



The Law of Liberty

DO WE TRUST IN GOD?

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Abstract

From the earliest of days, the American founders knew America was something special, something that had yet to be proven. They were strong believers, with faith in God. They honored God with all their steps to build a better government and calling America “this Great Experiment” fit at that time with the newness of what God was calling them to do.

When America was finally realized and doing what God intended us to do, we never moved into God’s understanding of what America is...God’s example for self-government. Yet society never strayed from the comfort of what our founders had labeled this infant nation: an “experiment.”

We are now 245 years beyond our founding and have been separated from our founders by three plus generations and it is now time either to deliver this nation to her end or send her off to realize her full potential and future.

It comes down to Faith.

We cannot continue to label this nation as an experiment while claiming we are “One Nation Under God.” Since when has God started producing experiments? Experiments have ends. God is in the business of producing examples, examples are eternal.

If we continue to call the United States of America the Great Experiment, at some point the experiment will end and so will God’s Providence over us, as we can see it (the blessing being removed and persecution setting in) starting to manifest in some current events today. While we are still expecting that He provides His Blessing, all the while we are not showing Him Faith in His creation.

If we truly believe the United States of America was founded by God’s Providence, then we must choose to start speaking of ourselves as God’s Example over it and divorcing ourselves from our founders over calling this nation a Great Experiment. Thus, showing Faith in our Creator and who He is and what He has created.

America The Land of Liberty

“In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue;” it’s a phrase we learned early in our childhood, and it stays with you because it’s catchy and easy to remember. We also learned that because of that voyage, a new unknown continent sat on the other side of the known world and opened a whole new opportunity for civilization at that time.

THE DICHOTOMY

If I were to give you two words, example and experiment, what comes to mind for you? For me, they are opposing forms of thoughts. In my mind, examples are timeless and have no end whereas experiments are finite and have a beginning and an end and usually are purposed to reach a conclusion. I am going to use these two words to form the basis for what I am about to petition for your time and attention.

From the earliest of days, I remember hearing that this country was founded on God’s Providence. I’ve read about it, believe it, and have faith that America was truly founded through God’s Providence. It is documented in the letters of our founders and etched on every patriotic American heart. Our country felt so compelled to pay homage to our Creator, we went as far as putting “In God We Trust” on our currency, on our postage stamps and our pledge of allegiance. We eternalized our praise by placing the words “**Laus Deo**” on the eastern face of the Washington monument, so the first light to be shone on the capital is embraced with the words which mean “Praise be to God.” We have claimed to be a Christian nation, a nation that believes in Christ and a nation that has faith in Christ, for who he is and what he stands for. In the way that Christ came to set us free from Sin, America was founded to be the Land of Liberty.

When conducting a quick internet bible search on “liberty” many references come into focus. There is only one the Holy Spirit has put before me in James 2:12-13, it gets translated several different ways, but the English Standard Version (ESV) specifically translates “¹² So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”¹ (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV®)

My proposal is this: “How can we say as a nation, we have faith in God, faith that says, “In God We Trust”—that America was founded on God’s Providence and continue to speak about America as an experiment?—If you truly believe America was founded through God’s Providence, then we shall be calling America “The Example,” God’s Example of self-government from this point forward.”

¹ <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James%20%3A12-13&version=ESV>

The Great Experiment

There have been many leaders in our brief 245-year history that have referred to the United States of America as this “Great Experiment.” The intent here is to build a case why and how this continent and later nation was probably appropriately labeled as an experiment, but never made the transition to the example. In figure 1 below, you can see who and when referred to their nation or government as an experiment above the line, and below the line are events that were transpiring as the correspondences were being communicated to get a feeling for what was the pulse of the times.

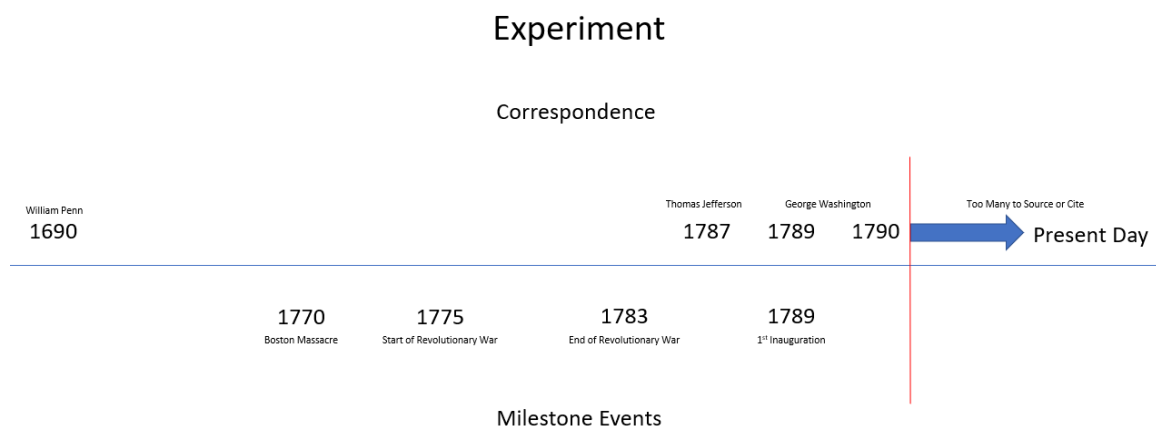


Figure 1 - Timeline Showing When the New Country is Referred to as an Experiment

1680

In the time of 1682-1684, during William Penn’s settling of Pennsylvania, he referred to his founding and governing of Pennsylvania as “The **Holy Experiment**” as he was trying to honor his creator with the way in which he was providing welfare² to its inhabitants. (Channel Press 35)

1787

Thomas Jefferson in a letter to David Hartley on 2 July 1787 “I have no fear that the result of our experiment will be that men may be trusted to govern themselves without a master.” (Jefferson)(<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0441>)

In this letter Jefferson is replying to David Hartley’s letter that was dated 23 April 1787, where Hartley, an English philosopher, is asking Jefferson for news of what’s going on in the American colonies. He had met Jefferson prior to this and appears to be using it to help establish some good rapport with Jefferson and the new American Colony.

² Welfare is defined here as general well-being and not as free government hand-outs.

Jefferson goes on to provide the latest news from America, specifically referring to an incident in Massachusetts, the purpose not yet known behind it, but probably being caused by people wanting their debts to be forgiven. He continues to rationalize it's only one of the thirteen "states" and happened only once in the past 11 of the 143 years and does not give the incident much attention. He goes on to provide confidence behind our ability to form a new government that is capable of meeting mans need for government and law in the very near future as he provides the information surrounding the meeting of states that had already met in Philadelphia.

1789

George Washington's inaugural address on 30 April 1789, after approximately two thirds of the way through the address, there is a line that comes across "which Heaven itself has ordained: And since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of Government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people." (Washington, Transcription)

1790

George Washington quote from a letter penned to Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay Graham on 9 January 1790—"The establishment of our new Government seemed to be the last great experiment, for promoting human happiness, by reasonable compact, in civil Society."

(Washington, Founders

Online)(<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-04-02-0363>)

In this letter George Washington is responding to Catherine from her letter to him in October of 1789. She apparently wrote to him to congratulate him for becoming the first President of the United States of America. He starts the letter by humbly replying with sincere gratitude and a true desire to stay away from politics and rather be in the private care of his farm. He took up his nomination and appointment out of duty to country first and foremost.

The background here is that the country was literally just beginning, it had a very short history, Washington had only been sworn in as the first President on April 30, 1789, only 254 days prior to penning this letter in reply. While this was more than likely private, it was probably on the minds of many at that time, there was a lot of uncertainty about the new country's future and direction.

He goes on to lament in the letter "To me, there is nothing in it, beyond the lustre which may be reflected from its connection with a power of promoting human felicity. In our progress towards political happiness my station is new; and, if I may use the expression, I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely any action, whose motives may not be subject to a double interpretation. There is scarcely any part of my conduct wch may not hereafter be drawn into precedent. Under such a view of the duties inherent to my arduous office, I could not but feel a diffidence in myself on the one hand; and an anxiety for the Community that every new arrangement should be made in the best possible manner on the other. If after all my humble but faithful endeavours to advance the felicity of my Country & Mankind; I may indulge a hope

that my labours have not been altogether without success, it will be the only real compensation I can receive in the closing Scenes of life.”

FOCUSED APPEAL

If we believe this nation was founded under Godly principles, and if we lose sight of why this nation was created under those principles, we will most certainly lose our grace that came with that belief.

His Providence has been found and documented in unlikely successes throughout our entire 245-year history. Success in the continent being found by chance and documented by Columbus in his ships logs and drawing very close parallels to the resurrection of Christ. (Manuel) Success through the founding (farmers fighting the time-period Super-power) and documented by unexplained circumstances when faced with certain defeat, they work out to be glorious mornings of evading the enemy with uncanny supernatural cover. (Manuel) Success in keeping the nation together through the Civil-War by ending human bondage within the United States. Success in America fighting and defeating the evil that perpetrated the Holocaust, success in passing legislation to finally end the civil rights laws that kept us from realizing what we had stated at our founding, “that All men are created equal.”

The Founders intent when founding this nation was based wholly on the Father’s Love for us. He gave us his example, Jesus Christ, who gave his life to take away the sins of the world and gave us the two commands to always obey, “to Love only God the Father and to Love one another as we would like to be loved.” It was evident in the Mayflower Compact, in the way the legal system was started, the Preamble, the Constitution. The examples are boundless; however, we must start living within our Destiny as the example and calling it the Example and not the Experiment.

Experiment Takeaway

After compiling a minimal number of instances, where I could find references of when our founding fathers had documented the very thought of this visionary construct of self-government and communicated that thought to others; I have some very personal observations.

Catch Phrase

Have you ever picked up a nickname you wish you hadn’t? Kind of like the biggest kid in class being called “Tiny.” Or you get a jingle from a commercial stuck in your head and no matter where you are in life you can recall it in all its glory? Can I direct you to the phrase we started with...”In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue.”

There’s something that’s kind of awe inspiring by continuing to call America this Great Experiment. On one hand, it pays homage to our ancestors and our forefathers whilst still giving

an edge of excitement about where we are headed...kind of like being on this expedition into the future, a journey into the unknown...explorers of sorts.

The Unknown

The new world was new and ripe for exploring. There were lands that had not been mapped and there were many opportunities to grow. There was excitement in the air and a healthy fear of the unknown and trying to figure it out. Independence, Freedom, Liberty...all of it was on the hearts and minds of everyone. If William Penn, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson were all writing openly about the uncertainty of the new nation, I'd imagine the rest of the country felt similarly the same way.

And in the same way we all came to know "In 1492—ocean blue" everyone became comfortable with knowing the uncertain future with the experiment explanation and for me gives me a rational way of accepting the risk of the unknown...The Great Experiment.

The Example

In 2018, I set out to study God's Providence in the founding of the United States of America. As I embarked on my journey, I was turned on to a specific book, "The Light and the Glory" by Peter Marshall and David Manuel. As I finished the first of three books, it finished with the American Revolution and as I did, I needed to take a business trip to Massachusetts. During my short trip in mid-September 2019, I set some time aside to visit some of the sites I had just finished reading about in the book.

My spiritual coach challenged me to step out of my comfort zone and provide our mentoring group a video documentary of the things I had learned over the year and capture anything the Holy Spirit might be imparting on me as I visited these sites. I recorded myself and explained what I was feeling in the moment and later shared with our group.

I started the day praying "Heavenly Father, thank you for this opportunity, may I embrace it and be worthy of Your Grace and Your Mercy. May this effort bring glory and honor to your name and all that I do, for you and for others. Give me the strength, courage, and wisdom; bless the Holy Spirit with my words and my actions. May he rise up in me and make me stronger and keep me safe and Bless this day."

My first visit was the Lexington Commons and I walked the grounds for over an hour taking in the awesome task that our Founders faced on April 19th 1775. Visiting historic sites such as Lexington Commons, Bunker Hill and Faneuil Hall; it hit me like a ton of bricks: when America was founded and named, it was literally translated into "the covenant lands of America."³ (Benner) See figure 2 below. Some also call America "The New Israel" or the way I understand it is, as God's promise to protect his chosen people of Israel.

³ <https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/modern-hebrew/usa.htm>

USA

By **Jeff A. Benner**

The "United States of America" is written in Hebrew as ארצות הברית של אמריקה (*artsot haberiyt shel america*). The noun ארצות (*artsot*) is the plural form of the word ארץ (*erets*, Strong's #776) meaning "land." The word הברית (*haberiyt*) is the noun ברית (*beriyt*, Strong's #1285) meaning "covenant" with the prefix ה (*ha*) meaning "the." The word של (*shel*) means "of." And the word אמריקה (*ameriqah*) is of course a Hebrew transliteration of the English word "America." When put together, this phrase literally reads, "the covenant lands of America."

Figure 2 - Hebrew Translation by Jeff A. Benner

It became movingly clear to me, in the way Christ died to free us from sin, those patriot farmers and merchants that believed in the freedom that they had been governing themselves by fought for our Independence and Liberty against the world's largest military of that time. They fought for their families and against tyranny...and they won.

The Covenant

When one thinks "covenant" what comes to mind? When I think covenant, I think "marriage." As I refer to the Hebrew translation of the English word "America," I cannot help but to correlate it as a marriage between God and America.

Think about it, in the book of Genesis God spoke "Light," and light appeared, he created the heavens and the earth all at the same time. Meaning all the lands of the earth were created at the very same time into existence...Europe, Asia, Australia, Antarctica, Africa, North and South America. Where the world was only civilized and known to the first five continents.

In the time before Christ, the land was there, unknown, undiscovered, and not being used to glorify God. America did not exist until it was her time to rise and follow God's plan. Our God that created America, is the same God that destroyed Jericho. When we say God created America, and that it was created by His Providence⁴, we mean that He was involved in making sure it succeeded and thrived in every way.

His Providence has been found and documented in unlikely successes throughout our entire 245-year history. Success in the continent being found by chance and documented by Columbus in his ships logs and drawing very close parallels to the resurrection of Christ. (Manuel) Success through the founding (farmers fighting the time-period Super-power) and documented by unexplained circumstances when faced with certain defeat, they work out to be glorious

⁴ 1-a-often capitalized: divine guidance or care; -b-capitalized: God conceived as the power sustaining and guiding human destiny. (Merriam-Webster)

mornings of evading the enemy with uncanny supernatural cover. (Manuel) Success in keeping the nation together through the Civil-War by ending human bondage within the United States. Success in America fighting and defeating the evil that perpetrated the Holocaust, success in passing legislation to finally end the civil rights laws that kept us from realizing what we had stated at our founding, “that All men are created equal.”

Becoming Real

As I soaked in the feel from Lexington Commons, I came across a name I had read and learned about, Jonas Parker, a colonial that was resolute in fighting the British and vowing to never run from a fight for freedom. He died that fateful day of 19 April 1775 when the British marched on the colony and the official start of the Revolutionary War. As I took it all in, I had my first of many prompts by the Holy Spirit, that of “The one thing other than Christ that was truly and purely Perfect, the idea of the Government this Nation was built upon.” It was built upon and out of Love. Love for one another so great, they died for the birth of this Nation as Christ died for every one of us. No matter how flawed.

What became apparent to me during my time there was the example of Christ. I saw His example in the way that Christ died for all our sins, his example of a selfless love. His great commandment to us all commands us to “love our God above all else and to love your neighbor as you love yourself.” As I reflected on His words, the image became clearer than I had ever seen it...Christ’s words were alive in the founding of America.

As the early patriots came together to fight the crown, they were living to act out his very commands. As they fought, they fought for each other, for their families, and for their freedom and liberty. They were there laying down their lives so that the American dream could be one-day realized. They were laying down their lives dying for Liberty as Christ died for us, freeing us from sin.

The Law of Liberty

In James chapter 2, he refers to the law of Liberty in verse 12 (ESV). The Life Application Study Bible offers commentary saying “As Christians, we are saved by God’s free gift (grace) through faith, not by keeping the law.” It goes on to say “God’s grace does not cancel our duty to obey him; it gives our obedience a new basis. The law is no longer an external set of rules, but it is a “law that sets you free”—one we joyfully and willingly carry out, because we love God and have the power of His Holy Spirit.”⁵

The Mayflower Compact, was the earliest known form of government established with resolve on the shores of the American continent. The colony of Roanoke was an experiment and did not survive the test of time. I believe, from Manuel & Marshall⁶, that Roanoke was doomed as they truly did not embody the law Christ set before us to Love one another as we Love ourselves. By contrast The Mayflower Compact at Plymouth was born of the community and was designed to look after one another and keep each other accountable. That colony desired to worship the

⁵ Life Application Study Bible, New Living Translation, 2nd Edition, page 2117

⁶ The Light and The Glory

God they followed to the new world because they were being persecuted for believing they way they did.

Conclusion

I have presented how and why we started calling America, The Great Experiment. How it was comfortable and relatable as our country did things never done as a free people before. However, we are now 245 years removed from our founding and we have managed to be such a good “experiment” that other countries around the world emulate our example by creating a form of government that promotes Liberty. We have set example after example by abolishing slavery, by securing and rescuing the world from tyranny during WWII, by ending segregation, by giving women the right to vote...

There are many times we have “experimented” and turns out that the experiment falls in-line with what our founders created in the Constitution. The Constitution was designed and written through debate, prayer, and fasting - taken from the basic design of the Mayflower Compact, the original blueprint of our design for self-government, founded on Christ’s instruction to “Love one Another.”

I truly believe we are to align our thoughts, our words and our actions with what God has for us; I believe God has created America as His example for self-government and I believe it is now time to start speaking it. The experiment has ended “America is the Great Example!”

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