

THE STORY OF OUR FLAG

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Taken From *Your Heritage*

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Clifton A. Emahiser's Teaching Ministries
Plus Critical Notes

From the beginning of civilization, flags have been used to symbolize the principles for which nations stand. Many different flags have floated over the territory now included in the United States, the original Union Jack was here also. It was the red cross of St. George and with it was subjoined the white diagonal cross of St. Andrew, in a field of blue. This flag had come into being in 1606 following the union of England and Scotland three years earlier. It was not the present Union Jack of Great Britain, for the red diagonal cross on a white ground for Ireland, was not added until later.

Why the diagonal crosses? Genesis chapter 48 gives us the answer. When Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph he crossed his hands, putting his right hand on the head of Ephraim and his left on the head of Manasseh, saying that Manasseh would become a great people and Ephraim a multitude of nations. So today we have the United States and the British Commonwealth of nations, descendants of the tribe of Joseph, to whom was given the birthright.

The first flag of the united colonists, the immediate predecessor of the stars and stripes, was the Grand Union flag, sometimes called the First Navy Ensign or the Cambridge flag. It was hoisted by order of General Washington on Prospect Hill in what is now Somerville, Mass., on January 1, 1776. It had the Union Jack in the canton and red and white stripes. **It was a peculiar flag**, the stripes standing for the union of the colonies and their revolt against the mother country. The crosses indicated an allegiance to the mother country not yet wholly broken. When reported in England it was alluded to as the thirteen rebellious stripes. This flag was never formalized by congress, but was in use until nearly a year after the declaration of independence, until it was superseded by the stars and stripes.

The authentic history of our flag began on June 14, 1777, when the American congress adopted the following resolution. "Resolved, that the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white. That the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

It was George Washington who described it in these words. "We take the star from heaven, the red from our mother country, separating it by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing liberty."

When Vermont and Kentucky came into the union on June 1, 1792, congress soon passed an act increasing the stars and stripes on our national flag from thirteen to fifteen. This was our national banner for twenty-three years. This was the flag which inspired Francis Scott Key to write The Star Spangled Banner.

Then Tennessee came into the union, and Ohio, then Louisiana, and Indiana. However, no provision had been made for their representation on the flag. Peter H. Wendover, a congressman from New York City, urged a change in form which would show their membership in the sisterhood of states. Because of this recommendation, he was made chairman of a committee which made a recommendation from which I'm quoting. "In viewing this subject there appears to be a happy coincidence of circumstances in having adopted the symbols in this flag, a peculiar fitness of things in making the proposed alterations. In the part designed at a distance to characterize our country, and which ought, for the information of other nations, to appear conspicuous and remain permanent, you present the number of states that burst the bonds of oppression and achieved our independence; while in the part intended for the nearer or home view, you see a representation of our happy union as it now exists, and space sufficient to embrace the symbols of those who may hereafter join our banner."

After much debate, congress passed a bill calling for these alterations. It was signed by President Monroe on April 4, 1818. The law reads as follows. "Be it enacted that from and after the fourth of July next, the flag of the United States be thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white; that the union have twenty stars, white in a blue field. Be it further enacted, that on the admission of every new state into the union, one star be added to the union of the flag; and that such addition shall take effect on the fourth of July next succeeding such admission."

Thus on July 4, 1818, the flag with 20 stars and 13 stripes appeared and then came the addition of star after star for state after state until on July 4, 1960, after the admission of Alaska and Hawaii the stars number 50. No star has ever been removed.

Henry Ward Beecher said, "A thoughtful mind, when it sees a nation's flag, sees not the flag, but the nation itself. And whatever may be the symbols, its insignia, he reads chiefly in the flag the government, the principles, the truths, the history, that belong to the nation that sets it forth. The American symbol of liberty, and men rejoiced in it."

Let's trace our nation and our flag from their Biblical origins. As we have said so many times in these lessons, we are an Israel nation. Yahweh commanded Israel to set up standards, banners or flags, one for each tribe. Numbers 1:52 says, "And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts." Standards are referred to twenty-one times in Numbers, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. Psalms 20:5 records, "in the name of our God we will set up our banners." This we have done.

Note the colors of our flag. When Yahweh gave Moses the ten commandments, they were deposited in the ark of the covenant within the tabernacle, whose curtains were red, white, blue and purple. So being Israel, it isn't strange that we have chosen the Israel colors of old. As for the scriptural significance of these colors, red is the color of blood and signifies justice or judgment, reminding us of the life laid down by the Son of Yahweh. White signifies purity or holiness, blue the color of the sky, signifies loyalty and consecration. Numbers 15:38 tells us, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the border of their garments throughout their

generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue that ye may look upon it: and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, and do them.”

Why stars in our flag? When you turn to the Bible you will find our American forefathers were using Israel emblems there too. Jacob recognized stars as the sign of the Israel family. Genesis 37:9-10 records, “ And Joseph dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more: and behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?”

The only object ever to rest upon our national flag is the holy Bible, just as the church pennant is the only banner permitted to fly above it in the United States navy. This is clear, **national recognition**, of the word of Yahweh as the overruling spiritual force.

We salute the flag! There are some who don't care to pay their respects to the flag of the United States of America. They regard saluting the flag as a sign of worship, but it isn't that. It is a sign of respect for the government for which the flag stands. Yahweh organized a government at Mt. Sinai, and to that government He gave authority to rule, instructing each tribe to encamp by its own standard, the emblem of its authority, to which respect was to be shown.

From that Biblical injunction comes the Israel respect for the flag and the government it represents, as exemplified in our oath of allegiance when we salute the flag. “ I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all.”

The stars and stripes symbolizes these thoughts.

**LONG MAY OUR LAND BE BRIGHT, WITH FREEDOM'S HOLY LIGHT,
PROTECT US BY THY MIGHT, GREAT GOD OUR KING.**

Critical note by Clifton A. Emahiser: To support Bertrand L. Comparet's thesis, I will quote an excerpt from Howard Rand's *Destiny Magazine* for August in his yearbook for 1946 in an article entitled *Annuit Coeptis* by Rev. J. H. Allen on page 278:

“ Declare ye among the nations, and publish and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not ' (Jer. 30: 2).

“ In order not to conceal but to publish its identity, each tribe, in its exodus out of Egypt and its subsequent march through the wilderness, was assigned a special camp standard, of which there were four, by which each must also pitch its tent. Therefore, a careful examination of the heraldry of the United States may prove of great value in settling a question that has long perplexed the ethnologists of our race. Some declare there is no such race as that of the Anglo-Saxons; others affirm that we are of Shernitic origin but reject all Biblical evidence; while still others declare that we are of Aryan stock. Thus the pros and cons fight merrily on, all the while neglecting their best source of factual information, the Bible ... ”