

CIC 7-5-2026, 250th Anniversary of USA.

This Land Of 250 Years – WorshipHouse Media

I love America. We lived overseas for several years, and I love America.

I'd like to begin with an amazing story of thunder saving ancient Israel – yes thunder!

- Israel had no king. Samuel was both the religious leader and semi-political leader.
- Samuel sensed that Israel was mixing the worship of the true God with the pagan god, Ashtoreth (love, fertility, war).

Samuel called a sacred assembly. 'They also went without food all day and confessed that they had sinned against the Lord (1Sa 7:6 NLT).'

- The Philistines heard about the sacred assembly and Israel's repentance.
- They thought it was the perfect time to attack.
- But Israel heard of their attack, so Samuel offered a sacrifice and said, 'Don't stop pleading with the Lord our God to save us from the Philistines (1Sa 7:8 NLT)!'

The Lord answered their prayers (v. 9).

- As the Philistines were about to attack, 'The Lord spoke with a mighty voice of thunder from heaven that day, and the Philistines were thrown into such confusion that the Israelites defeated them (1Sa 7:10 NLT).'
- That must have been some thunder.

After Israel's victory, Samuel took a large stone and named it 'Ebenezer,' which means 'the stone of help.' That stone was a memorial that 'Up to this point the Lord has helped us (1Sa 7:12 NLT)!'

- This Ebenezer stone memorialized God's help for a nation.
- I love that Samuel said, 'up to this point.' That means he expected God's blessing and favor in the future.
- Today, like Samuel's Ebenezer stone, we can say 'up to this point, God has helped America.'

My text today is: 'The plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

¹²Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord (Ps 33:11-12a NIV).'

- This promise was to Israel, but I believe America will continue to be blessed if we keep God first.

Today, we seek God's blessing on America and promise to do our part to be a nation who honors God.

Blessed is the Nation
250th Anniversary of the USA



How government intersects with Christianity is rarely discussed here at CIC, while in other churches, it's politics every Sunday. Today, let's ...

- Look at what the Bible says about our relationship to government.
- Look at how our spiritual ancestors engaged with their government as an example for us today.
- Highlight some great things about America.
- Pray for God's blessing over America.

Let's jump right into what the Bible has to say about governments and believers.

1. Governments and Believers.

The ancient believers lived under five types of governments.

Bible Types of Government

1. Patriarchal – family-base authority centered on the head of the household. This was during the times of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.
2. Theocracy – God Himself was the direct ruler. This was during the time of Moses, Joshua.
3. Tribal – a loose alliance of tribes with no centralized king. The time of the judges.
4. Monarchy – a centralized kingship. Saul, David, Solomon, divided kingdom.
5. Imperial rule – foreign empires ruled over Israel / Judah. In order, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Rome ruled over Israel.

Jesus lived under the Roman government.

Under Roman Rule

Jesus separated earthly governments and heavenly authority. Two examples:

- 'Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God (Lk 20:25 NLT).'
- Respectfully to Pilate, 'Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." ³⁷ Pilate said, "So you are a king (Jn 18:36-37a NLT)?"'

Paul's view is more nuanced.

Normally Paul would say, 'But we are citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20 NLT).'

But on two occasions Paul used his Roman citizenship to his advantage.

- In Philippi he told a jailer, 'They have publicly beaten us without a trial and put us in prison—and we are Roman citizens. So now they want us to leave secretly? Certainly not! Let them come themselves to release us (Acts 16:37 NLT).'
- In Jerusalem, he told a Roman commander, 'I was born a citizen (Acts 22:28 NIV).'
- And he was proud of the believers 'who belong to Caesar's household (Phil 4:22 NIV).'

Our world today is a lot more complex than in Bible times. Things are very scary ...

- Genocide
- Nuclear weapons
- Rail guns
- EMP attacks
- Bio-weapons – things not imagined by the ancients.

There are many types of Government today:

- Monarchies.
- Autocrats / oligarchies.
- Theocracies. And of course ...
- Democracies – rule by consent of the governed.

America is unique. Taking parts of democracy from ancient Athens, and ideas of a Republic from ancient Rome, America has the longest-surviving written constitution.

- As citizens we have a voice in government; we elect our government.
- If Paul used his citizenship to influence his situation, then we have every right to do so as well.

How are we as Christians and citizens to live in America?

Interestingly, our theology of the end times affects how we live today as citizens.

- How we see the end of determines how we live.
- There are two incorrect and extreme views on the end times.

Two extreme views ...

1. 'This world is all there is.' – engage because there is no afterlife.

- Justice and utopia are brought about by human effort.
- A loving God would not 'judge' the world.
- Political activism is the work of the Church.
- 'Prophetically, speak truth to power.'

2. 'This world is going to burn.' – withdraw because there is no hope.

- Justice and utopia are only in the new heavens and new earth.
- Don't worry about justice or the poor because God will sort it out.¹
- Politics is not the work of the Church.
- 'Maranatha, come LORD Jesus.'

A balanced biblical view holds these two views together – both are Biblical! We should work towards justice and live a holy life as we wait.

- On the one hand, we should vote and work towards a better America. 'What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Mi 6:8 NIV).'
- On the other hand, we should keep our eyes on the sky. We should not be disappointed when we cannot make heaven on earth – because of the evil in the human heart. 'Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. ¹¹ Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live (2Pe 3:10-11 NLT).' No earthly nation will ever be heaven.

Today, we seek God's blessing on America and promise to do our part to be a nation who honors God.

Daniel and Jeremiah show us how to live faithfully in a land that is not yet what it could be.

2. Daniel & Jeremiah.

Daniel

Daniel was carried off to Babylon as a young man.

He acknowledged that God was the supreme ruler and caused nations to rise and fall.

Daniel said, 'Praise the name of God forever and ever, for he has all wisdom and power. ²¹ He controls the course of world events; he removes kings and sets up other kings (Da 2:20-21 NLT).'

Because of his aptitude, he rose in power and position, serving with all his heart four pagan kings.

Served four pagan kings:

- Nebuchadnezzar - Babylonian
- Belshazzar- Babylonian

¹ Fujimura calls the conservative view and 'apocalyptic fantasy,' Makoto Fujimura, *Art + Faith: A Theology of Making* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020), 84. Wright calls it an 'escape' that 'leaves the unscrupulous bullies running this world', N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* (HarperOne, 2006), 9.

- Darius the Mede – Mede & Persian
- Cyrus the Great – Mede & Persian

Daniel served and facilitated these pagan kings because he viewed himself as a citizen of Babylon. But his heart was in Jerusalem.

- ‘But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God (Da 6:10 NLT).’
- There is an example of his prayer in chapter 9.
 - He acknowledges that they are in Babylon because of their sin.
 - He prays for deliverance and blessing on Israel.
 - He reminds God of his mercy and forgiveness (v.9).
- Friends, we should work towards America’s prosperity and blessing, but we should also walk humbly before God. Repenting as Daniel did: ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong. ¹⁶ Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill (Da 9:15-16 NLT).’

Jeremiah

Jeremiah wrote during the same time that Daniel did. He knew their captivity was a part of God’s punishment. Nevertheless, he wrote ...

- ‘This is what the Lord says: “You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope (Jer 29:10-11 NLT).’ God will bring us home, and has good things planned for us.
- Therefore, wrote ‘Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. ⁶ Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! ⁷ And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare (Jer 29:5-7 NLT).’

Daniel and Jeremiah are beautiful examples of being in this world, but not of this world. In the same way, we should work towards America’s prosperity and blessings but also know that our home is in heaven.

Today, we seek God’s blessing on America and promise to do our part to be a nation who honors God.

On America’s 250th anniversary let me encourage you with some great words from the past.

3. America’s ‘Unfinished Task.’

The second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence says, '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.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.' Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776.²

- What great words!
- God made us all equal.
- This government is to do the will of the people.

Eleven years later, the U.S. Constitution was signed. The preamble reads, 'We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.' - U.S. Constitution Preamble, 1787³

- It does not say 'a perfect Union,' but a more perfect union. It implies that we should work together to improve our nation.

We are not a simple democracy.

- We are a republic that balances the people's representation, executive power, and judiciary.
- It is designed so that the large states and cities cannot run over the rights of the smaller states and rural America.

Delegates were reluctant to sign until Benjamin Franklin delivered a speech urging unity despite imperfections.

- He said that America's survival depended on public virtue, civic responsibility, and the good moral character of the people. He said, 'Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom.'⁴
- We are to do our part towards a more perfect union.

² [Declaration of Independence: A Transcription | National Archives](#)

³ [U.S. Constitution - The Preamble | Resources | Constitution Annotated | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#), approved September 17, 1787.

⁴ https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/benjamin-franklin-keeping-republic?utm_source=copilot.com

The greatest division among the colonists was slavery. The southern colonies refused to relinquish their slaves. Eventually, the northern colonies compromised to see the new nation launched. But ...

- 21 years after the signing of the Constitution, Congress prohibited the importation of slaves with the Slave Trade Act of 1808.⁵ Towards a more perfect union.
- 74 years later, America was so divided a civil war erupted.⁶
- 76 years later, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.⁷ Towards a more perfect union.

Abraham Lincoln said on Gettysburg's battlefield, 'Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war ... It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.'



- I love that phrase, the unfinished work. That is what America is, an unfinished work.

Let me finish Lincoln's great speech. 'It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion ... that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.' - Abraham Lincoln, the Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863⁸

- Wow. Look at the spiritual word picture he used - a new birth - for America.
- America is a work in progress. No nation on earth will be perfect, but we live in a great nation, one that has moved towards what is right at great cost.

So what does this mean for us, standing here on America's 250th birthday?

⁵ [The Slave Trade | National Archives](#)

⁶ April 12, 1865.

⁷ [Emancipation Proclamation \(1863\) | National Archives](#)

⁸ [The Gettysburg Address \(1863\) | Constitution Center](#)

Let's seek God's blessing on America in prayer and promise to do our part to be a nation who honors God.

Let's set our Ebenezer stone and say, 'God, you have helped us this far, now for the sake of our children and nation, we seek your face.'

'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord (Ps 33:12a NIV).'

Our nation will continue to be blessed and work towards a more perfect union if we keep God first and do our part for this nation.

Our Greatest Hope – WorshipHouse Media

Pray for the USA.