

Proud to be an American: Individual Rights

October 18th, 2020 by Kasey Crawford

Today's Passages: Phil 3:4–21, 1 Pet. 2:9, Rev 5:10, Deut. 1:13–14

As Americans, we have a rich, godly heritage that has been bestowed to us as a mighty _____, that as Christians, we can be proud to preserve, defend and promote.

An American ideal to be proud of: Individual rights

The American Experiment began with radical notions of Individual rights and liberty that were diametrically opposed to the prevailing notion of government at the time.

In 1620 before the **Pilgrims** even got off the boat, they signed a document called the **Mayflower Compact** that declared their vision to: *"Covenant and Combine ourselves together in a Civil Body Politic,...and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal Laws..."*

A *"Civil Body Politic"* -the voice of the people creating a government document, and ratified by a majority _____. This stands in glaring contrast to the King of England who had declared the "divine right of the king", essentially saying that that people have no "unalienable rights", except the King, who may govern the people as he sees fit.

But where did the Pilgrims get these ideas?

Just a few years before Henry VIII in England declared himself "Supreme Head of the Church" in England in 1531, Martin Luther, starts Protestant Reformation in 1517, which emphasized the personal salvation of the individual, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and the "priesthood of all believers," about which he said: "they have no right to exercise power over us except insofar as we may have _____ it to them."

The Protest Reformation planted the seeds of "individual rights" and the Pilgrims watered those seeds into a revolution.

Thomas Hooker, a puritan pilgrim and pastor, preached in 1638 on the text of **Deut. 1:13**, Moses' call for the people to elect leaders. "the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the _____... the foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free _____ of the people."

Shortly later (1687), the Rev. John Wise of Mass. was preaching and writing that the "consent of the people" was the foundation of government, and that "every man must be acknowledged _____ to every man" and that "taxation without representation is tyranny."

In 1772, the Sons of Liberty reprinted two of Wise's old sermons to re-introduce biblical principles of government to the people and stir up support for Independence.

What the reformation planted and the pilgrims watered, **The founders brought to harvest in the of Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Bill of Rights.**

Signer of the Constitution John Dickinson defined an inalienable right as a right "which God gave to you and no inferior power has a right to take away."

The radical American notion of individual rights is that our rights did not come from the government, they come from God. The government's job is to make sure the rights God gave us are _____!

Responding to God...

How can you act to preserve, defend and promote the great American ideal that: Individuals have "inalienable rights" that come from God?

Answers: inheritance, vote, granted, people, consent, equal, protected