

Revolutionary War Sermon

Old Testament: Joshua 24:1-28
New Testament: Revelation 13:1-10

We left Northern Ireland and Scotland as loyal subjects of his Royal Majesty, the King of England. We settled in Penn's woods, drawn by our Colonial Proprietor's guarantee of religious liberty. Those rights were stated in our colony's *Frame of Government* in 1682.

. . . all persons living in this province, who confess and acknowledge the one Almighty and eternal God, to be the Creator, Upholder and Ruler of the world; and that hold themselves obliged in conscience to live peaceably and justly in civil society, shall, in no ways, be molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasion, or practice, in matters of faith and worship, nor shall they be compelled, at any time, to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place or ministry whatever.

We forged homes in this dense forest and raised children according to God's Word with confidence the Almighty protected us who honored His covenant with Abraham.

We descended from Scottish reformers who signed the National Covenant and committed to the National League and Covenant with England's monarch. We agreed his Royal Highness was God's agent for the covenant made with Israel. Some in these parts still do.

They follow Lord Dunsmore who favors the Monarchy and its Church of England. They claim for Virginia what is rightfully Pennsylvania and oppose our alarm.

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Dr. John Connolly in Pittsburg represents England's interests. He has been arrested for arousing the King's supporters to resist the Sons of Liberty. They fight our independence.

We once counted on England's throne to protect us from Catholic France's incursion upon these parts. We expected the English throne to defend us against France's Indian allies when our families and neighbors were terrorized by warriors tomahawking our wives and children.

We were grateful for the Throne's support while our own Quaker leaders in Philadelphia failed to defend us on the frontier from horrible atrocities.

We remember Philadelphia's unwillingness to raise a defense for this frontier two decades ago. Lancaster's irate settlers carried mutilated bodies of family and friends to the Quaker's hall of justice as winter descended. They placed the corpses before our peace-loving leaders who would not fulfill their Godly obligation in the City of Brotherly Love to defend the weak and help the afflicted.

We were grateful to God's justice for which the British Empire once stood. Some of us fought in that war with British regulars.

But war with France left many families destitute. Our crops and homes were destroyed. Many sought refuges in new shelters without provisions they originally brought into this wilderness.

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Parliament's tax upon our colonies for the cost of our defense did not consider what we have suffered in western Pennsylvania. Boston is incensed by taxation without representation and resists London's efforts to reduce us to vassals of Britain's Empire.

Our royal protector in London sent Gen. Gage's 4,000 Redcoats by sea to invade Boston and lay siege to it. Our New England brothers are waging a firm defense.

News of this reached Ohio's forks two months ago.

Presbyterians of Westmoreland, we are in Joshua's position before Almighty God in the Promised Land.

Joshua swore allegiance to God's covenant before Moses in the Wilderness. He entered God's Promised Land and waged war against tribes who opposed Israel's presence among them.

The Israelites were wearied by war, wanting peace. But difficulties in the Promised Land weighed on them. Israel could have returned to the land beyond the waters where they originated. They could have returned to their ancestors' ways and paid homage to deities they had once worshipped beyond the waters.

Or, they could choose God, who had given them victory thus far. We are in Israel's position today!

Hear what Joshua says to us, a new generation of Covenanters.

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Fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and faithfulness.

Put away the god which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord.

God's Word calls us to measure our Monarch and Parliament to whom we have sworn allegiance - by God's covenant with Moses.

Our allegiance is to God. Every monarch who claims fealty to the Almighty must display God's righteousness. This mandate inspired the Magna Carta and Treaty of Arbroath that form us.

Fealty to God subjects a ruler to care for people who pledge their allegiance to him. He protects his people, who faithfully live by his righteous demands. This is what God does for His faithful.

William Penn included this conviction from the Bible in his *Frame for Government*. It says the governor of this colony and the governed must equally represent God's faithfulness.

[Just] as a careless and corrupt administration of justice draws the wrath of God upon magistrates, so the wildness and looseness of the people provoke the indignation of God against a country.

An invading army of 4,000 soldiers waging war upon their fellow citizens in these colonies does not represent God's covenant with Israel. Imposing taxes upon a people without honoring their protest does not represent God's covenant righteousness.

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William Penn petitioned England's throne to form a colony that propagated Christ's gospel among the natives. That mission has been threatened by evil. Moravians from our colony sent missionaries to the Ohio territory only to have them murdered. Quakers dealt fairly with the Indians, only to have Quaker settlers scalped. We have suffered and we will suffer again.

Captain Connolly has stirred Indians against us. Lieutenant Governor Hamilton in Detroit will send warriors to attack our settlements with his Regulars.

What happened in Massachusetts will come to all of us.

Britain is the Beast from Revelation that is rising from the sea. Its monarchy was wounded when Charles I was beheaded. The Crown angrily remembers Presbyterian insistence that God alone rules our conscience, not Westminster Abbey.

Let us remember the Crown's response to our faith.

Our parents and grandparents defended themselves from England's Beast in Antrim, Fermanagh, Donegal, Tyrone, Armagh, Cavan, and Londonderry. We've been raised on stories from Ulster's Plantation when Presbyterian homes were burned, land stolen, livestock killed. Our families lost loved ones in most horrible ways.

King Charles I brought dark times to us Northern Ireland.

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Those of us from Scotland remember our Covenanter martyrs, Bothwell Brig, and the Killing Times. Those were dark times as well.

The Beast that blasphemes God's name has risen against us wherever we were. It is rising again on these shores.

Our faith in God's covenant was tested beyond the Atlantic in the land of our faithful Kirk. Our families' destruction was not by savages who spoke another language or worshipped another god.

The attack on our churches and homes was by the King's men of the British Empire who worship under the sign of the Cross.

What crime did Presbyterians commit that drove our king to send dragoons against the innocent in Ulster and Scotland?

What crime had James Guthrie, Richard Cameron, and David Cargill committed that our sovereign king, Charles II, executed them as traitors to the Crown? This unrighteous king put his pen to William Penn's charter that brought us to this colony.

Clergy and elders, church men and women, were branded as rebels by that English monarch. Our ancestors were hunted by day and by night. They hid in cairns and barns. They took refuge in the Highlands, or along the coast. They accepted whatever food a charitable Christian gave them despite the King's law.

Their high crime of treason was . . . wanting God's Word spoken truly without a King's interference.

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They wanted God's Word read directly . . . without a King's interpretation.

They wanted words prayed to God sincerely . . . without a King's prayer book imposed.

They wanted freedom from a king's arrogance.

Our families came to these colonies to follow God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might. We left the God-forsaken land of our ancestry for Pennsylvania to flee monarchs who justified by the sword their divine right to rule over the people for their own benefit, not the people's.

We cleared this forest relying on God to give us strength. We settled this land relying on God's Word to unite us. We erected homes relying on God's protection and faith in His election of us, despite the evil that lurks between London and us in the colonies.

The Beast rises again against the righteousness of Christian faith that made this land and inspires its people's prosperity. Parliament that rules without concern for its people is no better than a king who rules without compassion for his subjects.

The Beast utters blasphemy against God in the name of God. King George calls himself Christian yet sends armies to destroy the people under his so-called Christian dominion.

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The Beast who blasphemes God, wages war against his own people and calls it peace.

Our Covenanter ancestors once stood against such tyranny. The Bible in our log houses is available to us because Scots and Scots Irish were martyred by government persecution.

Our brothers in Hanna's town recalled this legacy when they drafted their Resolves six weeks ago. They declared England's king a tyrant and call us to just defense. Let us unite in prayer and action with them knowing God sanctifies the cause of pious men.

This is our time to declare as one that only Jesus Christ is Lord of our conscience. We shall not bow in fear to Indian or monarch.

We shall rise as one in humility of faith, united by our resolve to withstand this evil against us.

We shall come to our neighbors' rescue as one and offer our neighbor safety regardless of its cost.

God gave us freedom from tyranny to serve Him alone. His will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. We shall appeal to those men and women with a true Christian conscience in London to turn to God in humility and abandon this fight.

We shall till our fields and clear our forests as God's endowment to us. We shall build homes, worship in our glens, and give thanks for God's Word that inspires His mission that unites us.

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God's Word stands beyond Parliament's proclamations. God's Word stands beyond declarations from Detroit war councils.

God's Word endures forever. Where families are devoted to God's Word, there is the will to sacrifice for God's goodness.

We will not appeal God's justice in the Star Court. We shall not question when God's justice will arrive on earth as it is in heaven.

The justice and righteousness in which we have faith is from God who gives life, not death, by His love for His people.

God honors the sincerity of those who follow His covenant and triumphs over those who violate His covenant. His mercy shall make us victorious as Christ defeated death!

God's covenant inspires us to holy service, as citizens of His Kingdom in this promised land, and followers of our only sovereign, Jesus Christ, in this county of Westmoreland.

Let us resolve to join this cause of liberty, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, to defend our conscience against magistrates who disdain God's righteousness.

May our humility before God and our firm conviction in His righteousness, inspire future generations to honor God's glory with their sacrifices for liberty across this Land, now and forever.

Amen.