

## Week 10

# The United States Constitution — Implementing the Christian Doctrine of Government

### Lesson 1

Write the definitions from the glossary for the following vocabulary terms.

1. treason \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. totalitarian \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Read the following text for good understanding.

#### The Influence of the Declaration of Independence

The Christian doctrine of government had been clearly stated in the Declaration of Independence. The Founders saw no need to restate their philosophy. The Constitution dealt with implementing this philosophy of government. Despite many modern statements to the contrary, the Declaration of Independence is still part of the United States legal code. Nine times between the years of 1884 and 1982, the United States Supreme Court has declared the Declaration of Independence to be part of our legal code.

The Founders demonstrated in the Declaration of Independence that it was not necessary to have to choose between the extremes of a “religious establishment” and a “secular state.” They believed that the government could encourage Christianity without creating a religious establishment.

Joseph Story, a Supreme Court Justice in the 1830’s and a famous lecturer and author on the Constitution wrote:

*Probably at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, and of the amendment to it now under consideration, the general, if not the universal sentiment was, that Christianity ought to receive encouragement from the state, so far as was not incompatible with the private rights of conscience and the freedom of religious worship. An attempt to level all religions, and to make it a matter of state policy to hold all in utter indifference, would have created universal disapprobation, if not universal indignation.*

Story’s *Commentaries on the Constitution* was considered the most important study of the Constitution during the Nineteenth Century. He personally knew most of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

#### The Promotion of Christianity

The first Congress assembled after the adoption of the Constitution appointed a chaplain, instituted daily prayers, and made arrangements to print and distribute 20,000 Bibles.

on other people’s sinful natures.

The power of the Congress is limited by regular elections, the President’s veto power, and the Supreme Court.

One limit on the President’s power is that he cannot legislate. He is also limited by regular elections and by the possibility of impeachment. His veto can be overridden, and his appointments must be approved by the Senate. This is also true of any treaties he signs.

The members of the Supreme Court must be appointed by the President, and they must be confirmed by the Senate. They can be impeached.

### Other Christian Principles

Many other Christian principles are seen at work in the Constitution.

† The Biblical concept of property rights (Exodus 20:15, 17)

The French Revolution and the Communist Revolutions in Russia, China, Cuba, etc., destroyed property rights. The American War for Independence and the Constitution confirmed them.

† Old Testament law about the sanctity of contracts

† The Bible rules of evidence (Deuteronomy 17:6, Numbers 35:30)

The Constitution requires two witnesses before one is convicted of **treason** (Article III, Section 3, Paragraph 1).

The Bible forbids holding children responsible for their parent’s actions. This policy is the norm in most governments and legal systems. However, the Constitution repeats the policy of the Bible (referred to as the “Corruption of Blood” and “Attainder” in Article III, Section 3). Deuteronomy 24:16 says, “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.”

There are many other Biblical principles seen in the first Ten Amendments, the Bill of

Rights.

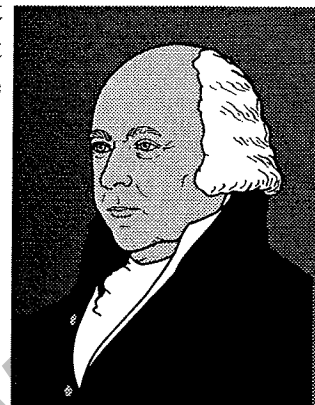
### Recognition of the Christian Influence on the Constitution

The Supreme Court has declared on at least four occasions that the United States is a Christian nation. Many Presidents have also recognized this truth.

† “The general principles on which the Fathers achieved independence were . . . the general principles of Christianity.”

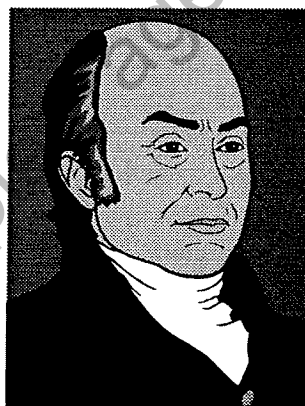
John Adams

— John Adams



Consider these quotes by other Presidents:

**John Quincy Adams** declared that our Founding Fathers “connected in one indissoluble bond the principle of civil government with the principles of Christianity.”

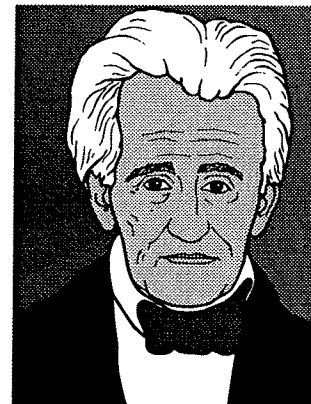


John Quincy Adams

“Go to the Scriptures . . . the joyful promises it contains will be a balsam to all your troubles;” and, “[T]hat book . . . is the rock on which our republic rests.”

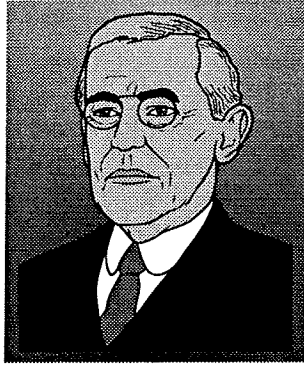
— Andrew Jackson

“America was born a Christian nation. America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of right-



Andrew Jackson

ousness which are derived from the revelations of Holy Scripture.”



Woodrow Wilson

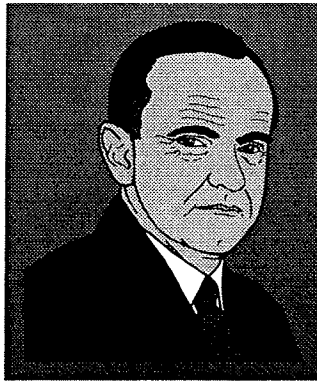
— **Woodrow Wilson**

“The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support

them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country.”

— **Calvin Coolidge**

Franklin Roosevelt described the United States as “the lasting concord between men and nations, founded on the principles of Christianity.” He also said, “We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a nation without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic . . . .”

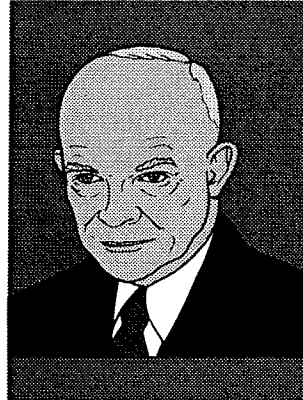


Calvin Coolidge

In a 1947 letter to Pope Pius XII, Harry Truman said, “This is a Christian nation.” He also wrote:

The fundamental basis of this nation’s law was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teaching we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul. I do not think we emphasize that enough these days. If we

do not have the proper fundamental moral background, we will finally wind up with a **totalitarian** government which does not believe in rights for anybody but the state.



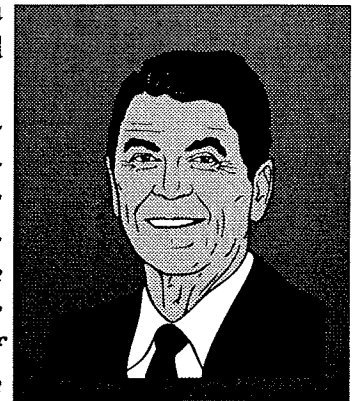
Dwight D. Eisenhower

**totalitarian** government which does not believe in rights for anybody but the state.

**Dwight D. Eisenhower** wrote: “The Bible is endorsed by the ages. Our civilization is built upon its word. In no other book is there such a collection of inspired wisdom, reality, and hope.”

In 1982, the Congress passed and **President Reagan** signed a resolution which stated in part:

*Whereas Biblical teachings inspired concepts of civil government that are contained in our Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States;*



Ronald Reagan

*Whereas this Nation now faces great challenges that will test this Nation as it has never been tested before, and*

*Whereas that renewing our knowledge of and faith in God through Holy Scripture can strengthen us as a nation and a people . . . .”*

14. What are they?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
15. What is the basis for our procedure regarding a conviction for the crime of treason?
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Lesson 3

#### Fill in the blanks.

1. State and federal powers are designed to \_\_\_\_\_ each other.
2. The power of the Congress is limited by regular \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ veto power, and the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Members of the Supreme Court must be appointed by the \_\_\_\_\_ and confirmed by the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The American War for Independence and the Constitution \_\_\_\_\_ the Biblical concept of property rights.
5. The Constitution and the Bible forbid “Corruption of Blood” which holds \_\_\_\_\_ responsible for the actions of their \_\_\_\_\_.
6. “The general principles on which the Fathers achieved independence were the general principles of \_\_\_\_\_.”
7. “. . . [O]ur Founding Fathers connected into one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of \_\_\_\_\_.”
8. “America was born a \_\_\_\_\_.”