

## “O God, Our Help in Ages Past...”

Dr. Jim Cecy

A flag is a rallying point representing a group of people who willingly unite together.

“Jehovah Nissi” = “The Lord is My Banner” (Exodus 17:15)

“O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come.”

- **The Viking’s Sea Rovers Banner**

- **The Spanish Colonial Flag**

“O Lord, Almighty and everlasting God, by Thy holy Word has Thou created the heaven and the earth, and the sea; blessed and glorified be Thy Name and praised be Thy Majesty, which hath deigned to use us, Thy humble servants, that Thy holy Name may be proclaimed in this second part of earth.” (Christopher Columbus)

- **The British Union Jack**...under which the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth and Jamestown, Massachusetts

- **The Cross of St. George**...under which Wm. Bradford ministered and served.

- **The Puritan Flag (A Revised St. George Flag)**...under which the Puritans came to America

- **The Colonial Flag of Rhode Island**...under which the people of Rhode Island declared their faith in Jesus Christ and the Scriptures as the anchor of their hope

“We submit our persons, lives and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords and to all those perfect and most absolute laws of His given us in His Holy Word.” (Rhode Island Charter of 1683)

We have now come to 1720-1760....**The Great Awakening**

- Theodore Frelinghuysen (Dutch Reformed) • Gilbert Tennent (Presbyterian) • Jonathan Edwards • George Whitfield • Samuel Davies • Daniel Marshall • Shubal Stearns • and many more.

• This Great Awakening – this colonial revival -- laid the foundation for what would soon become “One nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.”

- **The Grand Union Flag/Continental Flag of 1775**....the first flag of the united colonies.

- **The Gadsden Flag of 1776 “Don’t Tread on Me”**

- **The Flag of Massachusetts (1776) (The Green Tree Flag)** with its motto: “AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN”

- Ivy League Schools founded to train ministers of the Gospel

Harvard University’s “Rules and Precepts” (adopted in 1646) stated “Every one shall consider the main end of his life and studies to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life.”

- Yale University (1701)

- Princeton University founded in 1746 (as a result of the Great Awakening)

- Dartmouth University founded in 1754 as a missionary school to reach the American Indians.

- **The Betsy Ross Flag (1776)**

“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 implore His protection and favor..” (George Washington)

“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.” (George Washington)

### The Ministry of John Wesley: The Circuit-Riding Minister

- **The 15-Star Flag (1795)The Star-Spangled Banner**

...under which Francis Scott Key wrote the Star Spangled Banner in 1814 and these words:

“Blessed with victory and peace, may this Heav’n rescued land. Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation! Then conquer we must, when our cause is just; And this be our motto: “In God is our trust!” And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave, O’er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.”

- Under this flag came the Great Yale University Revival (under University President Timothy Dwight, the grandson of Jonathan Edwards)

- **The 20-Star Flag (1818)**

Under this flag America's leading Evangelist, Charles Finney preached in what is called, “The Second Great Awakening” (His methods adopted by Billy Sunday and Billy Graham)

- First American Foreign Missions Boards established (Adoniram Judson/Luther Rice, etc.)

“That book, sir, is the rock on which our republic stands....Go to the Scriptures...the joyful promises it contains will be a balsam to all your troubles.” (President Andrew Jackson defending the Bible)

In 1849 the rush for gold and the power of greed...

- **The 31-Star Flag (1851)**

- **The 34-Star Flag (1861)**
  - The Great Depression of 1857 and The Third Great Awakening
  - The Prayer Meeting Revivals of 1857-1859 (Jeremiah Lanphier)
  - The War Between the States -The War Over Slavery -The Civil War (1861-1865)

- **The Stars and Bars: The First Official Confederate Flag (1861)**

- **The Confederate Navy Jack Flag (1863)**

- **The 35-Star Flag (1863)**

- **The 36-Star Flag (1865)**

"It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord." (Abraham Lincoln)

"...this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom..."(Lincoln 's Gettysburg Address of 1863)

- **The 45-Star Flag (Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)**

"The more profoundly we study this wonderful Book, and the more closely we observe its divine precepts, the better citizens we will become and the higher will be our destiny as a nation." (President William McKinley)

- **The 48-Star Flag (1912)**...under which Americans would fight two World Wars, and a costly conflict in Korea.

"I have a very simple thing to ask of you. I ask every man and woman in this audience that from this day on they will realize that part of the destiny of America lies in their daily persual of this great Book....A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of this (a knowledge of the Bible)....There are a good many problems before the American people today, and before me as President, but I expect to find the solution of those problems just in proportion that I am faithful in the study of the Word of God." (Woodrow Wilson)

- **The Present 50-star flag (1960)**

- The Bicentennial Flag of 1976 • The Flag of the Bicentennial of the Constitution

"The religion which has introduced civil liberty is the religion of Christ and His apostles...to this we owe our free constitutions of government." (Noah Webster)

## CONCLUSION

"A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today; nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a futile thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about." (Woodrow Wilson)

"America, you're too young to die."

God of our Fathers, whose Almighty hand hath made and preserved Our Nation, grant that our people may understand what it is they celebrate tomorrow. May they remember how bitterly our freedom was won, the down payment that was made for it, the installments that have been made since this Republic was born, and the price that must yet be paid for our liberty. May freedom be seen not as the right to do as we please but as the opportunity to please to do what is right. May it ever be understood that our liberty is under God and can be found nowhere else. May our faith be something that is not merely stamped upon our coins, but expressed in our lives. Let us, as a nation, not be afraid of standing alone for the rights of men, since we were born that way, as the only nation on earth that came into being "for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith." To the extent that America honors Thee, wilt Thou bless America, and keep her true as Thou hast kept her free, and make her good as Thou hast made her rich. Amen.

(This prayer was offered in July of 1947 by the former chaplain of the United States Senate)

2 Chr. 7:14 "...and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

**O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come.**

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