

In God We Trust

America's Historic Sites Reveal Her Christian Foundations

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Throughout history nations have built monuments, usually to record victories in battle or to honor their gods. Every nation's monuments and national symbols reflect the heart of the people and identify what they believe is the source of their nation's greatness and achievements. Unlike most nations, America's monuments were not built to record countries conquered or battles won. America's memorials contain the declaration that the source of our birth, liberty, and greatness is God.

A tour of our historic sites reveals that America was a nation birthed by men who had a firm reliance upon Almighty God and His Son Jesus Christ. Inscribed upon our buildings, monuments, and national symbols is our nation's faith in God. A sampling of this evidence seen in some of our monuments and buildings in Washington, D.C., follows.

The Washington Monument

From the tallest structure in Washington a message of Praise be to God goes forth. Engraved upon the aluminum capstone on the top of this 555 foot monument is *Laus Deo*. Inside the structure are carved tribute blocks with many Godly messages: "Holiness to the Lord," "Search the Scriptures," "The memory of the just is blessed," "In God We Trust," "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

The Library of Congress

Within the Great Hall of the Jefferson Building are two climate controlled cases, one contains a Gutenberg Bible and the other a hand-copied Giant Bible of Mainz. The display of these two bibles is appropriate because, in the words of President Andrew Jackson, "The Bible is the rock upon which our republic rests." Many Biblical inscriptions can be found on the ceiling and walls including, "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

In the Main Reading Room are statues and quotes representing fields of knowledge. Moses and Paul represent Religion, with the inscription, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." Science is represented by, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handywork." History: "One God, one law, one element, and one far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves."

The Supreme Court

The Biblical foundation of American law is evidenced throughout this building. On the outside East Pediment is a marble relief of Moses holding tablets containing the Ten Commandments. Engraved on the oak doors at the entrance of the Court Chamber are the Roman numerals I through X, and above the heads of the Justices is a carved marble relief with a large stone tablet containing I through X (each set of numerals represents ancient law, that is the Ten Commandments). In the main foyer are marble busts of previous Chief Justices, many of whom were Christians. Each day the Court is in session, a crier ends his call announcing the formal opening by declaring, "God save the United States and the Honorable Court."

The Capitol Building

All of the eight large paintings in the Rotunda present aspects of our Christian history. Two include: The Baptism of Pocahontas—this shows the baptism of one of the first converts in the Virginia colony. The Virginia charter said they came to propagate the "Christian Religion to such People, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God." Departure of the Pilgrims from Holland—shows the Pilgrims observing a day of prayer and fasting. William Brewster is holding an open Bible upon which is written: "The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." "God With Us" is written on the ship's sail.

In God We Trust, our national motto, is inscribed in letters of gold behind the Speaker's rostrum in the House Chamber. Also in this chamber, above the central Gallery door, is a marble relief of Moses, the greatest of 23 noted law-givers. In 1867 the House Chamber was the meeting place for the largest Church congregation in America. This was not unusual for Churches had been meeting in the Capitol from its beginning.

Statues of many early leaders are displayed throughout the Capitol. Most of these people were Christians and many were ministers. Many plaques in the Capitol declare our faith as well, including: In God We Trust, placed above the

Senate main door; “What hath God Wrought!”—the first message sent over the telegraph in 1844, found on the Samuel F.B. Morse Plaque outside the old Supreme Court Chamber. The Prayer Room contains an open Bible sitting on an altar in front of a stained window showing Washington in earnest prayer. Behind him is etched the first verse of Psalm 16, “Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust.”

The White House

An inscription by the first President to inhabit the White House, John Adams, is cut into the marble facing of the State Dining Room fireplace. It reads: “I pray Heaven to Bestow the Best of Blessings on THIS HOUSE and on All that shall hereafter Inhabit it. May none but Honest and Wise Men ever rule under this Roof.” Though all have not lived out their profession, each President has attended church, associated with the Christian faith, taken the oath of office with their hand on a Bible, and referred to God in their inaugural addresses.

The National Archives

A bronze design on the floor of the Rotunda contains the Ten Commandments with Senate and Justice to the right of them, which symbolizes that our legal system has its origin in God’s law. The two most important civil documents on display reflect Biblical principles of government. These are: The Declaration of Independence (1776)—contains such ideas as man is created in the Divine image, all men are equal, man is superior to the state, the state exists for man. The United States Constitution (1787)—Christian ideas include: the reign of law; trial by jury of peers under law; Creator endowed rights, not government granted; Christian self-government; religious freedom; private property rights.

The Lincoln Memorial

The words engraved upon the walls of the Lincoln Memorial reflect the Christian faith and providential perspective of our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln. On the south wall is the Gettysburg Address which ends exclaiming “that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” On the wall of the north chamber is Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address which shows his knowledge of the Scriptures: “Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. ‘Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh’ (Mt 18:7).”

There are many other monuments and buildings in Washington that proclaim America’s faith in God. Carved on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery is the inscription: HERE RESTS IN HONORED GLORY AN AMERICAN SOLDIER KNOWN BUT TO GOD. On the front facade of Union Station three Scripture verses are engraved: “Thou has put all things under his feet;” “The truth shall make you free;” and “The desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose.”

This brief tour of our nation’s Capital reveals that Christianity is the source of America’s liberty and prosperity. In the words of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1854: “The great vital element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and divine truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Engraved on the Jefferson Memorial are words from our third President we must remember: “God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?” We must not forget the author of our life and liberty, for if we do we shall lose them.