

A black and white photograph of a city skyline, including skyscrapers and a bridge, is shown upside down at the top of the page. The rest of the background is a plain, light color.

MATTHEW

The Upside umog Kingdom

Matthew 6

Do the right thing for God, not for the praise of others



Matthew 6:1-6

**Do good works for God's glory,
not for praise and attention from people**

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



Do good works for God's glory, not for praise from people

- Jesus now focuses on the motivation behind our "righteous acts."
- Jesus begins by making a declarative statement:
- "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them," and then explains, "if you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."



Do good works for God's glory, not for praise from people

- Jesus uses three examples: almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.
- These are three examples of the 613 *mitzvot* (commandments in the Jewish law) that were practiced.
- There were 248 positive commands (the number of limbs and organs in the human body) and 365 negative ones (the number of nerves and sinews in the body).



Do good works for God's glory, not for praise from people

- We should not do “spiritual” acts for others to see or to gain approval. We do them for God.
- Paul also taught this in his letter to the Galatians, “Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10).



Do good works for God's glory, not for praise from people

- This doesn't mean we can't ever pray, give alms, or fast in public.
- Acts gives several examples about praying together as a community (Acts 1:14; 2:42).
- Believers were often called to public fasts (Ezra 8:21; Acts 13:1–3), and we are often encouraged to encourage each other to do good deeds (Hebrews 10:24).



Do good works for God's glory, not for praise from people

- This Paul told the Corinthians about the Macedonian generous giving to inspire them to give cheerfully from the heart (2 Corinthians 8–9).
- He told many of his churches about all he had done for the Gospel, not to brag or seek their approval but to encourage them to do the same (Philippians 3).



Do good works for God's glory, not for praise from people

- Jesus just told them to “let their light shine” so people could see their good works and give glory to God the Father (Matthew 5:16).
- Why were they giving alms or praying or fasting? So other people will think they are holy, or for God's glory?
- Jesus says “when you” pray or fast or give alms, not “if you.”



Do good works for God's glory, not for praise from people

- Almsgiving was required of everyone.
- The assumption is that you will do these things.
- The question is how, with what attitude and heart.
- We should seek God's glory and not our own.



Do good works for God's glory, not for praise from people

- The temple (later the synagogues) set up a system of donating to the needy. There were 13 trumpet-shaped brass boxes into which both rich and poor gave their alms. They were shaped like trumpets to keep dishonest people from taking out coins.
- Jesus says hypocrites sound trumpets when they give to the poor, which is a play on words referring to this trumpet shape.



The trumpet-shaped brass vessels for almsgiving.

MATTHEW
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Do good works for God's glory, not for praise from people

- In all three examples, Jesus concludes, "Truly I tell you; they have received their reward in full" (verses 2, 5, 16).
- This phrase came from businessmen of the time who would write on a receipt to indicate no further payment was required.
- Those who do good for God's glory will be rewarded by Him in heaven (verses 4, 6, 18).



Matthew 6:5-15

**Prayer should be simple
and focused on God's will**

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



Prayer should be simple and focused on God's will

- Jesus now focuses on prayer and gives an example.
- Don't do this deed of righteousness for attention from people; do it for God. Those who look for praise from people receive their "reward in full."
- Pray with the right heart and motivation and God will reward you in heaven.



Prayer should be simple and focused on God's will

- Jesus criticizes the hypocrites for praying publicly for attention.
- He adds the Gentiles - Greek word translated "heap up empty phrases" literally means to "babble."
- It refers specifically to a Gentile practice of saying prescriptive incantations, almost like magic spells, over and over, to try to convince their god to do what they asked.



Prayer should be simple and focused on God's will

- Our Father: Our prayer is based on an intimate relationship with God, a dependence on Him as our Father.
- Hallowed be your name: Hallowing God's name was "the most characteristic feature of Jewish ethics" and something His people could do with their words and their actions. Everything we do can bring either honor or dishonor to God's name.



Prayer should be simple and focused on God's will

- Your kingdom come: We should long for God's kingdom to come.
- Not just in the future in heaven, but for His will to be done here on earth.
- This is a prayer for God's will in your own life as well as for His justice, mercy, and will to be done in the world.



Prayer should be simple and focused on God's will

- Daily bread: The only request mentioned in this sample prayer is for "our daily bread."
- This would remind Jewish hearers of God's gift of daily manna in the wilderness, when they were only to gather enough for one day, trusting God to give them more the next day (Exodus 16).



Prayer should be simple and focused on God's will

- Forgive our debts: Debts represent sins (Luke 7:36–50).
- Here and in verses 14–15, Jesus explains that our forgiveness from God is tied up with our willingness to forgive others.
- We read in the epistle of John's that we cannot say we love God if we don't love our neighbor (1 John 4:20).



Prayer should be simple and focused on God's will

- Temptation: This word means trial, temptation, or test.
- God does not keep us from all suffering, trials or temptations, but He uses them to work in our lives (Romans 5:3–5).
- God Himself never tempts us; that is the work of the Evil One (James 1:13).



Matthew 6:16-20

**Store up treasures in heaven,
not on earth**

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



Store up treasures in heaven, not on earth

- Jesus says, “when you fast,” assuming that all believers would fast.
- Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness before being tempted.
- Joel said those who were truly repentant would rend their hearts and not their garments (Joel 2:13).
- Isaiah declared that a true fast was to seek justice and care for the vulnerable (Isaiah 58:1–10).



Store up treasures in heaven, not on earth

- Jesus says the hypocrites “disfigure their faces” when they fast.
- The word for disfigure is very strong; it is intentionally hyperbolic like the other examples Jesus used.
- Anointing oil was used to anoint priests and kings for service, but it could also be used to clean the skin or as a kind of perfume.
- Don’t make a show of fasting.



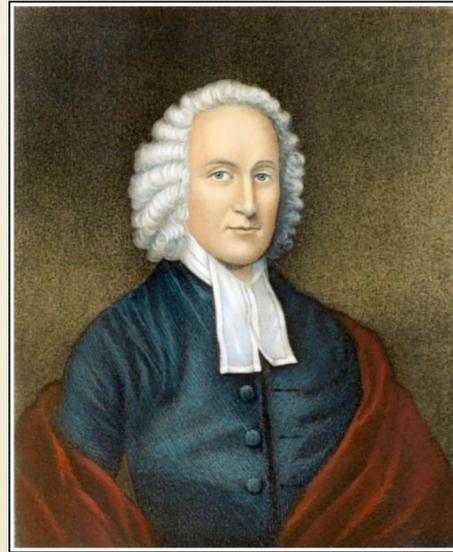
Store up treasures in heaven, not on earth

- Jesus ends this section with the command not to store up treasures on earth but to store up treasures in heaven instead.
- Jesus keeps telling the people that these hypocrites already have their “reward in full,” but God's people will be rewarded in heaven.
- We don't do these acts of righteousness to get a reward in heaven. We do them to grow closer to God and to serve others.

PRAY FOR AMERICA

A graphic of the United States flag, featuring the stars and stripes, waving to the right. It is positioned behind the word "FOR" in the text "PRAY FOR AMERICA".

THE GREAT AWAKENING



- Jonathan Edwards – revival began in his church in 1734 like a “flash of lightning.”

- George Whitefield – made first continental tour of colonies in 1740.



PAUL JOHNSON



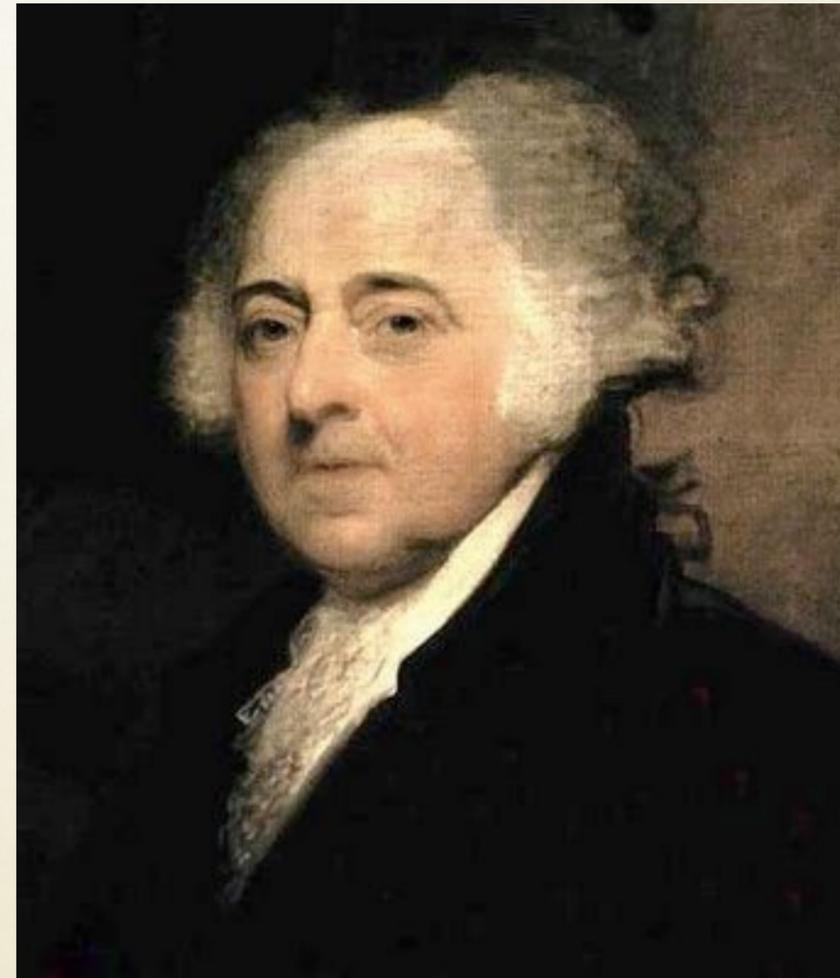
- The Great Awakening may have touched as many as three out of four American colonists.
- He points out that this Great Awakening “sounded the death-knell of British colonialism.”

Clergy in America



JOHN ADAMS

“The Revolution was effected before the War commenced. The Revolution was in the mind and hearts of the people: and change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations.”

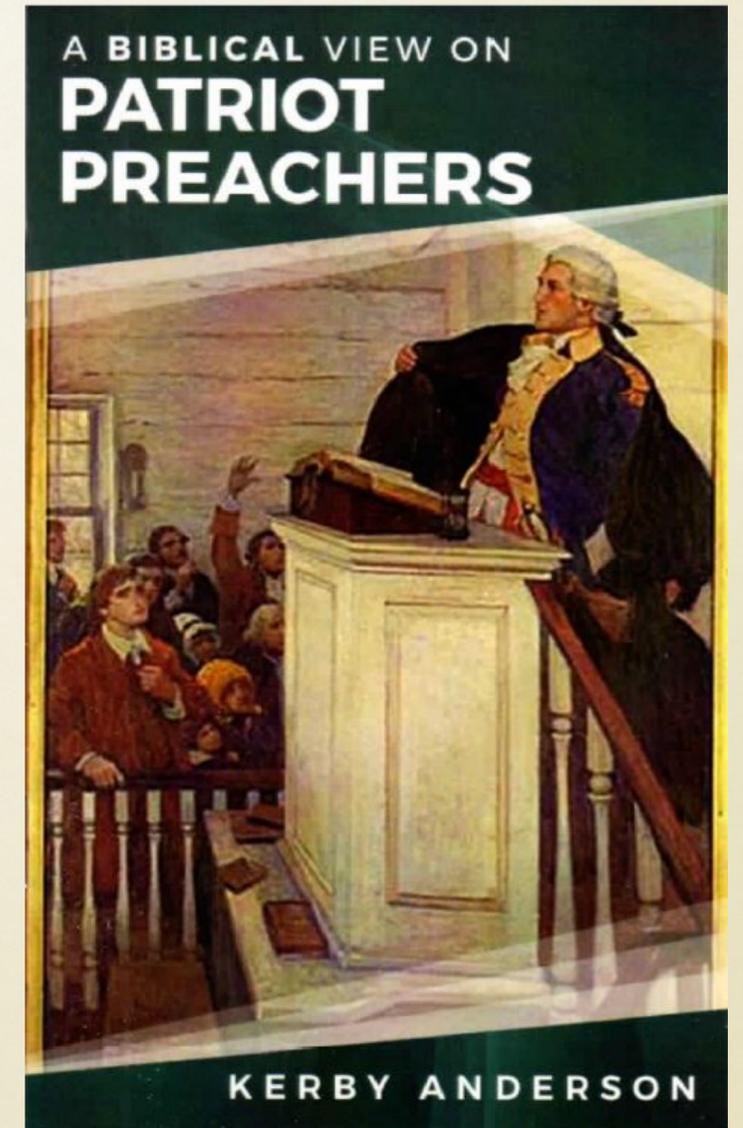


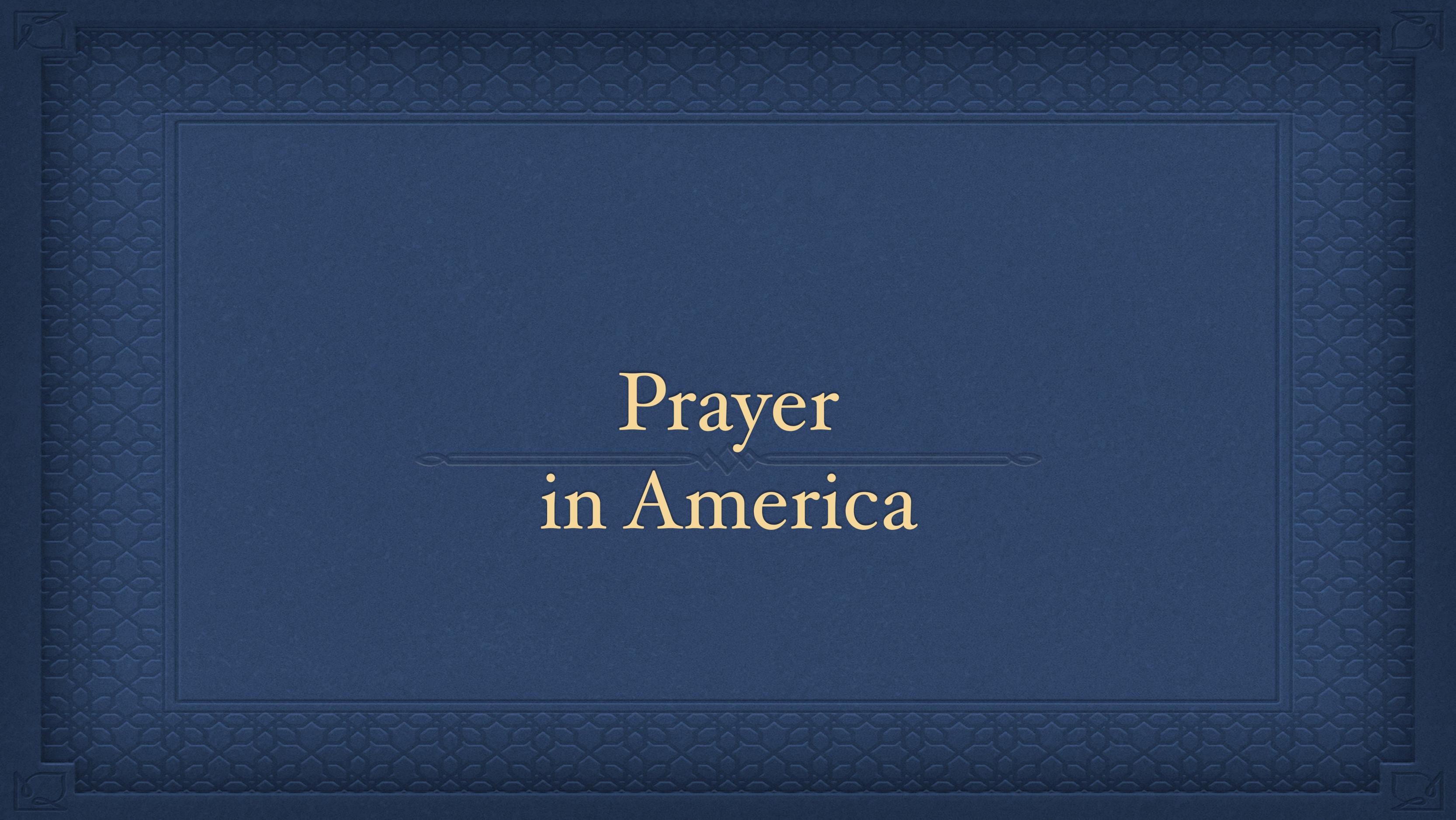
PATRIOT PREACHERS

- John Adams wrote “The Meaning of the American Revolution” in 1818.
- He listed those men responsible for the revival of American principles that led to the American Revolution.
- Two of the men he mentioned were Dr. Mayhew and Dr. Cooper.

PATRIOT PREACHERS

- Rev. Jonathan Mayhew, minister of West Church (Boston)
- Dr. Samuel Cooper, minister of the Brattle Street Church (Boston)
- Rev. John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg (Woodstock, Virginia)





Prayer
in America

FIRST PRAYER

- The first act of the First Continental Congress in 1774 a time of public prayer.
- Americans were divided according to religious sentiment but they asked Reverend Duché to lead them in prayer.



NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

- Only five months after the Declaration, “the pinch and suffering of war and a poor harvest seriously imperiled morale.”
- Congress set aside December 11, 1776 as a Day of Fasting and Repentance.

GEORGE WASHINGTON



DAY OF THANKSGIVING

- A day of Thanksgiving was established near the end of the third year of the war.
- Congress had many reasons to express thanksgiving to God and to seek His continued mercy and assistance.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

General Thanksgiving.

BY THE PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
A PROCLAMATION.

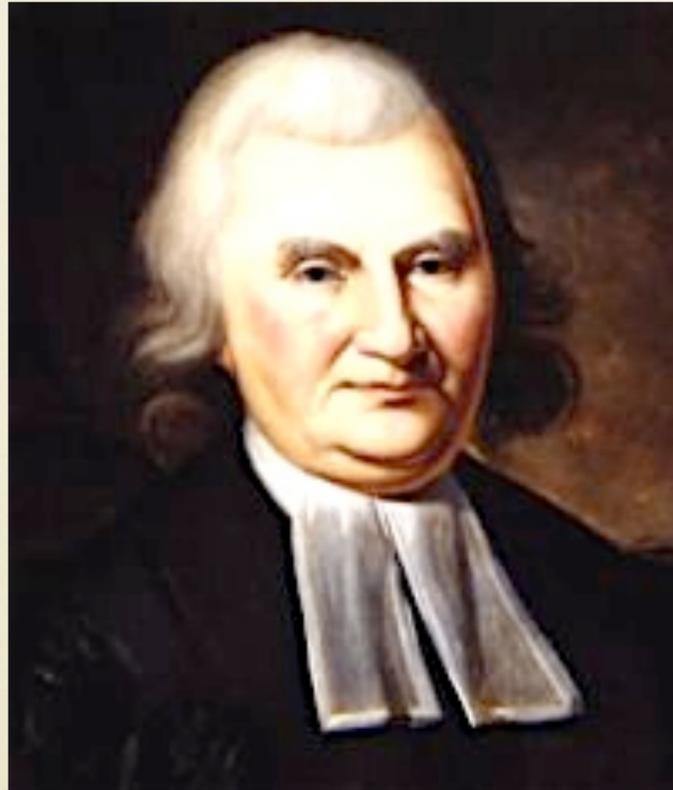
WHEREAS it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God---to obey his will---to be grateful for his benefits---and humbly to implore his protection and favour : And whereas both Houses have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States, a DAY of PUBLICK THANKSGIVING and PRAYER, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favours of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness :"

NOW THEREFORE, I do recommend and assign THURSDAY, the TWENTY-SIXTH DAY of NOVEMBER next, to be devoted by the people of these States, to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be : That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks for his kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation ; for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favourable interpositions of his Providence in the course and conclusion of the late war ;---for the great degree of tranquility, union and plenty, which we have since enjoyed ;---for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish Constitutions of Government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted ;---for the civil and religious Liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge ;---and in general, for all the great and various favours which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.

AND ALSO, That we may then unite in most

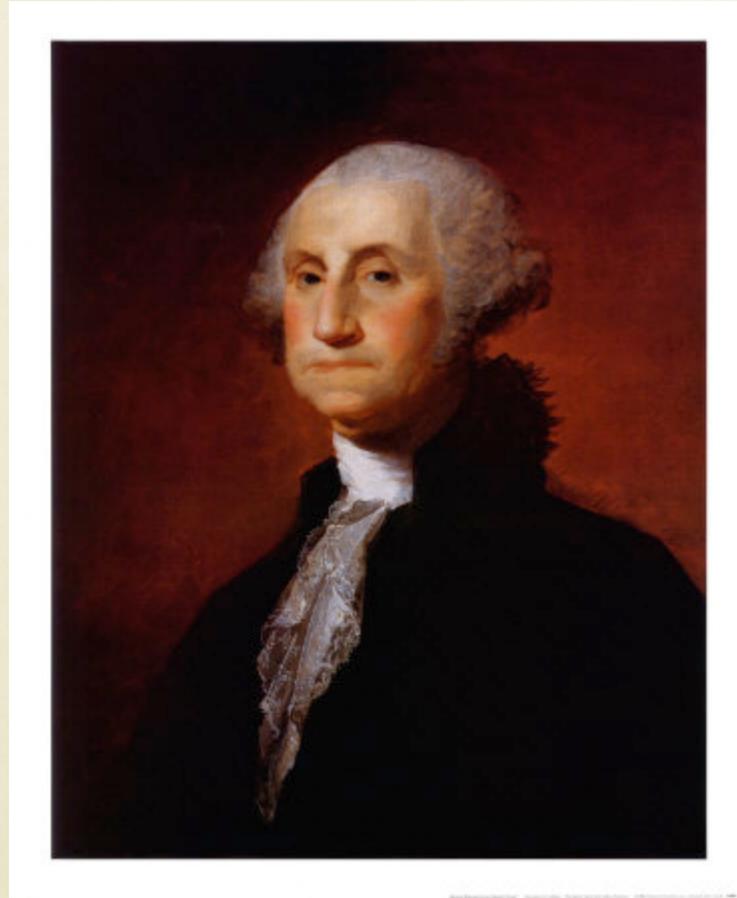
- George Washington issued a thanksgiving proclamation in 1789 about our duty to God.
- He issued another thanksgiving proclamation in 1795 describing God's beneficence in the world.

DAY OF THANKSGIVING



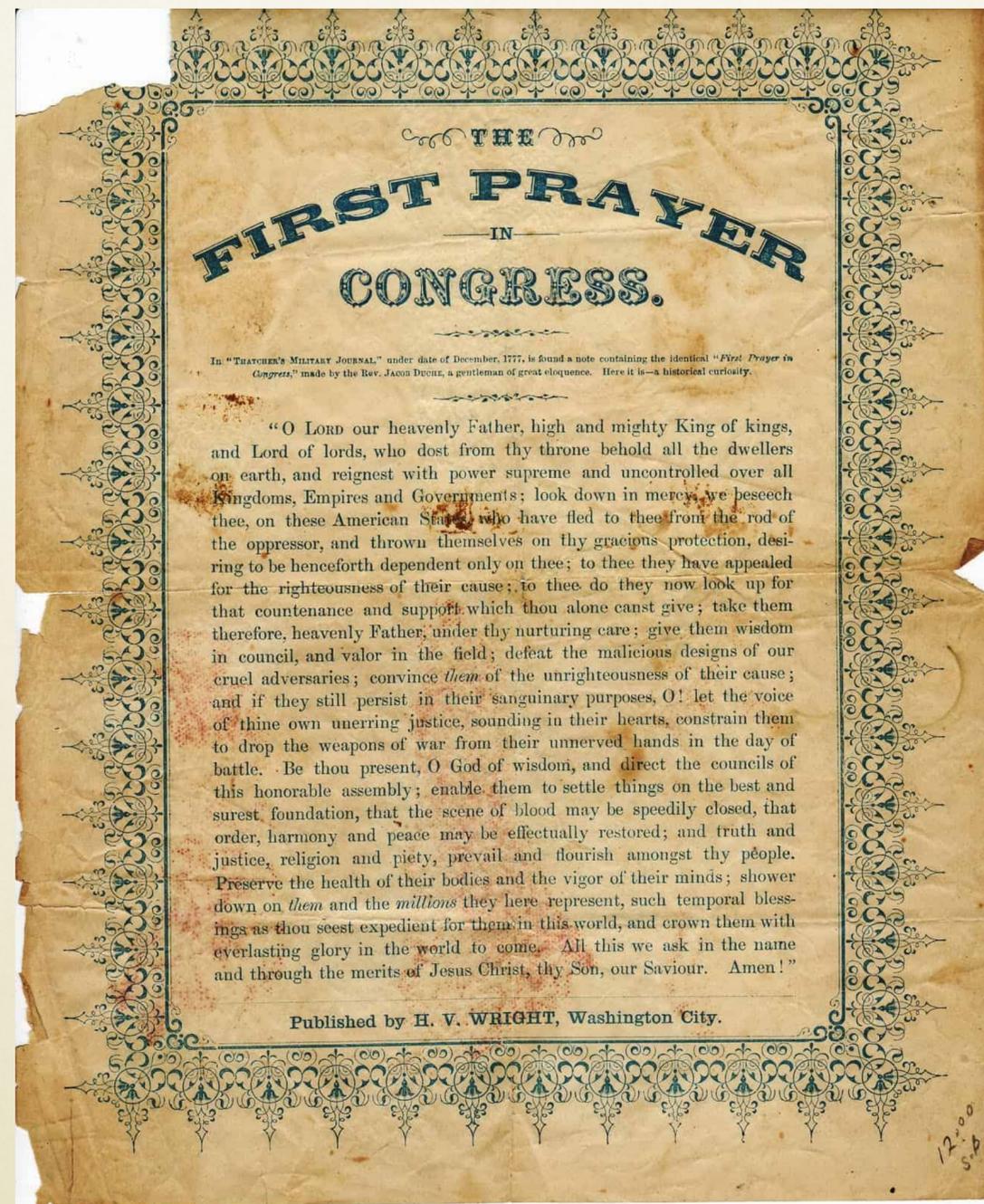
- John Witherspoon was the president of Princeton and a signer of the Declaration.
- He was called upon to draft a Thanksgiving Day recollection of those events.

DAY OF THANKSGIVING



- George Washington reminded the nation of God's protection and provision.
- He recounted God's protection in the Battle of Long Island all the way to their final victory at Yorktown.

FIRST PRAYER IN CONGRESS



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

- Sarah Josepha Hale convinced Abraham Lincoln to declare a national day of thanksgiving.
- Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation came at a pivotal point in Lincoln's spiritual life. The battle of Gettysburg occurred 3 months earlier.
- Lincoln committed his life to Christ while walking among the graves at Gettysburg.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“When I left Springfield, I asked the people to pray for me. I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, the severest trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ.”

Reply to Illinois clergyman

GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

surrounded the position taken by the immense multitude of people.

The Marshal took up a position on the left of the stand. Numerous flags and banners, suitably draped, were exhibited on the stand among the audience. The entire scene was one of grandeur due to the importance of the occasion. So quiet were the people that every word uttered by the orator of the day must have been heard by them all, notwithstanding the immensity of the concourse.

Among the distinguished persons on the platform were the following: Governors Bradford, of Maryland; Curtin, of Pennsylvania; Morton, of Indiana; Seymour, of New-York; Parker, of New-Jersey, and Tod, of Ohio; Ex-Gov. Dennison, of Ohio; John Brough, Governor Elect, of Ohio; Charles Anderson, Lieutenant-Governor of Ohio; Major-Generals Schenck, Sigel, Doubleday, and Couch; Brigadier-General Gibbon; and Provost-Marshal-General Fry.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S ADDRESS.

The President then delivered the following dedicatory speech:

Four score and seven years ago our Fathers brought forth upon this Continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. [Applause.] Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting-place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate. We cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. [Applause.] The world will little note nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. [Applause.] It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus so nobly carried on. [Applause.] 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 here gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain; [applause] that the Nation shall under God have a new birth of freedom, and that Governments of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from the earth. [Long continued applause.]

Three cheers were then given for the President and the Governors of the States.

After the delivery of the addresses, the dirge and the benediction closed the exercises, and the immense assemblage separated at about 4 o'clock.

- This is the November 20, 1863 article from the *New York Times*.
- Reports that his speech was interrupted five times by applause and was followed by “long continued applause.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us. It behooves us then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.”

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER



RESOURCES

