

BIBLICAL ROOTS THAT SHAPED 250 YEARS OF AMERICAN FREEDOM

This land is a “...land shadowed with wings... that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers...” — Isaiah 18: 1 & 2

There is one land that seems to be *shadowed with wings*, as shown in our Isaiah theme text, and that is *this land* — *shadowed* by divine providence through the *wings* of the Old and New Testaments. This would broadly refer to true believers of Christ all over the world, but it is specifically related to *this land*. America had been *shadowed* or covered in the sense that it was kept hidden from all of the civilized world for millennia until such time as it was needed for God’s purpose — revealing the clear understanding of His beautiful plan and the spread of it throughout the world.

Why hidden? — because the Lord’s people needed a place to go to be free from their brutal persecution in Great Britain and Europe. They longed for a safe haven where they could worship the Lord as their true King and not be oppressed by the kings of Europe and false religious rulers. And so, at the proper time, God prepared *this land* for those seeking freedom of religion — creating an environment for believers to receive the true message of salvation! And, thus, America became *a land shadowed with wings* from which the printed page of divine truth would go forth to all families of the earth — *go ye swift messengers* bearing the Gospel truth!

FOUNDING FATHERS ESCAPED FROM RELIGIOUS TYRANNY

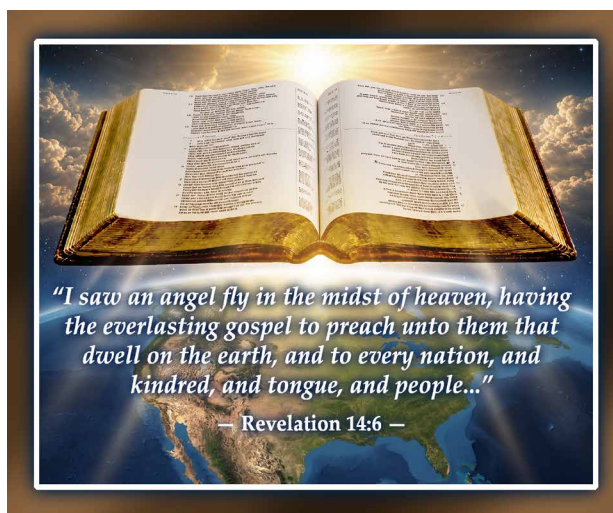
At the root of America’s democracy, statesmen from the thirteen colonies looked to God’s Word to bless a nation that would be dedicated to liberty, justice and respect for all people. Fresh from the tyranny of kings who ruled as *divinely appointed* heads of the church, the founding fathers insisted on separation of church and state. They were Christian men and women who wished to have biblical principles apply, but knew well, from the lessons of the past, the abuse that would come from an alliance of an oppressive government under the dictates of a flawed church.

Twenty years after the birth of America, James Madison summarized the reason for this separation: “*The purpose of separation of church and state is to keep forever from these shores the ceaseless strife that has soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries.*” In 1787, with these harsh lessons of

history in mind, Thomas Jefferson wrote in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*: “*Millions of innocent men, women and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burned, tortured, fined and imprisoned. What has been the effect of this coercion? To make half the world fools and half hypocrites; to support roguery and error all over the world...*” Again, in 1802, Thomas Jefferson wrote: “*...legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall*

of separation between church and state.” Carrying forward in recent history, then President Elect John F. Kennedy, a devout Catholic, stated: “*I believe in an America where the separation of church and state is absolute — where no Catholic prelate would tell the President (should he be Catholic) how to act, and no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote... where no public official either requests or accepts instructions on public policy from the Pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source...*”

As Christians, many of the predecessors of America’s founders escaped persecution by risking their lives to cross a vast and perilous ocean. They sought a land free from bondage to the dictates of kings and clergy — a land where they could worship as their own consciences dictated. They also desired to own their own property and reap the reward of their labors upon it. In the making of the *Declaration of Independence*, the very word *independence* meant to them that the thirteen colonies derived their power from the “*consent of the governed*” — the people — rather than a monarchy *claiming* to receive directives



from God. In establishing a new government, they believed they had the duty to create a constitution that protects the personal liberties of all. Looking to the Bible, many of the laws then established had their origin in the Law given by God to Moses.

VIRTUE OF ISRAEL'S JUBILEE SYSTEM

The Mosaic Law introduced ancient Israel to a form of government calculated to cultivate the spirit of liberty, equality and accountability. No ruler or privileged class was above the law of the people, nor could any deny the legal rights of the people. All people were taught to consider one another equal as brethren and to act accordingly.

Israel's Law focused on promoting universal happiness and tranquility more than any other system of laws, either ancient or modern. Their judges were charged to be impartial: "*Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's.*" (Deuteronomy 1:16-17) "*Love thy neighbor*" was at the core of this impartiality.

One prime example of the principles of justice, tempered by mercy, is derived from the Law given to Israel found in Leviticus 25:10. We find there that God gave ancient Israel a special provision of *grace* called the **Jubilee**. This directive of Israel's Law commanded that every seventh year was to be a **Sabbath** — a year of rest for the land. After seven cycles, a total of 49 years, the very next year was celebrated as the *Jubilee*. During that 50th year, amazing things happened to the benefit of God's people:

- **Freedom for All:** *All indentured servants were set free.*
- **No More Debt:** *All financial debts were entirely erased.*
- **Land Returned:** *Families could buy or sell land during the 49 years, but on the Jubilee year, the land had to be given back to its original family owners.*

The land being returned meant that when it was purchased, it was like *leasing* it from the original owner until the next *Jubilee* cycle. The wisdom of God for this Law prevented a small handful of rich families from hoarding all the wealth and land forever. God gave Israel this *Jubilee* system during their very first year of freedom from slavery in Egypt under Pharaoh. By giving them this Law immediately, God showed them that human beings — even those working as indentured servants to pay off a debt — must always be treated with kindness, fairness and dignity.

As generous as this feature of God's Law was, picture what the *Jubilee* was actually like for the ancient Israelites. During the 49 pre-Jubilee years, properties may have been bought and sold multiple times. In some cases, the original owners might have passed away, meaning their children or grandchildren had to step up to claim what belonged to them. We can imagine

that the first few months of the *Jubilee* year were quite chaotic. During that time, people likely disputed just to sort things out and get everyone back to their rightful homes and freedoms.

Even with the initial confusion of the *Jubilee*, modern economists and social historians look at this system in Leviticus as a brilliant strategy for promoting economic stability and protecting vulnerable populations. They view the *Jubilee* as an early version of *bankruptcy protection* — the forgiveness of debts. By resetting the clock every 50 years, the *Jubilee* limited how long a financial disaster could last, acting as a generational safety net. It guaranteed that if a parent made a bad financial decision or suffered from a terrible calamity, their children and grandchildren would not be trapped in poverty forever, thereby preventing the establishment of permanent class distinctions of rich and poor.

Although a literal *Jubilee* may be too difficult to implement in our modern world, its core message still resonates in our laws today. It inspired a global movement called the *Jubilee Debt Campaign* (now known as *Debt Justice*). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, economic leaders used this biblical idea to successfully push for the cancellation of billions of dollars in crushing debt owed by the world's poorest developing countries.



GOD IS GUIDING HUMANITY TOWARD A FUTURE GLOBAL JUBILEE

Freedom of religion has been a foundation principle of American liberty, but it is only a small foretaste of man's coming "*restitution of all things*" in God's Kingdom on earth — His intended *Jubilee* for all. (Acts 3:19-21) There is an old saying in political thought: "*Where the Bible has been freest, the people have been freest.*" When the average person reads the Bible, without sectarian control over access to and study of the Scriptures, the natural result is a culture of freedom, literacy and respect for individual rights.

The prophet Daniel marked the year 1799 as the beginning of "*the time of the end*" when knowledge and world travel would be increased — educating and enlightening the world! (Daniel 12:1-4) While America was reaching toward independence in the late 1700s, God was preparing the world for a country built upon His righteous principles. Shortly after, in 1803, Bibles began to be mass produced in common languages throughout the world, creating a hunger for understanding the Scriptures. But, standing in the way was the lack of literacy. Again, God's time clock struck and education of the general public was gradually introduced, starting when Massachusetts became the first state to pass a mandatory school attendance law in 1852. Thus, increased literacy exposed the biblical truth that every single person should answer directly to God. This completely changed how people viewed the false doctrine of the *divine right of kings*, and the deception of an authoritarian religious hierarchy. All of these events set the stage for contemporary representative democracies.

Even though human history shows amazing progress today, we all know that our world is still broken and governments are full of flaws. While the enlightenment over the last 250 years of individual freedoms are significant steps forward, God's *grand design* for humanity worldwide is yet to bring about liberty, equal rights, and human dignity for *everyone* — a worldwide *Jubilee*, where *all* mankind will be restored to *life, liberty and the pursuit of lasting happiness*. Bible prophecy indicates that this time is not far off!

We are living in the very early days of this great transformation process during which God is preparing the world for the *grand, global Jubilee*! But, at this point, it is not surprising to see that, as with ancient Israel, when God's Kingdom is finally inaugurated, not every one will be pleased with His *Jubilee* system. Its regulations will be far more exacting, and the liberties of the people will be restricted to a degree that may be galling to many — especially those who do not want to give up their claim to power and wealth. *"Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low..."* (Isaiah 40:4) These symbolic words apply to the forcible transition that will be required to fully purge the world of sin and selfishness.

Even today we see that any corruption of God's Laws found among political, social, financial or religious institutions is being exposed, and will soon be removed by the newly enlightened and righteous inhabitants of the earth. With Christ as the incoming ruler, liberty will then take on a whole new meaning — liberty to deceive or in any way to corrupt will be totally forbidden. The only liberty that will be granted to any will be the liberty to do good to oneself and others. *"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him... but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself..."* (Leviticus 19: 17 & 18) None shall *"hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."* Isaiah 11:9

ENCOURAGING GLOBAL INDICATORS

In our current world there has been a struggle to bring justice to the poor, as the rich and powerful seek to hold on to and abuse their wealth and power. However, we can see many indicators that progress is slowly taking place. By God's overruling in what Daniel called *the time of the end*, the combination of increased personal liberty and innovative solutions has dramatically improved the human experience upon the earth — showing evidence of man's gradual restoration from the curse upon Adam and his children. It is faith strengthening to see the physical signs that indicate a coming *worldwide Jubilee*!

1. Reducing Disease: During the American Revolution, life expectancy averaged 30 to 40 years. Today, thanks to electricity, clean water, vaccines and antibiotics, the global

average life expectancy is over 70 years, and reaches 80 in developed countries like ours. Infant mortality has dropped by over 90%.

2. Lessening Famine and Physical Labor: Exhausting *"sweat-of-the-brow"* endured for more than 6,000 years is being lifted. Thanks to modern farming machines and high-yield crops, we can now grow more food than ever before — combined with global trade and travel, mass starvation by natural disaster is preventable.

3. Curtailing Poverty: In 1776, nearly 90% of the world lived in absolute poverty. Today, that number has dropped below 10%. In our modern world, even the poor enjoy as basic necessities indoor plumbing, refrigerators, and smartphones, which would have seemed miraculous to the richest kings of the past.

4. Literacy Leading to Greater Equality:

Global literacy rates have skyrocketed from a small elite minority to more than 86% of the world's population today. Because of this, groups everywhere are loudly demanding their rights — rights of women, laborers, races, the elderly, children, and even animals and the environment.

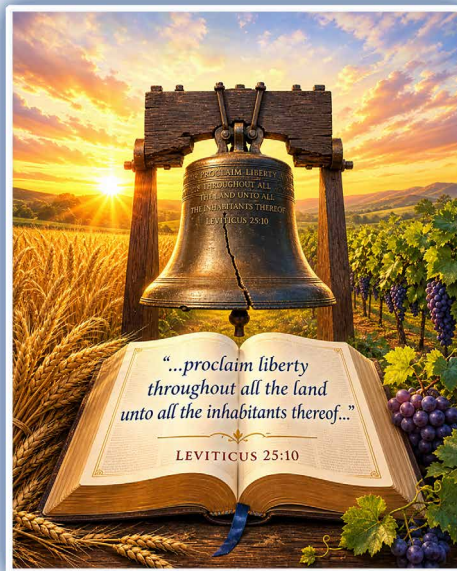
JUBILEE FULFILLED WILL EXTEND TO ALL

Although these increasing evidences are promising, they are not yet worldwide. Only a perfect, divine *Jubilee* can bring true liberty, justice and life to every single person. And, because this massive restitution process cannot be rushed, God has arranged to allow a one-thousand year Millennial Age to reach total fulfillment — and that will be under the righteous rule

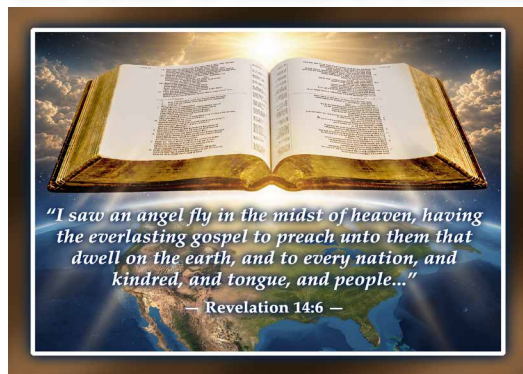
and blessing of Messiah! (Revelation 20:6) It will take the full establishment of God's Kingdom, with Christ as Mediator, to finally sort out all of the confusion and bring peace and equity abundant to all. *"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."* *"...the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings..."* 1 Corinthians 15:25; Malachi 4:2

The ultimate *Jubilee* will do far more than just settle disputes and bring about peace. It will restore everything humanity lost long ago when Adam sinned — including perfect health, a beautiful planet earth, and harmony with God! The absolute best part of the global *Jubilee* will be restoring life again for our loved ones released from their graves — blessed promise! Acts 24:15

America has truly been a land of liberty enlightening the world. The next time you see a picture of the Liberty Bell, look closely at that verse from Leviticus 25:10 displayed on its face: *"Proclaim LIBERTY throughout all the Land unto all the inhabitants thereof."* This is the *grand, global Jubilee* which God had purposed since before the world was created, and before all was lost in Eden! (1 Peter 1:20) Remember what *Jubilee* meant to the ancient Israelites, and think about the beautiful, flawless world of freedom that is coming for you and all of humanity. Yes, *liberty and justice will be for All* in this righteous government under Christ!



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