

Ancient Israel inspired Pilgrims' Experiment in Self-Government –

Thoughts taken from: **The American Minute - Bill Federer**

SEPTEMBER 16, 1620, according to the Gregorian calendar, 102 passengers set sail on the Pilgrims' ship, *Mayflower*, with the blessings of their separatist pastor, John Robinson. Their 66-day journey of 2,750 miles encountered storms so rough the beam supporting the main mast cracked and was propped back in place with "a great iron screw."

Intending to land in Virginia, they were blown off-course to Massachusetts. With the weather too dangerous to sail, the captain insisted they disembark. With no "king-appointed" person on board with authority to take charge, the Pilgrims gave themselves authority and created their own government -- *The Mayflower Compact*. Where did they get this idea?

From their separatist **Pastor John Robinson**, considered one of the founders of the Congregational Church.

Of the Pilgrims' landing at Plymouth, Massachusetts, **Governor William Bradford** wrote: "Being thus arrived in a good harbor, and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the **God of Heaven** who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the **firm and stable earth**, their proper element."

Though half died that first bitter winter, Governor **Bradford** wrote: "Last and not least, they cherished a great hope and inward zeal of laying good foundations ... for the propagation and advance of the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in the remote parts of the world."

Franklin D. Roosevelt stated October 28, 1936, regarding America's founding:

"Rulers ... increase their power over the common men. The seamen they sent to find gold found instead the way of escape for the common man from those rulers..."

What they found over the Western horizon was not the silk and jewels of Cathay/China but MANKIND'S SECOND CHANCE - a chance to create a new world after he had almost spoiled an old one...

... **The Almighty** seems purposefully to have withheld that SECOND CHANCE until the time when men would most need and appreciate liberty...

Those who came ... had courage ... to abandon language and relatives ... to start ... without influence, without money...

Perhaps God's Provision did prepare this American continent to be a place of the
SECOND CHANCE

At the Bicentennial Celebration of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock, Secretary of State **Daniel Webster** stated December 22, 1820:

"Let us not forget the **religious character** of **our origin**.
Our fathers were brought here by their **high veneration for the Christian religion**.
They journeyed by its light, and labored in its hope.
They sought to **incorporate its principles** with the elements of their society, and to
diffuse its influence **through all their institutions, civil, political, or literary**.
Let us cherish these sentiments, and extend this influence still more widely; in the full
conviction, that that is the happiest society which partakes in the highest degree of the
mild and peaceful spirit of Christianity."

Dr. Paul Jehle, Executive Director of the Plymouth Rock Foundation, whose ancestors
were on the Mayflower, wrote "Mayflower Compact Day" (*Plymouth Rock Foundation's
E-News*, November, 2011):

"We remember when the *Mayflower Compact* was signed on board the *Mayflower*, while it
lay anchored in what is now Provincetown Harbor, November 11, 1620 ...

A compact is a covenant ... Since the Pilgrims were children of the Reformation, their
view of **covenant** came from the **Bible**.

It was **God** that initiated the concept of **covenant**, first with Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:15-
17 and 2:24).

God also made a **covenant** with **Noah** in Genesis 9

Cutting' covenant with **Abraham** in Genesis 15.

Throughout the **Bible covenants** were used both **vertically** (with God directly) and
horizontally (with humans) to depict **God's process of bringing people into unity with
Him and one another.**"

At the time of America's founding, nearly the entire world was ruled by **kings who
claimed** to have a "**divine right**" to rule over people.

England's King James I declared:

"Kings are ... God's lieutenants upon earth ... sit upon God's throne ... The king is overlord
of the whole land ... master over every person ... having power over the life & death of
every one."

France's King, Louis XIV, is credited with saying:

"I am the State"; and **"It is legal because I wish it."**

The early settlers inquired of **Rev. Hooker** how they should set up their government.

Nearly a century before Europe's "Age of Enlightenment," **Rev. Thomas Hooker** preached a sermon, May 31, 1638, explaining:

Deuteronomy 1:13 "Choose you wise men and understanding and known among your tribes and I will make them heads over you captains over thousands, captains over hundreds, fifties, tens."

The choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by Gods own allowance...

The privilege of **election** ... belongs to **the people** ... according to the blessed will and law of God.

The foundation of authority is laid firstly in the **free consent of the people.**"

The ideas proposed in **Hooker's** sermon were revolutionary as for most of the world, the foundation of authority was the will of a divinely-appointed king, emperor, czar, sultan, maharaja, or chieftain.

- Instead of the top-down government of a "divinely-appointed" king, government was to be bottom-up, like the roots of a tree drawing nourishment from every citizen's involvement.

The Fundamental Orders were used in **Connecticut** till 1818, serving as a blueprint for other **New England** colonies and eventually **The United States Constitution**.

In **New England**, instead of separation of church and state, it was the **pastors and churches that created the state!**

President Calvin Coolidge stated at the 150th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Philadelphia, July 5, 1926:

"The principles ... which went into the Declaration of Independence ... are found in ... **the sermons ... of the early colonial clergy** who were earnestly undertaking to instruct their congregations in the great mystery of how to live.

They preached equality because they believed in the **fatherhood of God** and the **brotherhood of man**.

They justified freedom by the text that we are all created in the divine image...

Placing every man on a level where he acknowledged no superiors, where no one possessed any right to rule over him, he must inevitably choose his own rulers through a system of self-government..."

- While European kings were burning people at the stake for not believing the way they did, New England pastors concluded that since Jesus never forced anyone to follow Him, they could not either.

They determined that since the KINGDOM OF GOD can NEVER BE FORCED from the top-down-- the only way for it to happen was if the majority of PEOPLE held godly values and voted for REPRESENTATIVES holding their values, then LAWS would be passed reflecting those values, and the values of the KINGDOM OF GOD could come **voluntarily from the bottom-up.**

Romans 13:1

"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is NO AUTHORITY EXCEPT that which GOD HAS ESTABLISHED."

God allowed for America's founders to establish a **government** where, instead of a single man being the supreme authority, **THE PEOPLE are the SUPREME AUTHORITY.** In essence, the **U.S Constitution** was a way for **the PEOPLE** to prevent **one political leader**, such as a **President**, from **ruling through Executive Order.**

Signer of the Constitution **Governor Morris** wrote:

"This magistrate is not the king. THE PEOPLE are THE KING."

John Jay, the First Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, wrote in *Chisholm v. Georgia*, 1793:

"THE PEOPLE are the SOVEREIGN of this country."

James Madison wrote in *Federalist No. 46*, 1788:

"The ULTIMATE AUTHORITY ... resides in THE PEOPLE ALONE."

Abraham Lincoln said in a debate with Stephen Douglas:

"THE PEOPLE of these United States are the rightful MASTERS of both Congresses and Courts."

President Ronald Reagan opened the John Ashbrook Center in 1983, stating of America's founders:

"The Founding Fathers understood that only by making government the servant, not the master, only by positing SOVEREIGNTY in THE PEOPLE and not the state can we hope to protect freedom."

President Donald J. Trump stated January 20, 2017:

"The United States of America, is your country. What truly matters is not which party controls our government, but whether our government is controlled by THE PEOPLE."

James Wilson wrote in his *Lectures on Law*, 1790-91:

"In a free country, EVERY CITIZEN forms a part of the SOVEREIGN POWER: he possesses a vote."

Voting is not just a **right**, but a **responsibility** for which every citizen will be held accountable to God. Not to vote is to **abdicate** the throne.

Sam Adams stated in 1781:

"Let EACH CITIZEN remember at the moment he is offering his VOTE ... that he is executing one of the most solemn trusts in human society for which he is ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD.

Socialism is a **creative sales campaign for dictatorship.**

People will not **knowingly surrender control of their lives**, so those selling dictatorship have two methods to take power from the PEOPLE:

- 1) **FEAR**: When PEOPLE are in fear they will **trade freedom for security**;
- 2) **FREE STUFF**: In exchange for entitlements, PEOPLE will **incrementally trade freedom for dependency.**

Where did America's founders get the idea of people ruling themselves?

- They did draw some ideas from **English Common Law** and the **Magna Carta**, which limited the arbitrary power of a king.
- They did draw some ideas from the **Roman Republic** and the **Athenian Democracy**.

Ultimately, though, America's New England founders looked to Ancient Israel:

Harvard President Samuel Langdon's address June 5, 1788, titled "**The Republic of the Israelites an Example to the American States**," stating:

"As was the twelve tribes of ISRAEL, may we form the thirteen states of the American union...

The ISRAELITES may be considered as a pattern to the world in all ages ... Government ... on republic principles, required laws; without which it must have degenerated immediately into ... absolute monarchy...

How unexampled was this quick progress of the ISRAELITES, from abject slavery, and almost total lack of order, to a national establishment perfected in all its parts far beyond all other kingdoms and states!

From a mere mob, to a well regulated nation, under a government and laws far superior to what any other nation could boast!"

Langdon concluded:

- "It was a long time after the **Law of Moses** was given before the rest of the world knew anything of government by law.

Dr. Pat Robertson wrote in *America's Dates with Destiny*, 1986:

"What was happening in America had no real precedent, even as far back as the city-states of Greece. The only real precedent was established thousands of years before by **THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL** in the **covenant** with **God** and with **each other**."

The book *"Rise of the Tyrant: Two of Change to Chains-The 6,000 Year Quest for Global Control"* examines in detail:

***Ancient Israel** was the first well-recorded instance of an entire nation ruled without a king, that first 400 year period in the Promised Land.

***Ancient Israel** taught that **everyone, male and female**, were made **in the image of the Creator** who was **not a respecter of persons**, commanding judges to **treat everyone equally before the law**. This was the beginning of the **concept of equality** on planet earth.

***Ancient Israel** had a system of honesty, as God hates unjust weights and measures. This provided a basis for commerce.

***Ancient Israel** had the land divided up and permanently titled to each individual family. This prevented a dictator from gathering up the land and putting the people back into slavery. If someone owned land, they could accumulate possessions:

- The Bible called this being blessed; Karl Marx called it being a capitalist.

***Ancient Israel** had a bureaucracy-free welfare system. When someone harvested their field, they left the gleanings for the poor.

***Ancient Israel** was the first nation where everyone was taught to read.

***Ancient Israel** had no police, as the people were not only taught the Law, they were accountable to enforce it.

Albert Einstein stated:

"The strength of the Constitution lies entirely in the determination of each citizen to defend it. Only if **every single citizen** feels duty bound to do his share in this defense are constitutional rights secure."

***Ancient Israel** had no prisons, as the Law required swift justice at the city gates and a "city of refuge" where fugitives could flee to await a trial.

***Ancient Israel** had no standing army, as every man/now women are in the militia, armed, and ready at a moment's notice to defend their community.

***Ancient Israel** had the people of every town gather in the meeting house -- synagogue -- where they were taught the Law and where they **chose their elders** who would sit in the gates:

- Deuteronomy 1:3-13: "How can I myself alone bear ... your burden? ... **TAKE YOU** wise men, and understanding, and **KNOWN AMONG YOUR TRIBES**, and I will make them rulers over you."
- Deuteronomy 16:18–19 "Judges and officers **SHALT THOU MAKE IN ALL YOUR GATES** which the Lord your God giveth you throughout your tribes."
- Exodus 18:21 "Moreover you shall provide **OUT OF ALL THE PEOPLE** able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

But why would a person obey internal morals?

Ancient Israel had the key ingredients:

- 1) God is watching everyone;
- 2) God wants you to be fair/honest;
- 3) God will hold you accountable in the future.
 - If you had the opportunity to steal and not get caught, you might considered it.
 - But if you remember God is watching, that He wants you to be fair, and that He will hold you accountable in the future, you would hesitate.
 - This is called having a "**conscience**."
 - If everybody in the nation believes this, there would be complete order with no police having to enforce laws.

Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan stated in 1908:

- "There is a powerful restraining influence in the belief that an All-seeing eye scrutinizes every thought and word and act of the individual."
- This only works with the God of the Bible.
- An Islamic Allah permits lying, stealing, and raping infidel non-Muslims.
- Only the God of the Bible declares that all men and women are equal, made in the image of the Creator, and to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

When the **Levites** and priests neglected teaching the **Law** "every man did what was right in their own eyes," immorality and domestic chaos resulted, and the people begged for a king to restore order.

As Israel demanded a king to be like other nations; the prophet **Samuel** wept, and the Lord told him, "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them."

Israel got King Saul, who shortly thereafter killed most of the priests.

Harvard President Samuel Langdon, in his address "Government Corrupted by Vice," May 31, 1775, referred to ancient Israel:

"The only form of government which had a proper claim to a divine establishment, was so far from including the idea of a king, that it was a high crime for **Israel** to ask to be in this respect like other nations; and when they were thus gratified, it was rather as **a just punishment.**"

- This is a warning [given in May 31, 1775], to republics, that if the consciousness of God is removed and people yield to their unrestrained selfish passions and lusts, there will be domestic chaos, random violence, mobs smashing windows and looting in the streets.
- In this crisis, people will beg for a strong leader to restore order.
- This leader will send militarized police down the street, who will go house to house collecting all the weapons.
- Order will indeed be restored, but when the dust settles, the people will have given up ruling themselves and will have returned to being ruled by a king.

Could various state and national leaders in America, in times of crises, usurp power and fundamentally transform the country into a dictatorship?

- Look at what's happening with the direction of America right now !

SONG: "MY AMERICA"

For the American Republic to last, citizens must learn from the early New England pastors, from ancient Israel, and return to the God of the Bible.

Noah Webster wrote in the preface of his 1828 *Webster's Dictionary*:

"The Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government ought to be instructed ...

No truth is more evident than that the Christian faith must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people."