

Prayer

Bible - Matthew 5:43-48

Quiz

1. What colony and state was John Adams from? Massachusetts
2. What was John Adams' profession before he began serving in the government?
lawyer/attorney
3. When George Washington was president, what was John Adams? vice president
4. We are studying a letter from John Adams to what other famous American? Thomas Jefferson
5. When John Adams died, how long had it been since the Declaration of Independence? 50
years

Recitation

Excerpt to Memorize - John Adams 1813

President John Adams (1735-1826)

born in Massachusetts

studied at Harvard College at age 16 graduated 1755

studied law at Harvard; graduated 1758; became a lawyer 1759

1764 age 28 married Abigail Smith, age 19; his third cousin

they had six children; two died in early childhood

one of their sons was later President John Quincy Adams

became the most prominent lawyer in Boston

1774 delegate to First and Second Continental Congress

1775 he is the one who nominated George Washington to be commander of the army

1776 the most important figure in passing the Declaration of Independence

ambassador in France, Holland, and Great Britain

1788 elected vice president; began term in 1789; served as VP until 1797

1796 elected vice president narrowly over Jefferson; began term 1797

1800 moved to the new capital at Washington DC; lost election to Jefferson

1801-1826 mostly farmed in Massachusetts

1812 began correspondence with Jefferson - rich source - 158 letters

1826, age 90, died July 4 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

(Jefferson died earlier the same day)

Text - Letter to Thomas Jefferson - June 28, 1813

Understanding the Letter

This conflict between the US and France that was the occasion for this letter was “The Quasi War,” an undeclared war fought mostly at sea in the Caribbean Sea, lasting 1798-1801. When President Adams sent three diplomats to France, the French high government officials would not even see them. The U.S. and France came to the brink of war.

The young men of the Philadelphia, PA area composed a letter to the president, proclaiming their confidence in the president’s judgment, and their willingness to go to war with France if necessary to preserve the country’s honor.

Adams asserted that the same knowledge and morals by which the country had achieved so much were the only ones by which it could continue to prosper, and that no better principles ever will be found.

Apparently Adams had been criticized for that assertion, as if he were narrow-minded or sectarian.

Moravians - protestant group that grew up in eastern Europe under the influence of Jan Huss; they spread to several places in the world, including a large presence in Pennsylvania

“Horse Protestants” - As good a protestant as Oliver Cromwell’s horse. A Protestant who does not really know the beliefs that make up Protestantism.

“House Protestants” - A term from southern Ireland, where at the time it was common for Protestants to live in the “big house,” in control of land with Roman Catholics as tenants. They were called “Big House Protestants.” If their fortunes had changed, and they were in reduced circumstances, they were jokingly called “Small House Protestants.”

“Protestans qui ne croyent rien.” Protestants who believe nothing.

Arians - believing what was taught by Arius, that Jesus was created by God

Priestleyans - Joseph Priestley; unitarianism

Socinians - believing what Socinus taught, that Jesus was a mere man, not God

Quotes and Allusions

Are there any identifiable Bible references?

...for a greater Character than Priestley or Godwin has Said, "Be ye perfect &c."

Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Consistency or Inconsistency with Deism

Is this letter from John Adams consistent with deism? No.

...for a greater Character than Priestley or Godwin has Said, "Be ye perfect &c."

Excerpt to Memorize - no new one this week

Grammar Notes