

THE BIBLE AND THE CONSTITUTION

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In 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court threw Bible reading out of the public schools. This was no small or casual development. To judge from their own writings, the Founding Fathers might well have considered this action by the Court to be an impeachable offense.

The Founders were well aware that the entire civilization of the Western world had been built on the moral and legal structure of the Bible. They knew that the Moslems (as stated in the Koran), the Jews (as stated in the Old Testament), and the Christians (as stated in both the Old and New Testaments) all considered the Bible to be the foundation of their laws and their morals.

Unfortunately, in our day too few people become profound students of the Bible. But the Founders were; and many of their most significant contributions came from the Bible, as we pointed out in *The Making of America*.

Washington stated: "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

Thomas Jefferson said: "The Bible is the cornerstone of liberty.... I have always said, I will always say, that the studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better citizens, better fathers, better husbands."

John Adams said: "So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society."

Notice that they are not talking about any particular creed or denomination, They were talking about liberty, good government, wholesome morals, and qualities of good character.

William Blackstone pointed out in his famous *Commentaries on the Laws of England* that virtually the entire system of Anglo-American jurisprudence is based on biblical law. A few examples with sample citations will demonstrate his point:

Jefferson's statement that we are "endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights" comes straight out of biblical law. (Life -- Genesis 9:5-6; liberty -- Jeremiah 34:17; property -- Deuteronomy 19:14; 5:19, 21; etc.)

The concept that "all men are created equal," and that we are responsible to our Creator for the things we do, is based on biblical law. (Details are set forth in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and in Revelation 20:12.)

The concept that no government can rule legitimately without the consent of the people is based on biblical law. (See 2 Samuel 2:4; 1 Chronicles 29:22. For an example of a leader who was rejected, see 2 Chronicles 10:16.)

The caption on the Liberty Bell which says, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," comes from the Bible. (See Leviticus 25:10.)

The concept of dividing Americans into small, manageable units and setting up townships where every person could have a voice and a vote is based on biblical law. (See Deuteronomy 1:12-18.)

Compelling criminals to compensate their victims for losses or injuries is also taken from biblical law. (See Exodus 21 and 22. The only crime for which no "satisfaction" could be given was first-degree murder; the penalty was death. See Numbers 35:31.)

Practically all of the fundamental principles of morality which distinguish right from wrong were taken directly out of the Bible. (See Exodus 20:317; Deuteronomy 5:6-21; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 7:12.)

When the Founders passed the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 (the same year they authored and signed the Constitution), they provided in that ordinance that the fundamentals of religion and the precepts of morality should be taught in the schools. Imagine how shocked the Founders would be to learn that in our day we have made Bible study in the schools illegal.

Every American should read the Bible, because it is there that you will find "the rock from which we were hewn and the pit from which we were dug."