

What is American Exceptionalism?

Notes from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFaTOSSE644> presented by David Barton on Nov 14, 2017.

Pro 10:22 The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it.
God's Blessing actually enriches your life.

Dr. Benjamin Rush, 1 of 3 most notable founding fathers, said, "I thank God for all the times I've NOT fallen down stairs"

In 2017 USA is one of 195 Nations in the "United Nations" We've had only ONE constitution in 229 years! Compared to some other Nations:

Nation	#ea	Starting Year
France	15	1789
Haiti	23	1801
Brazil	8	1822
Ecuador	20	1830
The Philippines	7	1899
Russia	4	1918
Poland	7	1919
Nigeria	9	1922
Afganistan	6	1923
Iraq	4	1925
South Africa	5	1931

Some Amazing Statistics of America

- 4% of the world's population (USA yearly!) produces 96% of the world's creativity
- 4% of the world's pop. (USA yearly!) produces 25% of World's Prosperity(Gross Dom Prod)
- Agriculture is 1% OF America's GDP (annually); and our 1% is enough to feed 100% World's needs!
- America's agricultural farming space is #66 of the World in listed space!
- OR our farm lands are utilized better than 64 other nations on earth!

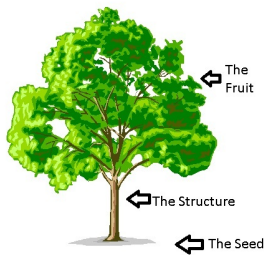
Alexis DeTocqueville, a political ruler in France from 1831, traveled here for 8 months and in 1835 wrote:

"The position of the Americans is quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one."

THIS IS WHERE, APART FROM ARROGANCE OR EGOTISM, WE GET THE TERM AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM. We are not *typical* as a nation, we are NOT the "rule" we are the "exception!"

Definition of: A _____ E _____ describes the
U _____ S _____, F _____ and P _____
that is the R _____ of the I _____ and P _____
Produced by a U _____ G _____ P _____

Answer key: philosophy, institutions, freedom, stability, prosperity, result, policies, unique, unprecedented, governing



"We have a unique philosophy of government >>that produces policies and institutions >>and because of them, we get the unprecedented stability freedom and prosperity." (Our current citizens only comprehend the last of these phrases...)

The Seed (The Philosophy) ^^ The Trunk, branches, infrastructure (The institutions, policies) ^^ The Fruit (Stability, freedom, & prosperity)

What 5 things make American Constitutional Law Unique?

[From 126 Words (Declaration of Independence) came 5 Immutable Principles]

The Immigration Test (3 months, 100 questions, Immigrants only taking–bare minimum standard for citizenship, 92% pass rate) >Only 7% of High Schoolers passed same test. 15 states now implement this test as their minimum HS graduation test [\$164,000 after 13 yrs invested into children by public education].

13 of the most basic questions off this test to the American (living here whole life!) basic citizen evaluation test found that— 71% failed./62-3 br of govt/70-Const-supreme law- 78%elected officials: 78% failed./48%-3 br of govt. {There is a miserable ignorance of our constitutional law!}

1. There is a Divine Creator – “...all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator...” - part of the *unanimous (all-are-in agreement)* declaration.
- this is the first step in limiting government: Acknowledging that there is a Power higher than Government.

George Washington, 1789, on the day of the Bill of Rights ratification, was asked to proclaim a National Day of Prayer of Thanksgiving for the event. Why? In the first paragraph of his proclamation he said: “[I]t is the **duty*** of all **nations** to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor.”

* In their day the usage of the word made a “**legally binding contractual obligation**.” In 1913, the definition was changed to “responsibility” a milder term in that Webster dictionary...

>No other nation has ever taken these divine principles and initially incorporated them into its founding laws, so it is understandable why similar “exceptionalism” is elsewhere found!<

2. Inalienable Rights Come from God – “...they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights...”

Just what is this right? **John Dickenson** – A right “which God gave to you and which no inferior power has a right to take away.” **Alexander Hamilton** – Inalienable rights “are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature by the hand of the Divinity itself and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.” **John Adams** – Inalienable rights are “*antecedent to all earthly governments* – rights that cannot be repealed or restrained by human laws – rights derived from the great Legislator of the Universe.”

“Noahide laws or **7 Laws of Noah** 1 Death penalty. If you take another’s life you lose your own.

Lying,... stealing... etc. Antecedent means before these laws or Gen 1-8.

Samuel Adams Inalienable rights are life, liberty and property... the 16 listed in The Bill of Rights, and 3 more from the Declaration of Independence, and about 25 others from the founding fathers not recorded but spoken of by them like “accumulation of profits, expatriation, etc., ... are all inalienable.

None of these are touchable by any government at any time.

3. Government Exists to Protect Inalienable Rights. – “...that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men...”

James Madison – “[T]he principal object ... of government [was] to acquire a new security for the possession ... of those right ... which were previously entitled by the immediate gift ... of our all-wise and all-beneficent Creator.”

Before King George, those in England had the Magna Carta and British bill of rights. Then he took guns away and prescribed the church you must attend, etc. There was 11 years after (1765 change of British Laws, 1770 first bullets) violence of the American Revolution before we tried to separate (1776). **Samuel Adams** – “[G]overnment ... was originally designed for the preservation of the unalienable rights. First, a right to life; secondly, to liberty; thirdly to property.”

Was ‘abortion’ [a right to life] an issue then, or just now in 2020? **YES** it was as much of an issue as today, we’ve just refined the ways we’ve conducted and justified certain procedures and definitions. “Observations on Abortion” – John Burns, 1808 treatise written by a physician instructor in Glasgow. **James Wilson** – “With consistency, beautiful and undeviating, human life – from its commencement to its close – is protected by the common law. In the contemplations of law, life begins when the infant is first able to stir in the womb. By the law, life is protected.”

Then it took 2-3 months to determine a child in the womb, now technology says 8 days after fertilization is recognition of the life.

John Witherspoon – In Europe the parent is considered the source of life, but in America, God. “A perfect right in a state of natural liberty [is] the right to life. [In America] we have denied the power of life and death to parents.”

The FIRST Inalienable right: the right to LIFE.

David Barton – personal testimony in his political ministry in dealing with representatives, and others around the Capitol *how a person believes life came about gives him 90% accuracy how they will vote on any other issue!* “Social Issues are not what people are most concerned about but Financial?”- they say. **But voting on financial laws is congruent to Right to Life both positively and**

negatively!

This was the report on the over 10,000 laws proposed each year in Congress. So...

If they won't protect your life, they won't protect your money!

SOCIAL ISSUES | ECONOMIC ISSUES **"First, a right to life.."**

4. There Is a Fixed Moral Law – "...that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men..." "...and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which **the laws of nature and of nature's God** entitles them..." *Blackstone's Commentary* on law used this unique phrase. Being the absolute textbook on law in that era, two categories of Law emerge here: 1)the Laws of Nature and 2)[the Laws] of Nature's God. Blackstone's was read by attorneys then as Muslims read the Koran today.

What are the Laws of Nature? Illustrated by David Barton. On his ranch he has a great trail horse which he trusts completely. After she gave birth to a foal, she kicked him in the forehead while he came close to the foal in the barn they were housed. In nature's law, the mare protected her foal, and her barn, and forgot any of her master's loyalty or his life.

At the same time he has a right to protect his life from his trail horse. No government has the right to revoke any of the above laws of nature!

Nature's law forbids slavery.

Nature's law forbids abortion. 10 million species do not do so, except in very rare circumstances.

Nature's law forbids homosexuality. Of 10 million species, only 6 societies have any record of same sexual union occurrences, and those are aberrations [noun. deviation from what is normal, expected, or usual] and not the normal course of life. The supreme court used to believe this.

Transgender. On David's cattle ranch there is never any consternation is deciding 580 calf's sex. 81 different gender identities now. [Illus. 15 housing options "LGBTTQQFAGPBDSM" in Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT]

Property. Species by nature "own," cultivate, and "defend" a perimeter of their habitat, while living. Too much food, so that it be removed from them.

Theft. negative trait that causes bad laws: e.g. skunk's tendency in hen house to destroy and now eat.

The Laws of nature's God. The Ten Commandments. A recognized set of moral laws. Given by God and universally observed.

5. The Consent of the Governed – "...governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..." "The will of the majority" **George Washington** – "The fundamental principle of our Constitution ... enjoins [requires] that the will of the majority shall prevail." **Thomas Jefferson** – "The will of the majority – the natural law of every society – is hte only sure guardian of the rights of man."

A filibuster in the Senate allows the will of 60 people to lose to 40 people every time!

These five laws in the order given set for the reasons Liberty and Limited Government have singularly succeeded in this nation and not in others who do not espouse ALL IN THEIR ORDER. Notice clearly that the first 4 are God centered and are exclusively not up for changing by voting!

Thomas Jefferson – See inside the Jefferson Memorial – "And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis?"

126 Words make up these 5 Principles. From our D_eclaration o_f I_ndependence
What is the average number of Constitutions among nations?

Answers: Definition of: A_merican_ E_xceptionalism_ describes the

U_nprecedented_ S_tability_, F_reedom_ and P_rosperity_
that is the R_esult_ of the I_nstitutions_ and P_olicies_
Produced by a U_nique_ G_overning_ P_hilosophy_

The Declaration of Independence and Natural Rights

Thomas Jefferson (Library of Congress)

Thomas Jefferson, drawing on the current thinking of his time, used natural rights ideas to justify declaring independence from England.

Thomas Jefferson, age 33, arrived in Philadelphia on June 20, 1775, as a Virginia delegate to the Second Continental Congress. Fighting at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill had already broken out between the colonists and British troops. Even so, most in Congress wanted to work out some mutual agreement with the mother country.

For more than a year, the Americans had sent petitions to England proclaiming their grievances against the British government. Colonists even appealed to the British people, pleading with them to elect different members of Parliament who would be more open to compromise. But the "British brethren" refused to do this.

Soon after Jefferson arrived in Philadelphia, Congress assigned him to draft a document explaining why the colonists had taken up arms against England. Even at this late date, the Congress still blamed only Parliament and the king's government ministers, not King George himself, for the growing conflict. Jefferson's Declaration of the Causes and Necessity for Taking Up Arms stopped short of declaring independence, but pointed out the folly of governing the American colonies from England.

Neither Parliament nor King George, however, were interested in negotiations to prevent all-out war. In August 1775, King George issued a proclamation charging that the Americans "had proceeded to open and avowed rebellion." A few months later, Parliament passed a significant act that placed the American colonies outside the king's protection. This act allowed the seizing of American ships, justified the burning of colonial towns, and led to sending war ships and troops, including foreign mercenaries, to put down the rebellion. Meanwhile, the royal governor of Virginia offered freedom to slaves who joined the British cause. These actions by the British king and government inflamed Americans who were undecided about independence and made war with England all but certain.

In May 1776, the Continental Congress took a fateful step and passed a resolution that attacked King George himself. This was not the first time in English history that such a thing had occurred. In 1688, Parliament had similarly denounced King James II. This led to the so-called Glorious Revolution, which drove James off the throne. Now, almost 100 years later, a formal declaration of independence by the Continental Congress was the only thing standing in the way of a complete break with King George.

The Declaration of Independence

Even before the Continental Congress declared independence, most colonies along with some towns, counties, and even private organizations had issued their own declarations. In most cases, these statements detailed British abuses of power and demanded the right of self-government.

On June 8, 1776, the Continental Congress voted to write a declaration of independence and quickly appointed a committee to draft a formal document. But the job of actually writing the draft fell to Thomas Jefferson, mainly because John Adams and other committee members were busy trying to manage the rapidly escalating war with England.

Working off and on while attending to other duties, Jefferson completed his draft of the declaration in a few days. He argued in his opening two paragraphs that a people had the right to overthrow their government when it abused their fundamental natural rights over a long period of time. Then in a direct attack on King George, Jefferson listed 20 instances when the king violated the rights of the American colonists. Having thoroughly laid out his proof that the king was a "tyrant" who was "unfit to be the ruler of a people," Jefferson continued on to condemn the British people. "These unfeeling brethren," he wrote, had reelected members of Parliament who had conspired with the king to destroy the rights of the colonists. Jefferson ended his draft by stating, "we do assert and declare

these colonies to be free and independent states. . . ."

When Jefferson submitted his draft to the Congress on June 28, the delegates spent little time on his opening paragraphs, which today are the most famous parts of the Declaration of Independence. Instead, they concentrated on Jefferson's list of grievances against King George and the British people.

The delegates made some small changes to improve the Declaration's clarity and accuracy. But they also ripped apart the last sections of Jefferson's draft, deleting about 25 percent of it. They eliminated most of his harsh language directed against the British people and totally cut out Jefferson's passionate assault on slavery and the slave trade.

The removal of the section on slavery, Jefferson's last grievance against the king, probably resulted from objections by Southern slave-holding delegates. But Jefferson's argument was weakened when he blamed the king alone for continuing the slave trade and then condemned him for offering freedom to slaves who joined the British in fighting the American rebels.

Jefferson grew depressed as more and more of his words were cut or changed. He later wrote that the Congress had "mangled" his draft.

On July 2, 1776, the Continental Congress voted to declare the independence of the American colonies from English rule. On the Fourth of July, they approved the final edited version of the Declaration of Independence. There would be no turning back now.

Natural Rights

The members of the Continental Congress made only two minor changes in the opening paragraphs of Jefferson's draft declaration. In these two paragraphs, Jefferson developed some key ideas: "all men are created equal," "inalienable rights," "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Where did Jefferson get these ideas?

Jefferson was a man of the Enlightenment. This was the period during the 17th and 18th centuries when thinkers turned to reason and science to explain both the physical universe and human behavior. Those like Jefferson thought that by discovering the "laws of nature" humanity could be improved.

Jefferson did not invent the ideas that he used to justify the American Revolution. He himself said that he had adopted the "harmonizing sentiments of the day." These ideas were, so to speak, "in the air" at the time.

As a man of the Enlightenment, Jefferson was well acquainted with British history and political philosophy. He also had read the statements of independence drafted by Virginia and other colonies as well as the writings of fellow revolutionaries like Tom Paine and George Mason. In composing the declaration, Jefferson followed the format of the English Declaration of Rights, written after the Glorious Revolution of 1689.

Most scholars today believe that Jefferson derived the most famous ideas in the Declaration of Independence from the writings of English philosopher John Locke. Locke wrote his *Second Treatise of Government* in 1689 at the time of England's Glorious Revolution, which overthrew the rule of James II.

Locke wrote that all individuals are equal in the sense that they are born with certain "inalienable" natural rights. That is, rights that are God-given and can never be taken or even given away. Among these fundamental natural rights, Locke said, are "life, liberty, and property."

Locke believed that the most basic human law of nature is the preservation of mankind. To serve that purpose, he reasoned, individuals have both a right and a duty to preserve their own lives. Murderers, however, forfeit their right to life since they act outside the law of reason.

Locke also argued that individuals should be free to make choices about how to conduct their own lives as long as they do not interfere with the liberty of others. Locke therefore believed liberty should

be far-reaching.

By "property," Locke meant more than land and goods that could be sold, given away, or even confiscated by the government under certain circumstances. Property also referred to ownership of one's self, which included a right to personal well being. Jefferson, however, substituted the phrase, "pursuit of happiness," which Locke and others had used to describe freedom of opportunity as well as the duty to help those in want.

The purpose of government, Locke wrote, is to secure and protect the God-given inalienable natural rights of the people. For their part, the people must obey the laws of their rulers. Thus, a sort of contract exists between the rulers and the ruled. But, Locke concluded, if a government persecutes its people with "a long train of abuses" over an extended period, the people have the right to resist that government, alter or abolish it, and create a new political system.

Jefferson adopted John Locke's theory of natural rights to provide a reason for revolution. He then went on to offer proof that revolution was necessary in 1776 to end King George's tyranny over the colonists.

"All Men Are Created Equal"

Since 1776, no words in the Declaration of Independence have received more attention than Jefferson's phrase, "All men are created equal." But how could Jefferson and the other signers of the declaration believe this when slavery existed in the colonies? Some slave owners argued that slaves would become equal and worthy of natural rights only when they became civilized. For Jefferson, a life-long owner of slaves, this was a much more complex issue.

At an early age, Jefferson concluded that slavery was wrong. To his credit, he attempted to denounce slavery, or at least the slave trade, in the Declaration of Independence. Some scholars believe that Jefferson agreed with the Scottish philosopher, Francis Hutcheson, that all men are born morally equal to one another and that "Nature makes none masters, none slaves." But, how does this explain that Jefferson kept most of his slaves throughout his lifetime?

It appears that while Jefferson opposed slavery in principle, he saw no obvious way to end it once it became established. If the slaves were freed all at once, Jefferson feared that white prejudice and black bitterness would result in a war of extermination that the whites would win. He fretted that if slaves were individually emancipated they would have nowhere to go and no means to survive on their own. Of course, Jefferson along with most other Southern plantation owners were also economically dependent on slave labor.

The best Jefferson could come up with was a plan to take slave children from their parents and put them in schools to be educated and taught a trade at public expense. Upon becoming adults, they would be transported to a colony somewhere and given tools and work animals to start a new life as a "free and independent people."

Nothing ever came of Jefferson's fanciful plan. Slavery in the new United States of America would last another 89 years until the end of the Civil War. But even then, the equality promised in the Declaration of Independence was denied not only to African Americans, but also to other minorities and women. Even today, Americans are still not certain what equality means in such areas as affirmative action, sex discrimination, and gay rights.

The Declaration of Independence has no legal authority. It is not part of the basic law of the United States like the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. But its words have resonated as the ideals of the United States. Abolitionists in the 19th century asked Americans to live up to the ideal of equality and eliminate slavery. The civil rights movement of the 20th century pressured America to honor the commitment made in the declaration. The document still speaks to us today about the rights of Americans, as it did in 1776.

The complete text of the Declaration of Independence

For Discussion and Writing

List the main ideas in John Locke's theory of natural rights and revolution. Then read Jefferson's first

two paragraphs in the Declaration of Independence. What similarities and differences do you see? Write a letter to Thomas Jefferson expressing your views on his ideas about equality and slavery. "All men are created equal." What do you think this means for us today?

For Further Information

Two interviews with Pauline Maier, a Professor of History at MIT and author of *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence*. PBS Newhour

Booknotes

A C T I V I T Y

"Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"

In this activity, students discuss some of the ideals in the Declaration of Independence.

Form small groups to discuss the meaning of the three natural rights that Jefferson identified in the Declaration of Independence: "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

For each one of the three rights, group members should answer this question: What does this right specifically refer to in our lives today?

The groups should then post their answers for the rest of the class to see.

Hold a general class discussion and vote, if necessary, to drop or keep the meanings that each group has developed for the three rights.