

# The Declaration of Independence, Rights, and the First Story in Genesis

*“The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, 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** entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that **all men are created equal**, that **they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights**, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness . . . . And for the support of this Declaration, with a **firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence**, we mutually **pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor**.”*

Before I say anything about the *Declaration of Independence*, I want to address some misinformation that I hear all of the time. It usually states the colonists were not religious people. They put religion behind them when they came to America. The Association for the Sociology of Religion published [American Religion in 1776: A Statistical Portrait](#). It reveals the religious landscape at the founding of America (1775-1776). The numbers in parenthesis are the total number of congregations of each denomination in the Thirteen Colonies. The list begins with the largest congregations:

1. Congregational (668);
2. Presbyterian (588);
3. Baptists (497);
4. Episcopal (495);
5. Quakers (310);
6. German Reformed (159);
7. Lutheran (150);
8. Dutch Reformed (120);
9. Methodists (65);
10. Roman Catholic (56);
11. Moravian (31);
12. Separatist and Independent (31);
13. Dunker (24);
14. Mennonite (16);
15. Huguenot (7);
16. Sandemanian (6), and
17. Jewish (5).

Churches were the center of many community activities – *weekly services, schools, records of marriages, births, death, and hubs of networks of information.*

The *Declaration of Independence* links **Nature's God** and **the Creator** of all men together. This is a reference to Genesis 1.

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- Light, the skies, the earth, plants, trees, sun, moon, stars, water creatures, flying creatures, animals, and humans are all part of nature and they were created by God (Elohim).
- The functions of all of the things above were also determined by Elohim (Laws of Nature).

Dr. Danielle Allen, *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality* (p. 136) wrote:

- “Presumably this means that nature is given its order by God . . . to close arguments about why things are the way they are and about whether nature’s order is good. **Nature is ordered as it is because of nature’s God . . . order is good, because it belongs to God . . . .**
- But for Jefferson **it was not enough that his readers should understand nature’s order and power and the necessities that flow from nature.** He also wanted his readers **to see nature as sacred, as something meriting reverence and protection.**
- To see **nature as sacred through association with divinity** is both to have **an answer to the mystery of where its order comes from and see its laws as inviolable.**
- **By resting the principles in this document on God, the signers aspired to bring their readers to share the strongest possible moral commitment to those principles.”**

By linking “**all men are created equal**” to “**endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights,**” Jefferson established the “**sacredness of all men.**” *Humans are part of nature and nature is sacred because of its association with God.* Therefore, one needs a reason **to commit to other people’s survival and freedom so strong as to command one’s reverence.**

*One way or another, one must hold sacred the flourishing of others.*

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In Genesis, this is what Elohim's Co-Representatives must do – “*they must make the strongest possible commitment to protecting lives, preserving lives, making lives more functional, and increasing the quality of life.*”

According to the *Declaration*, **ONLY those who make that commitment** are “*endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*”

- **American rights aren't based on the Declaration.** They are based on the laws of the Constitution, as interpreted by courts.
- People **committed to Lives 1<sup>st</sup> Values and the Tov Standard hold sacred the flourishing of others.**
- **Life is held sacred in the Torah, teachings of Jesus, and the Declaration of Independence.**

Shalom,  
Jim Myers

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