

FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH

NATURE'S GOD

Text: Romans 1:18-32

Introduction:

1. Lesson One discussed the nature and function of human government.
2. According to the Bible, the function of government is to maintain societal order that promotes peace and liberty (Romans 13:1-7).
3. It was noted that America's Founding Fathers accepted God's view of the purpose of human government.
4. This leads one to consider what opinion the Founding Fathers held concerning the Bible.
5. However, to answer that question one must first consider their view of God.
6. Is the American system of government based upon a belief in God?
7. This study will investigate what the Bible teaches, and what the Founders believed, about the existence and nature of God.

- I. The Self-Evident God (Romans 1:18-21)
 - A. The words of the Declaration of Independence echo throughout the history of this country and in the hearts of its citizens.
 1. "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."
 2. The statement is bold: Both the existence and character of God are self-evident.
 - B. This sentiment echoes the clear teaching of Scripture (Romans 1:18-21).
 1. Paul declared that God has made Himself known to man.
 - a. "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them" (ESV).
 - b. "Because that which is known of God is manifest among them, for God did manifest it to them" (YLT).
 - c. "Because the thing known of God is clearly known within them, for God revealed it to them" (LITV).
 2. Furthermore, certain aspects of the nature of God are revealed in the natural, created world.
 - a. "For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse" (ASV).
 - b. "For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (ESV).
 3. Anyone with open eyes and an honest heart can see the evidence for the existence of God.
 - C. In fact, only a fool would deny the reality of God (Psalms 14 and 19).

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II. Nature's God (Romans 1:22-32)

- A. The Founders often used this phrase to refer to God.
 - 1. The Declaration of Independence expressed the people's desire "to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them."
 - 2. This descriptive name had reference to God's right to rule His world.
- B. If there is a Creator, then the world is under His power and authority.
 - 1. Thus, ungodly and unrighteous men were under the wrath of God (Romans 1:18).
 - 2. Their wickedness was not excused because they willingly darkened their foolish hearts (Romans 1:21).
 - 3. They declared their foolishness to be wisdom, leading them into deeper depravity and dangerous darkness (Romans 1:22-32).
- C. The consensus of the Founding Fathers agreed with this assessment of man's wickedness.
 - 1. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 – 43 BC) was a Roman philosopher and political writer who described Natural Law and Nature's God.
 - 2. In his studies, Cicero came to recognize the existence of a Creator – an intelligent, Supreme Designer who cared for the creation.
 - 3. He believed that "the only intelligent approach to government, justice, and human relations is in terms of the laws which the Supreme Creator has already established. The Creator's order of things is called Natural Law" (W. Cleon Skousen, *The 5,000 Year Leap*, pg. 39).
 - 4. Furthermore, the Creator imbued man with Reason – the ability to think rationally and with common-sense to understand and apply Natural Law.
- D. Thus, a man who rejects God and His Word falls under His wrath.

III. Belief in the Existence of God

- A. By studying the writings of America's Founding Fathers, one will learn that nearly all of them accepted the existence of God.
- B. The Declaration of Independence ended with an appeal "to the Supreme Judge of the world" and "with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence."
- C. Samuel Adams: "I . . . recommend my Soul to that Almighty Being who gave it, and my body I commit to the dust, relying upon the merits of Jesus Christ for a pardon of all my sins" (Will of Samuel Adams).
- D. John Hancock: "I John Hancock, . . . being advanced in years and being of perfect mind and memory - thanks be given to God - therefore calling to mind the mortality of my body and knowing it is appointed for all men once to die [Hebrews 9:27], do make and ordain this my last will and testament...Principally and first of all, I give and recommend my soul into the hands of God that gave it: and my body I recommend to the earth . . . nothing doubting but at the general resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mercy and power of God" (Will of John Hancock).

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- E. John Dickinson: "Rendering thanks to my Creator for my existence and station among His works, for my birth in a country enlightened by the Gospel and enjoying freedom, and for all His other kindnesses, to Him I resign myself, humbly confiding in His goodness and in His mercy through Jesus Christ for the events of eternity" (Will of John Dickinson).
- F. Patrick Henry: "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."
- G. Robert Treat Paine: "I desire to bless and praise the name of God most high for appointing me my birth in a land of Gospel Light where the glorious tidings of a Savior and of pardon and salvation through Him have been continually sounding in mine ears."
- H. Benjamin Rush: "My only hope of salvation is in the infinite, transcendent love of God manifested to the world by the death of His Son upon the cross. Nothing but His blood will wash away my sins. I rely exclusively upon it. Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!"
- I. Roger Sherman: "I believe that there is one only living and true God, existing in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. . . . that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are a revelation from God. . . . that God did send His own Son to become man, die in the room and stead of sinners, and thus to lay a foundation for the offer of pardon and salvation to all mankind so as all may be saved who are willing to accept the Gospel offer."
- J. Belief in the existence of God is still rational and righteous today (Hebrews 11:6)!
- K. Yet, that belief must be joined with obedience (James 2:19-20).

Conclusion:

- 1. The United States of America was founded by a people who largely accepted and believed in the existence of God.
- 2. However, no matter what country one lives in, the evidence for the existence of God is everywhere to be found.
- 3. The wise person will surrender to this evidence and submit to the God of Heaven.