

## **BIBLICAL ROOTS OF INDEPENDENCE DAY**

*"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 them are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."*

Many of you know that the inscription on the Liberty Bell found at Independence Hall (*"Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."*) quotes directly from Leviticus 25:10. But are you aware that the Book of Exodus inspired proposals made by Jefferson, Adams and Franklin for the first Official Seal of the United States?



Their design depicts Moses extending his rod over the Red Sea, thus causing the overthrow of Pharaoh and his minions. The motto around the seal reads: "REBELLION TO TYRANTS IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD." Of course today people would call this cultural appropriation, a charge that Christians and Jews might proudly accept.

As cited above, the opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence uses language clearly based on God's authority as our Supreme Ruler, "author of Liberty", just as it says in the hymn *"My Country 'Tis of Thee"*. The Bill of Rights passed in 1789 echoes the same theme with moral principles drawn from the Bible. And the idea of a "solemn agreement of the people" is a direct reference to a Biblical covenant between man and God.

Words of later American leaders who might not be called Christians still found inspiration in the Bible. In 1861 Abraham Lincoln described himself as a "humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his almost chosen people." He later employed John Wycliffe's dedication to his English translation of the Bible for the following phrase:



*"... that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall nor perish from the earth."*

Jews describe the Passover as *zeman cheiruteinu*, meaning "the time of our freedom." While enjoying good food and the company of friends and family, on this anniversary of Independence Day, let's remember that our land and liberties are the result of God's Providence and not the work of any man or nation. Under his divine hand, the prophet Micah wrote, *"Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken."* [Micah. 4:4]

*From "A Kosher Fourth of July", Wall Street Journal, July 2, 2019*

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