

“Original Intent - America Refocus 250”

Ephesians 6:10-14a

Message by Michael J. Barnard

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Teaching Aim: To examine the words of our Founding Fathers to see if the modern interpretation of “*separation of Church and State*” is consistent with their original intent. To understand the meaning of “*historical revisionism*” and to see how some in this generation are using this process to change history and the direction of our country. To have a better understanding of the original intent of our Founding Fathers through their own writings on the issue of “*separation of Church and State*” and to realize the rich spiritual foundation that our nation has.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: Spiritual warfare and historical revisionism (Eph. 6:10-14a)

1. Too often Christians attempt to stand and fight the enemy on their own power. Why is this dangerous? According to the Apostle Paul, where can we find strength in our time of need (**vs. 10**)? What does Paul encourage Christians to do if they are going to stand against the wiles (or schemes) of the devil (**vs. 11**)? How often should Christians put on the armor of God today? How can we better defend ourselves against the attacks of the devil?

2. Every Christian will face battles in his or her lifetime, some battles will be worse than others. According to **verse 12**, what are we fighting against in many cases? Often, we don’t see our battles as spiritual and blame other people for their part in them. How should our understanding of spiritual warfare affect the way we look at others during times of conflict? (See **2 Cor. 4:3-4**)

3. What does Paul encourage every believer to do since the enemy is so wicked and powerful (**vs. 13**)? What evil day is Paul talking about when he says to, “*withstand in the evil day?*” Why is it critical for Christians to wear “*the whole armor of God*” when in battle against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places? What does Paul encourage every believer to do at the conclusion of **verse 13**?

4. What is meant by the phrase “*historical revisionism?*” Why do you think some people want to rewrite history? What makes this practice so dangerous for the future of our nation? How do you see historical revisionism at work in our country today?

5. How do most people understand the concept of “*separation of Church and State*” today? What effect is this changed meaning having on our country today?

6. Why do you think only two brief quotes from Thomas Jefferson and James Madison have been used to establish the modern doctrine of separation of Church and State? Why do you think the rest of Thomas Jefferson’s sixty volumes of writings and other quotes from James Madison are not being brought up? Why are the views of one-hundred-forty plus Founding Fathers ignored on this topic? Why are the original Supreme Court Justices not quoted on this topic? Wouldn’t the original justices have had a good understanding of the intent of our Founding Fathers? What does subverting the views of our Founding Fathers teach us about the honesty and integrity of our modern court system?

7. Where did the separation clause attributed to Thomas Jefferson come from and what was the context behind Jefferson’s statement? (Hint: Search online – “Danbury Baptist Association”)

8. What did James Madison mean when he said, “*Congress should not establish a religion and enforce the legal observance of it by law?*” What is a state church?

Part II: A time to disagree and a time to disobey the civil authorities.

1. According to **Romans 13:1-7**, Christians are to submit to the governing authorities. Is there ever a time when Christians are obligated to disobey the government and follow God? If so, when is it?

2. Discuss the meaning of the following statement: “*We are to obey the civil authorities UNLESS they command us to do something that God forbids or forbid us to do something that God commands!*” How does this statement apply to every Christian today?

3. How do you see the above statement being played out in **Acts 4:1-20**?

4. Is there ever a time when we should stop sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with other people? Why do you think it is becoming more difficult for the church in the United States to evangelize people today? Where do you see much of the opposition coming from?

5. Would it be a good idea for Americans to return to teacher led mandatory prayer in school today? Why or why not? Would you rather have your student have a moment of silence and talk to God in his or her own way? Why is it dangerous to submit your child's spiritual welfare and prayer life to modern day public-school teachers?

Part III: The original intent of the Founding Fathers

1. The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights states, "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.*" What is meant by each part of this amendment? According to the First Amendment, does the press have the right to say whatever they want, even if they are spreading lies?

2. In **Isaiah 5:20**, the prophet Isaiah wrote: "*Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.*" Do you see this happening today in our country? If so, how?

3. The 1629 charter of Massachusetts read, "*Our said people...be so religiously, peaceably, and civilly governed [that] their good life and orderly conversation may win and incite the natives of... [that] country to the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Savior of mankind, and the Christian faith, which ... is the principal end of this colony.*" Has the state of Massachusetts remained true to their charter? How has the direction changed?

4. What can we learn about George Washington and his governing style from his comment, *"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible?"*

5. Patrick Henry is famous for his statement, *"Give me liberty or give me death!"* What truth can we learn about the establishment of our nation from his words: *"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here?"*

6. Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Danbury Baptists, *"Christianity is the best friend of politics because it is the only religion that changes the heart."* How does Jefferson's statement contrast with the modern understanding of *"separation of Church and State?"*

7. What truth can we learn about the American Revolution from John Quincy Adams's writing: *"The highest glory of the American Revolution was this; it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."*

8. What does the fact that many of our Founding Fathers were Presidents, Vice-Presidents, or members of various Bible societies teach us?

9. What can we learn about the spiritual state of our country from the fact that some Christians have been disqualified from certain jobs today because of their Christian faith? Article VI, Section 3 of the United States Constitution reads: *"No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."* What are some ways that we've seen this article of the Constitution violated in recent years?

10. Today our nation is in a *“Second Civil War,”* a war for the mind. What makes this civil war even more dangerous than the first? How does this war affect the soul of our nation and the people of our nation? How have you seen this war affecting the minds of our children and grandchildren?
11. How should Christians respond to the move toward immorality in our nation? What are some ways that we as Christians can get involved and make a positive impact on our culture?
12. Daniel Webster’s said: *“If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity.”* Why is this statement particularly important to every American today?

MINER’S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Christians need to know their history so that they can spot *“historical revisionism”* when it happens.
- Not everything we are being told on the news and in court decisions is true.
- We are to obey the civil authorities *UNLESS* they command us to do something that God forbids or forbid us to do something that God commands.
- We are never to stop living out our faith or sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with others.
- When you hear something that doesn’t sound quite right, go back and check out the facts in the context in which they were written.
- We live in an age where good has become evil and evil has become good.
- Daniel Webster said, *“God grants liberty only to those who love it and are always ready to guard and defend it.”*