



The Biblical Foundation of American Government

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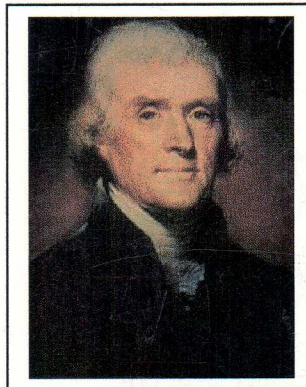
A great debate rages in our nation over this question: Was the United States founded on the principles of the Bible? Much has been written about what the Founders said, but it is fascinating to research what they actually said, in effect letting the Founders speak for themselves on this issue.

Before we embark on that discussion, however, let's first examine the religious beliefs of the Founding Fathers. Were they atheists, agnostics and deists as many claim? Or were they devout Christians who believed that the Bible was the inspired Word of God and the only authority for governmental power?

It will prove helpful to define the terms that are frequently used to describe our Founders as they are often confused or even used synonymously. An atheist is one who professes a belief that there is no God. An agnostic is one who professes that nothing can be known beyond what is visible and tangible, therefore it is impossible to know whether there is a God or not. A deist is one who believes in a God who remains aloof and is no longer involved in the affairs of mankind. Deists often proscribe to the "clock-maker theory" which states that God functions much like a celestial clock-maker who designed the universe, wound it up and now lets it run on its own.

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration, is often called a "deist", although he called himself a Christian.

"I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus."



*Letter to Charles Thompson,
Jan 9, 1816*

However, Jefferson did not meet the orthodox definition of a Christian since he denied the deity of Christ. Nevertheless, he considered the teachings of Jesus to contain the purest principles of

morality. He even wrote *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, which outlined the teachings of Jesus as contained in the gospels, as a moral guide for the Indians.

Some quotations from Jefferson indicate that his religious belief system was far from that of a modern day deist:

And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure if we have lost the only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath?

Notes on the State of Virginia

Does this sound like the words of a deist who believes God does not intervene in the affairs of men?

