political pressure to operate as part of the united world community shows that the stage is being set for a future world leader who will be a false savior of the world. But world politics aren't the only indicator that we're living in the season of the Lord's return...

Probably the most important prophecy that has been fulfilled in recent times is the re-establishing of the nation of Israel. The Bible says in many places that God will gather the Jews from among the nations prior to the Messiah's return. And once established in the land of Israel, the Jews would remain there as a nation forever, never to be uprooted again...

Ezekiel 37:21-25 – "Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land... Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever

This is pretty incredible when you consider that Israel ceased to be a nation in 70 A.D. being dispersed throughout the nations of the world then became a nation again in 1948.

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Lord brought to my mind a Bible verse which describes the age of terrorists: "*let the weak say, 'I am strong'*" in Joel 3:10. It is instructive to take a look at the context of the passage, so please turn in your Bibles to Joel 3:9-14. Joel is one of the Minor Prophets, the second book after Daniel. Joel being a minor prophet does not mean his message is of any less significance, it only is an indication that he was less verbose than the Major Prophets like Isaiah or Ezekiel.

This passage in Joel addresses the time when God pours out His wrath on the earth during the Great Tribulation. The attitude here that draws the enemies of God together at Armageddon is the same attitude that the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorists had...

Joel 3:9-14 – 9 Proclaim this among the nations: "Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. 10 Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, 'I am strong.'" 11 Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD. 12 "Let the

nations be awakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. 13 Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow-- for their wickedness is great." 14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

This passage is talking about events leading up to the battle of Armageddon which is referred to by the prophet Joel as "*the Valley of Jehoshaphat.*" The battle of Armageddon is the last event that happens before the Lord returns. The Bible has a lot to say about events during the 7-year period of time which culminates in Armageddon. Jesus called the second half of this seven-year period the Great Tribulation (in Matthew 24).

The context makes it clear that those who say "*I am strong*" are those who are gathering in the Valley of Jehoshaphat for the battle of Armageddon. The book of Revelation tells us that they are gathering there to do battle against Jesus Christ as He prepares to set up His millennial kingdom...

Revelation 17:14 - These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings;

Those who say "*I am strong*" are finding their strength in themselves and not in God. This should be contrasted with the Christian attitude expressed by the Apostle Paul when he was coming to terms with his "*thorn in the flesh...*"

2 Corinthians 12:10 - Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul didn't just say he was strong, he was strong when he depended on God's strength.

The age of terrorism is the era where "*the weak say I am strong.*" Note that in this era the weak will turn plowshares into swords, or in today's terms, they will take peaceful tools of productivity and turn them into weapons. This is what weak, deceived people did turning passenger airliners into guided missiles on September 11<sup>th</sup>. And they are doing the same thing in the Middle East with bombs strapped to their bodies or in cars and trucks. These weak people think they have power because of this terror tactic.

The Bible tells us about another great shaking that the world will experience prior to the Lord's coming that the church looks forward to: the rapture or resurrection of the saints:

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 - Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

The "Left Behind" novel series addresses what could happen in the wake of millions of born-again Christians vanishing off the face of the earth. You can be sure the world will be shaken. We don't know when the Lord will call His church out of the world. He said, "*Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming*" (Matthew 24:42). This fantastic event could happen at any time, there is nothing that has to occur before the rapture of the church. It may be the next great birth pang in God's plan. Certainly we know that the sequence of end-time events will be very rapid when they begin to unfold because, "*The end of it shall be with a flood*" (Daniel 9:26).

All these shakings of our world are but foreshadows of the final shaking of the world which God will do to usher in the eternal state...

2 Peter 3:10 - But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. (see also Revelation 21:1)

God will shake all of creation. There is nothing in this world that will not be shaken. But those who have trusted in Jesus Christ, God's provision for salvation, can not be shaken...

Hebrews 12:26-27 - He [God] has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

While the era where "*the weak say I am strong.*" is a scary period for our nation and the world, Christians can take comfort in knowing that God is still in control. And as we see events taking place that show the Lord's return as being near, this should cause us to draw near to Him and get on with doing what He has called us to do.

Maybe you don't feel any comfort from knowing that God is in control or that He is sending wake-up calls to our nation and the world. If this is the case, you should see this as God calling you into a relationship with Him so that He can bless you with His comfort. I would encourage you to let Jesus into your life immediately before it is too late...

2 Corinthians 6:2 - Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Jesus has already done everything necessary for you to have an eternal relationship with Him by paying the price for your sin. All that needs to be done is receive Him into your life.

Acts 2:21 - whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Those who are saved are citizens of the eternally blessed nation.