



## The Fourth of July



### I. The Cause

A. At one time there was no such thing as the United States of America. There were thirteen Colonies reaching from New Hampshire to Georgia (See a map). These colonies were like nations of their own, each having its own government and laws. Many thought that by uniting into one country, they would be stronger. Benjamin Franklin was one who promoted this idea.

B. After Britain finished fighting the French & Indian War (1754-1761), the King of England (King George) decided to have British soldiers present to prevent the French from getting back any land. He also asked the Colonies to pay for it! The people believed they could take care of themselves and didn't want to fund the British Parliament. King George was very upset and passed many laws to tax them. The Americans had no say in the matter and were not given the right to send a representative. They felt as though they were in a sort of slavery situation. They desired the same rights as the people of England and resented the royal governors that patrolled the thirteen Colonies. They spoke out against what they saw as "taxation without representation." The "Boston tea party" let King George know they had enough. George had become a TYRANT and forfeited his right to rule the people. War was now on the horizon.

C. The American patriots united to defend their liberty (Philadelphia, 1774). A meeting of the best men from the colonies met together, called Congress. They knew they would be attacked and had to prepare. As Paul Revere warned that the "British were coming," the "minute men" began to fight at a minute's notice (April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1775). These were just common men who believed liberty was worth dying for. This war was called the Revolutionary War. George Washington was the commander-in-chief of the army. Revolution means the doing away with an old government and replacing it with a new one. This war went on for seven long years. Many gave their lives for America to be free.

### II. The Declaration of Independence

A. The Declaration of Independence was a paper written by Thomas Jefferson, with the help of others to revise it. It declared that the American colonies were free from British rule and would take care of themselves. It was adopted on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1776 by Congress. Fifty six men put their signature to it. It was this day that the Republic of the United States of America was born... America's Birthday!

B. This was an exciting time for everyone. Joy and hope filled the land. At the State House in Philadelphia rang the great liberty bell on which the following Scripture words are printed— *"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Lev.25:10)*. In New York, the statue of King George was pulled down and thrown into the street.

C. Our founding fathers held strong personal beliefs in God. In addition, many of the men and women who colonized America did so in an effort to find a safe, new place to worship God as their consciences dictated, without hindrance from any established government religion.

D. "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."

1. **Self-evident** – no need for proof, discussion or debate; obvious
2. **All men are created equal** – this does not mean we all have the same circumstances, appearance, ability, personality, or status; we are all equal in relation to God; we all have a sin nature; we all are created in the image of God; we all have access to God's grace through Jesus
3. **Unalienable rights** – unable to be taken away from or given away, even by the possessor; because we are created in God's image, we have a duty to respect and honor the image of God both in ourselves and in others; these are sometimes called God-given or natural rights
  - a. **Life** – to be born and alive is a gift from God; our government is to protect life
  - b. **Liberty** – the opportunity to follow your God-given rights
  - c. **Pursuit of Happiness** – to follow your God-given callings in life and to be blessed by God

### III. Our Founding Fathers

A. Independence and Liberty is the theme of our great nation. Our founding fathers had faith in God and believed that independence was morally right. They pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to

this cause. The Declaration of Independence is the “WHY” of American government, while the constitution is the “HOW.” There are four references to God in the Declaration of Independence. It would be a good idea to look at a copy of the Declaration and read portions of it.

B. It is important to understand that every person has God-given rights. As part of our birthright, these rights can never be sold, given away, or taken from us. The government is to secure and protect these God-given rights. In America, our rights come from God, not the state. Therefore, the state cannot take them away.

C. What do you think we could do to help make sure that God continues to bless our great country?

Read (2Chron.7:14) (1Tim.2:1,2)

D. John Adams gave advice on how to celebrate our Independence Day...“It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more.”