



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: America's Birthday: The Real Story

Guest(s): David Barton

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: President Ronald Reagan, once referred to the United States as a shining city on a hill, because this country is more than just a piece of land discovered some 500 years ago. It's more than the people who have traveled here in search of a better life. America is a concept. The ideas of faith, freedom, liberty, and inalienable rights are why this nation has flourished for centuries. Today on Family Talk, we'll look back at our history and the impact Christianity has had on that history. Hello everyone, I'm Roger Marsh, and this broadcast is produced by the James Dobson Family Institute. Joining me in the studio now is Dr. James Dobson, who will tell us more about today's presentation. Doctor.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, thank you, Roger. We live every day under the protection of the constitution, which gave us rights and liberties and freedom that frankly had never been given to any other nation on the face of the earth or in the history of humankind. We have a wonderful guest. Most of our listeners will know of him or have heard him. He's David Barton. And he is a founder and president of Wall Builders, which is passionately dedicated to educating the public on America's forgotten history and heroes. We all need heroes. And there are many of them that we need to know about, especially when it comes to our moral and spiritual heritage. David has written many best-selling books on this topic and he was named by *Time* Magazine as one of America's 25 Most Influential Evangelicals. David is my friend, and he has given us permission to air recording of a message that he gave some time ago. It is timeless and people are going to enjoy what he has to say.

Roger Marsh: Well, I know I am Dr. Dobson. I love history and I'm very much looking forward to hearing this presentation. Now we're actually going to hear three different segments from David Barton, which we have pieced together into one program. He'll begin by walking through the momentous days and events that led up to the American Revolution. He'll then explain how our founding father's faith and biblical knowledge fueled their desires for independence from England. Here now is David Barton's presentation titled "America's Birthday: The Real Story," on this patriotic edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

David Barton:

We approach another birthday in America and each year is again another record setting year. We are the longest ongoing constitutional Republic in the history of the world. And as we roll around at the 4th of July every year, we do like to celebrate it. And we do have the fireworks and the other festivities that go with that day. But it's become today where there's so many people don't understand the roots of American history, the roots of the American Revolution. If you ask them what the revolution was about, they say, "Well, it was taxation without representation." And that answer really goes back to something that happened in the 1920s. In the 1920s, some revisionist historians called Charles and Mary Beard came up with what they called The Economic View of the American Revolution. And today that's what we teach.

We don't teach the spiritual side. We don't teach the constitutional side, all the other issues that were there. Even the biblical side, we used to in previous generations to understand the American Revolution, to understand what we celebrate on the 4th of July, you really have to go back 150 years before the American Revolution. You have to go back to the time of the pilgrims and the puritans and those settlers that arrived in America. Now, if you ever get to go to Washington DC, you'll see there in the Capitol, a picture of The Embarkation of the Pilgrims. It shows them gathered around a Geneva Bible. It was a popular Bible with the group called Deda centers. Those were the peoples who didn't really think that everything centered around one person at the top of every organization, whether it was church or state, they really were quite anti-autocratic. And the people that had started that group go back to people like Luther and the Calvin and Wing Lee and Knox and the reformers.

And so, the significant thing about the Geneva Bible was its marginal commentaries. Those commentaries were written by the reformers and they point out that God had so many different ways of governing, divine right of king says, "Oh, monarchy is the only way we do this." God has a single leader at the top of the state, a single leader at the top of the church. But here came these reformers saying, "No, there's the priesthood. The believers, each of us can go to God on our own, through what Jesus Christ has done. Each of us can self-govern ourself as citizens." They were persecuted for having those views, those anti autocratic views. And finally the pilgrim said, "We're out of here. We're going to America where we can read and study the word of God for ourself, without being persecuted for it." And so they arrived here in America.

Now when they arrived here, the Bible is a very significant book to them. There are so many aspects of American culture today that came from the puritans and the pilgrims. And that came specifically from the Geneva Bible. What we call the free enterprise system that came out of 1 Timothy 5:8, according to the pilgrims, that's a system they found. You'll find that they were in the habit of finding things in the Scriptures and trying to literally apply them into civil government, into education, into life and into family, into church. As a matter of fact, that's where the first education laws came were out of New England. In 1642, they passed that law in Massachusetts. That was if you will, a public school law that day, that the purpose of public education was to teach kids to know the

Scriptures so that they can judge both the church and the state by what God has said in the Scriptures.

Well, five years later, Connecticut passed that same law. It says, "Because if you can't read, you can't read the word of God and you therefore can't judge the laws of the state against the word of God, which means that we in the general assembly might pass a bad law. And you folks wouldn't stop us because you can't read the Bible." Let me go through some of those sermons and show you the type of things that we preached about, because this does give you a good indication of how that no matter what went on, we went to the Bible to see what the word of God had to say about it. This is a sermon preached 1804. This is a sermon on a solar eclipse, which had just happened in Connecticut. Now here's a sermon from 1799. Now this happened in Massachusetts and it was a hail storm in a tornado.

It happened on the 2nd of August. It says here on the sermon. And so the next Sunday, the poll pitch were filled with sermons on hailstorm and tornadoes. And here's, what's called an execution sermon. Now this sermon is from 1796. It was preached at Salem, January the 14th, 1796. It's occasioned by the execution of Henry Blackburn on that day for the murder of George Wilkinson. Now here's someone being put to death by civil government. And there's a sermon on that execution, absolutely. You see, we went back and said, "What did the Scripture say about this? Is this something civil government can really do? What does Romans 13 mean when it says that the government doesn't bear the sword in vain? What does the government even have the sword? What does it use the sword? Is this a justified use of the sword by the government?" And we just went back and looked at the Scriptures no matter what went on, we went to the Scriptures.

Here is a sermon. This is from 1803, it's called an artillery sermon. What happened was once a year, they gathered the military together and brought ministers in to preach these artillery sermons. That is sermons on what the word of God says about the military. You see nothing went on that we couldn't find a biblical precept with. For 150 years before the American Revolution, we had been trained in our culture to look at every single thing from the word of God. And that is literally how we approached it. Now it was because of that training that we were able to recognize when King George III came along, that he was transgressing those laws, not only was he transgressing biblical laws, he was transgressing the British constitution at that time.

He was going through all these things and the founding fathers were saying, "Whoa, time out here. These are things that have been in Great Britain for four to 500 years. They've been worked out. They've been set down in law, constitutions work this way, rights work this way. These are sovereign and alienable rights that God has given man and King George III, you're violating that. You can't do this." And so it's striking that as you look at the first reactions of the Americans against the policies that King George III was imposing on America, you'll find that it takes a very strong, biblical tone. Probably the first

person to write about these violation of rights was James Otis. And James Otis is really the man who mentored Samuel Adams. The father of the American Revolution, James Otis is the philosophical underpinnings. And in a book that he has right here, it's from 1766 is called the Rights of The Colonies. And now this came out because of the stamp act of 1765.

Now the stamp acts were taxes and of course the Americans objected these taxes in the way that they were being imposed on the Americans and for the purpose that they were being imposed. And the Americans had no voice in determining their own policies. And so it was taxation without representation, but notice how they go back to the Bible. Now see the king saying, "Look, I'm the king, I'm the authority. I am the top here. This is the divine right of Kings. When I speak, it's the same as if God speaks to you." And James Otis says, "No, no, no." He says, "Time out, let's back off here." And so in this writing, which is really the first objection raised in what became the American Revolution. James Otis says this. He said, "The power of God almighty is the only power that can properly and strictly be called Supreme and absolute."

He says, "You're not infallible." He said, "Only God is infallible. And we don't obey you as if you're God." Which is the same thing that you'll find with the apostles in acts four and five. When the civil authorities told him, "Don't do this." And the apostles said, "Now wait a minute, time out, God, Jesus told us to do this. Now, do we obey God? Or do we obey you?" And of course the apostles chose to obey God. And that put them in direct conflict with civil authority. And this aspect of, if you will, civil disobedience, if you even look through Hebrews 11 at what we call the faith hall of fame and look at all of those individuals who are in there is striking how many are there simply because of civil disobedience, the Hebrew midwives. Now, why did they make it into that chapter?

Because they disobeyed the order of Pharaoh to let them know when a young child was born so that young child could be killed. They protected Moses. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they're heroes, they're in that chapter. Why? Because they disobeyed a civil authority. They would not bow to man. They were going to stand firm, forgot Daniel. He works his way into that chapter. Why? Because he said, "I'm not going to obey a civil law that causes me to violate God's laws." Another person who spoke out about this very strongly is a man named John Dickinson. Now John Dickinson was a signer of the constitution after the revolution. And he declared a similar sentiment. This is from his writings on the rights to the Americans. He says, "Kings or parliaments cannot give us the rights essential to happiness."

He says, "We claim our rights from a higher source. We claim them from the king of Kings and the Lord of all the earth." But at this point, people say, "Now, wait a minute. This is called the American Revolution. Romans 13 says you're to submit to authority. How can you say that? God bless this nation, if it was birthed in revolution, that is rebellion against God, God can't bless the nation. That does that." Well, you have to understand first off that the founding fathers did not call it the American Revolution. It was called that in later years, at that

point in time, it was called a civil war. And as they point out, they didn't start it. Matter of fact, we took great pride in the fact that we never fired the first shot. We never sent troops to attack Great Britain. The Americans, they did not have an army. They did not have a Navy, but they did have the biblical right to defend themselves.

And that was one of the innagiable rights, by the way that the founding fathers put in the second amendment, the right to keep and bear arms. They pointed that in the Scriptures. And you can see that throughout Nehemiah. Nehemiah, what did he do when he was rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. He stationed him with a sword in one hand and a trial on the other. You have the right to defend yourself, if you're attacked. For 11 years, we've been negotiating over these principles and finally, King George III says, "I don't negotiate. You are going to bow your knee." And he sent these troops. It was not a revolution in that sense. As a matter of fact, there's some great statements here. Here's one by Sam Adams, Sam Adams wrote this to the British government. Now Sam Adams signer of the declaration, a member of Congress.

He wrote this to the British officials. He said, "You know that the cause of America is just." He said, "The blood of the innocent is upon your hands. We again make our solemn appeal to the God of heaven to decide between you and us. And we pray that in the doubtful scale of battle, we may be successful as we have justice on our side. And that the merciful savior of the world may forgive our oppressors." And that's not anarchy. That's not rebellion. I mean, they are sincerely submitting to God and saying, we've got to stand for what's right. And we just ask God to judge between us.

Roger Marsh: You're listening to Dr. James Dobson's family talk and a special patriotic program featuring guest speaker and bestselling author, David Barton. I'm Roger Marsh. David just gave a few examples of the impact that Christianity has had on the founding of our nation. But let's listen now, as he introduces a few godly Americans who were influential to our nation's success during the revolutionary war.

David Barton: Ethan Allen, his green mountain boys, he was approached by citizens and the legislature of Connecticut. Connecticut was really scared. They said, "British troops have gone into Williamsburg in Virginia, British troops are going through Lexington, Concord, Charleston, Boston, Bunker Hill. We're scared to death they're going to come into Connecticut next. And we don't know what we're going to do. Ethan, would you take your green mountain boys and go over here to New York, way inland go to Ticonderoga and capture Fort Ticonderoga. Ethan took green mountain boys. They surrounded that Fort in May of 1775. It was late at night, poor British didn't know anything was coming. And so they knocked out the guards. There were two guards, they knocked them out. They tied them up. This was late at night coming up toward midnight. And they got the rest of the barracks. And then Ethan Allen, after having secured the whole Fort went and banged on the door of the commander, Captain Delaplace.

He came stormed into the door and he says, "Who is this? What do you demand?" And Ethan Allen says, "I order you to surrender your fort." And Captain Delaplace became indignant. And he says, "By whose authority do you order me to give up my fort." Ethan Allen in his own autobiography, he took a step back. He raised his sword in the air. And Ethan Allen said, "In the name of the great Jehovah and the continental Congress." And it was that declaration, the great Jehovah and the continental Congress got the attention of the British commander. He promptly gave him the fort on the spot, not a single shot fired. They captured the fort without any loss of life. See, nobody hears that about Ethan Allen anymore, but that was the declaration made then. 1776, one of the members of the Virginia legislature. Now remember Virginia's been under attack.

One of the members of the Virginia legislature was a minister. He was the Reverend John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg. In January of that year, he had just heard the report of Patrick Henry and heard that he had to rally 5,000 Virginia troops to push back the British. And so as pastor Muhlenberg heads home, he gets to this remote secluded part of the state where his churches are, long way across the state. And he preached on January the 21st that Sunday, what became his farewell sermon. And he stood there in his clerical robes that morning and he preached out of Ecclesiastes three versus one through eight, which is the passage about, "Oh, there's a time and a season purpose to everything. Time to be born, time to die." Well, he went through all this and he got down to verse eight and verse eight says there's a time of peace and a time of war.

And he closed his Bible and he put his finger out and he said, "Brethren." He said, "This is not the time of peace." He said, "This is the time of war." He stood right in front of the congregation, started disrobing in front of the congregation. Underneath those robes. He was wearing the full uniform of an officer and the continental army sword and everything. He started marching down the aisle of that church. There was one aisle down the middle of the church. He marched down that aisle and he preached as he went, he said, "Brethren." He said, "We came here to practice our religious and our civil liberties. And if we don't get involved, we're going to lose those liberties." He said, "Now who's going with me to defend those liberties?" Well, 300 men got up and met him at the back door of that church.

Those 300 men became known as the Eighth Virginia Brigade. Now his brother was pastoring in New York city and his brother wrote him a scathing letter. And I mean, he just absolutely chewed him up. And his brother was Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, and Frederick tells his brother. He said, "You would've asked for the best. If you'd kept out of this business from the beginning." He said, "I now give you my thoughts in brief. I think you're wrong." And that's just about as brief as it gets. He said, "Brother, you shouldn't have done this. You're supposed to stay in the pulpit. You shouldn't be getting involved in this kind of stuff." Well, brother Peter wrote back a letter. He said, "Wow." He said, "That was a pretty scathing letter you wrote. Pretty serious stuff." And he said,

"You've accused me of getting involved and that I shouldn't because I'm a clergyman."

This is what he said. He said, "I am a clergyman. It is true. But I'm a member of society as well as the poorest layman. And my Liberty is as dear to me, as it is to any man." He said, "Shall I then sit still?" He said, "Heaven forbid it." He said, "I'm convinced, it's my duty so to do and duty, I owe to God and my country." And then he started meddling with his brother. He said, "Oh, by the way." He said, "Frederick." He said, "Do you realize you couldn't stand in your pulpits and do what you're doing? You couldn't stand there and preach the gospel, if it wasn't for people like me going out to defend your right to preach the gospel." And Frederick, "Yeah, yeah. Right." Just kind of blew it off. Well, interesting thing happened at 1777, the next year, the British invaded New York city.

They came into New York city. They seized his brother's church. They desecrated his church. They chased him out of the pulpit. And suddenly this minister of the gospel Frederick, who said, "You shouldn't be involved." Has lost his church, lost his ministry. It's been taken over. He says, "You know, maybe I ought to get involved after all." So he does get involved. Do you know who Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg is? Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg was the original speaker of the US house of representatives. As matter of fact, there's only two signatures on the bill of rights. He and John Adams are the only two to sign the bill of rights. And this minister of the gospel signed it not because it guaranteed separation church and state. You see, he got involved to make sure that government couldn't come in and stop those public religious activities like they had done to his very church, not because of separation church and state

1778, you may recall that year because that's the famous valley forge year. You remember Washington crossed the Delaware and after crossing the Delaware, they went into the battles of Princeton and Trenton, and finally settled down in Valley Forge, which was that tough winter. And so every day, Washington would go out and walk among the troops and try to encourage them and keep their confidence up and put a good face on himself and try to look like the good commander. But what he wrote in his diary was a whole different story. It just literally tore his heart out to see what those soldiers were going through. Every day between 12 and 20 soldiers fell over and died in that camp. Every day at Valley Forge, they died of malnutrition, of sickness, of starvation. They died of exposure, not having clothes, being exposed to cold weather.

Washington said, "I've never seen sacrifice like that. I've never even read of it. Never heard of this. This is the greatest degree of patriotism he had ever seen." Well, it's interesting that when the intelligence came to him in May, the British are breaking camp in Philadelphia, they're about to March out. That night he writes out his final order and as he writes out his final order, which was given on May the second, 1778 in Valley Forge. He said, "Guys." He said, "I've seen what you've done. I've seen your sacrifices. I can't tell you how much I appreciate what you sacrificed." He said, "Words, can't express it." And then he closed with this statement. This is right out of his orders. He says, "But while we are

zealously performing the duties of good citizens and soldiers with all this sacrifice." He says, "We certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion."

He said to the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of Christian. That's Washington in the middle of Valley Forge, one of the most sacrificial times in American history saying, "Guys, I love your patriotism. I just got to remind you. It's more important to be a Christian than it is to be a patriot." See, that's the aspect of the American Revolution we don't hear anymore. And it's a strong spiritual aspect. Well, we finally get into 1781, which is the final battle of the American Revolution, the battle there at Yorktown. And so at the battle of Yorktown, we are able to convince Cornwallis to surrender, and he does. Military actions over, but it would be two years before Great Britain was willing to admit that it had been beat. Finally, 1783, the peace treaty was negotiated and signed.

What was the very first line of this political treaty? It's said, "In the name of the most holy and undivided, trinity, amen." That's the opening line. In the name of the father, son, the holy ghost. Now we've acknowledged God. We have said, "God's at the top of this." Now let's talk about the terms of surrender here and who's going to get what and how we're going to divide America. See that was the opening line even the final peace treaty. From start to finish, this was remarkable in its open declarations of God. Now when Washington finally got the word that they've signed the treaty, it is now officially over.

He turned in his resignation and then he had 13 copies of that made and sent to the governors. He says, "I now make it my earnest prayer that God would have you and the state over which you preside in his holy protection, that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all, to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and peaceful temper of mine, which were the characteristics, the divine author of our blessed religion. And without a humble imitation of his example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation."

There's Washington saying, "Yeah, guys, we won but remember if we don't imitate Jesus, we're not going to be a happy nation." Now that's not the economic view of the American Revolution we hear today. And so what's the best way to celebrate the 4th of July? Well, maybe the best way to celebrate it is the way that John Adams said it should be celebrated. Now, if you want a good read, go to the public library, get the letters of John Adams to his wife, Abigail. This is like a blow by blow account of what was going on in the American Revolution.

And this is what he predicted to Abigail on that day, over 200 years ago, he says, "I believe that this day will be the most memorable, epic in the history of America." And then he wondered whether we should really celebrate what they had done that day. Is that something that should be celebrated? And he finally decided that it was, if we celebrated it the right way, what's the right way to

celebrate? According to John Adams, he said this day ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. You see in America for generations, the 4th of July was a religious holiday.

Roger Marsh: Wow. What an adventure this has been as our guest historian, David Barton has walked us through the American Revolution on this special edition of Family Talk with Dr. James Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, David can really pick him up and lay him down, can he?

Roger Marsh: Sure can.

Dr. James Dobson: He talks fast, but there's so much content there. I really wonder how many listeners today have been thinking, "I wish I'd had a history teacher or a college professor who made history so interesting the way David Barton does."

Roger Marsh: Amen.

Dr. James Dobson: He did make it come alive. And one of the things that he said that really interested me, had to do with civil disobedience, he pointed to Hebrews chapter 11, which recounts the stories of biblical heroes. It's called the "Heroes Hall of Fame." And he said that if it comes to a decision between obeying God and obeying the King or Pharaoh or the Congress or the President, we will choose to obey the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, but I've enjoyed this program. And I hope other people have too.

Roger Marsh: And I know doctor, there is a parent listening who is already thinking about how they might gather their family around and do just what you suggested. Those parents need to come to our website at drjamesdobson.org, where we have a link for WallBuilders. And that's where you'll find articles, DVDs, audio, and other resources to help you teach your children the truth about our country's history. And we will also make this program available on CD if you'd like a copy as well. For more information on how to get your copy, go to drjamesdobson.org or call us at (877) 732-6825. Again, that number is (877) 732-6825. Be sure to contact us today to find out how you can get your copy.

Dr. James Dobson: And Roger, I want to say at the end of this program, that I would like to ask those who can, not others, but those who can to give us a little boost at this time of the year.

Roger Marsh: Doctor, listeners can contact our offices here in Colorado Springs at (877) 732-6825. Again, that's a toll free call. They can also visit drjamesdobson.org and click onto the donate button. Thanks so much for tuning in today and be sure to join us again. Next time right here on Family talk for Dr. Dobson and the rest of the team. I'm Roger Marsh, have a blessed day.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.