

“Ask for the Ancient Paths!”

Jeremiah 6:16-19

Intro. – History is so important. The older I get, the more I realize how significant history is. Now, what we’ve learned from history is that we have not learned from history. Our text is history in its purest form. Jeremiah is an historical figure. Jerusalem and the nation of Israel are historical. Jeremiah is giving God’s message to God’s people. That message is more than relevant for our nation today. America needs to *ask for the ancient paths!* It’s a call back to our roots.

Writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn said, “To destroy a people you must first sever their roots.” This is exactly what God is saying through Jeremiah. The call to *ask for the ancient paths* is a call to get back to God – to get back to one’s roots.

I want to take this message in that very direction. What made and makes America GREAT has nothing to do with ingenuity, sophistication, or superior wisdom and wealth. America is GREAT for one reason – she was founded on *the ancient paths* of God!

Older and younger alike are hearing less of the real reason behind America’s greatness. Thus, it is necessary that we honor God in worship today through this “Patriotic Service.”

What are our *ancient paths* as a nation? Why ask for these *ancient paths*? Will succeeding generations be taught the truth? What emphasis and direction is our nation being given today?

Purpose: to see why it is necessary to understand the roots of America

I THE WAY IT WAS

- the historical record makes clear – Christianity is the base of our nation, government, and education:

A. The Base of Our Nation

1. America’s discovery reveals much – C. Columbus (person of whom we’ve heard much lately... (all of which isn’t close to the truth...) was given “professional opinion” assuring him that dragons and death awaited him beyond the uncharted waters. Why then did he risk the journey?
 - a. “All those who heard about my enterprise rejected it with laughter, scoffing at me... Who doubts that this illumination was from the Holy Spirit? I attest that He, with marvelous rays of light, consoled me through the holy and sacred Scriptures... He inflamed me with a sense of great urgency... No one should be afraid to take on any enterprise in the name of our Savior, if it is right and if the purpose is purely for His holy service... And I say that the sign which convinces me... is the preaching of the Gospel recently in so many lands.”
 - b. 100 settlers founding Georgia – “When they touched shore, they kneeled in thanks to God. They said, ‘Our end in leaving our native country is not to gain riches and honor, but singly this: to live wholly to the glory of God.’”
2. America’s independence from England
 - a. Samuel Adams (Father of American Revolution) never separated the fight for freedom from Biblical principles. During the beginning struggles of independence, Adams set aside days of fasting and prayer to “seek the Lord and His intervention on America’s behalf.”
 - b. there were open declarations of the Colonists’ reliance upon God causing one “crown appointed governor” to write: “If you ask an American, who is his master? He will tell you he has none, nor any governor but Jesus Christ.”
 - c. this may well have given rise to the cry throughout the colonies: “No king but King Jesus!”
 - d. the inevitable became obvious; thus, on July 2, 1776 the Declaration of Independence was approved in principle and July 4th was officially declared that the colonies were separating from “...the tyranny of Great Britain.”
 - e. the Liberty Bell was rung July 8, 1776 at the first public reading of this independence. Why? The inscription on the bell is taken from the Bible (Leviticus 25:10) – “Proclaim liberty

throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.” Thus, the symbol most closely associated with the Revolution proclaims the Bible and civil government bound together!

B. The Base of Our Government

1. There is so much material substantiating the Founding Fathers and what their *intent* was behind the Constitution...
2. Quotes to share but a few:
 - a. John Witherspoon – “It is in the man of piety and inward principle, that we may expect to find the uncorrupted patriot, the useful citizen, and the invincible soldier. God Grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable and that the unjust attempts to destroy the one, may in the issue tend to the support and establishment of both.”
 - b. Patrick Henry – ”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!”
 - c. John Jay – “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.”
 - d. Alexander Hamilton – “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness... The mere politician... ought to respect and cherish them... Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle... Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?”
 - e. Noah Webster – “The moral principles and precepts contained in the Scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws... All the miseries and evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery, and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible.”
 - f. Alexis de Tocqueville – “Upon my arrival in the United States, the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there, the more did I perceive the great political consequences resulting from this state of things, to which I was unaccustomed. In France, I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom pursuing courses diametrically opposed to each other, but in America I found that they were intimately united and that they reigned in common over the same country... The American combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds, that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other.”
 - g. Supreme Court of 1892 – “This is a religious people. This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation... These are not individual sayings, declarations of private persons: they are organic utterances; they speak the voice of the entire people... These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation.”

Summary: 106 out of 108 early colleges in the USA were founded on the Bible... By the Civil War “non-religious” colleges could be counted on one hand. Christian education trained our early statesmen, patriots and leaders. To such we owe our nation being what she was and is!

II THE WAY IT IS

A. Church and State Have Been Separated

1. The phrase “separation of church and state” is not found in the Constitution; yet, today it would seem it is the only “phrase” we hear!

2. 1st amendment was/is restriction of “state religion” or “state denomination”... i.e. it is a safeguard against governmental tyranny and NOT religious expression.
3. There is no “wall of separation” in Constitution, UNLESS it is a wall intended by founding fathers to keep government out of the Church! Jefferson’s words have been twisted to mean the exact opposite; so, today government is PROTECTED from the Church!
4. Note: Constitution of former USSR – “The church in the USSR is separated from the state, and the school from the church.”

B. Supreme Court Has Ruled Opposite of God

1. Since 1947, the Supreme Court’s ruling on the First Amendment have completely opposed original intent of Constitution and founding fathers are being ignored...
2. Illus. – three men quoted most by Founders were Montesquieu, Blackstone, and Locke. Yet, there was a source the Founders cited four times more often than either Montesquieu or Blackstone, and twelve times more often than Locke. What was that source? The Bible! The Bible accounted for 34 percent of all the Founders’ quotes. Another 60 percent of their quotes were drawn from authors who had derived their ideas from the Bible. Therefore, it can be shown that 94 percent of their quotes are based either directly or indirectly on the Bible. Even major news magazines have conceded that “historians are discovering that the Bible, perhaps even more than the Constitution is our Founding document.” The fact that the Founders quoted the Bible far more frequently than any other source is an impressive testimony to its importance in the foundation of our government.

C. Education Has Ignored God

1. Alexis de Tocqueville – “There is no country in the whole world in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America and there can be no greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity to human nature, than that its influence is more powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation on earth.”
2. It’s no coincidence this nation where Christianity has had the greatest influence was also the world’s most enlightened and free!
3. This is the way it was BUT certainly not the way it is today!

III THE WAY IT OUGHT TO BE

- like the nation of Israel – America is being urged to REPENT = “Ask for the ancient paths!”
- we need to get back to our “roots” which means getting back to God!
- Edmund Burke – “All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”

A. Practice Biblical Principle of Accountability

1. Read and do the Word of God...!
2. Read the Constitution...
3. Abe Lincoln – “It is the duty of nations... to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God... and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.”

B. Practice Biblical Principle of Truth

1. John 8:32 – “...*truth shall make you free.*”
2. Abe Lincoln – “But for the Bible we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man’s welfare... are to be found portrayed in it.”
3. Don’t give up on our schools – fight for them...!

C. Practice Biblical Principle of Responsibility

1. James 4:17 “*Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.*”

2. Be more politically active by being more *Christian* in the truest sense...

D. Practice Biblical Principle of Faith, Hope and Love

1. God makes a majority
2. All that needs to be “restored” what has been lost in America is for the majority to rise up and *ask for the ancient paths!*

Conclusion: French historian Francois Guizot, asked James Russell Lowell, “How long will the American Republic endure?”

Lowell replied, “As long as the ideas of the men who founded it continue dominant!”

Is there any question why it is necessary for you and me to know and understand the roots and foundation of this nation? Ask for the ancient paths, brethren! America was great because of the founding fathers’ faith in God and His Word!! She can be restored to greatness no other way!!!