

Ahead of America's 250th, Rare Founding Artifacts Reveal the Bible's Enduring Influence on the Nation

As Americans prepare to celebrate the nation's 250th birthday this week, a new exhibit invites visitors to look beyond modern debates and examine the nation's founding through the words and artifacts left by those who lived it.

The Museum of the Bible in Washington has unveiled a special collection featuring original founding-era documents, family Bibles and historical artifacts that trace Scripture's influence on America's earliest years.

Among the exhibit's centerpiece items are the first Bible printed in English in America, family Bibles belonging to several Founding Fathers and an original letter from Thomas Jefferson discussing religious liberty.

The exhibit arrives at a significant moment. As our nation approaches a milestone birthday, it offers an opportunity to reflect not only on America's political history but also on the biblical ideas that shaped many of its earliest conversations about liberty, human dignity and public life.

Original documents tell the story

Rather than asking visitors to accept a particular interpretation, museum officials say the collection centers on primary historical sources.

"The Bible has been an integral part of this nation's founding and history," Anthony Schmidt, the museum's director of collections and curatorial, told Fox News Digital.



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"That's not a theological claim; it's what the documents show. The founding fathers referenced Scripture, argued from it, and built political frameworks on its language about human dignity and liberty."

The exhibit explores how biblical language appeared throughout the founding era and influenced discussions surrounding education, government and individual freedom.

More than church history

One section highlights the role Scripture played in everyday colonial life, displaying family Bibles owned by several Founding Fathers and other prominent Americans.

"These objects show the Bible's impact not only on religious life, but on early American art, education and politics," Schmidt said.

The collection also includes Revolutionary-era publications that helped unite the colonies, documents tracing early Jewish civic life in America, portraits of George Washington and other colonial figures, a hand-colored lithograph honoring Abraham Lincoln and busts of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin.

Another section examines the relationship between faith and government through Jefferson's writings on religious liberty and one of America's earliest published arguments for resisting tyranny.

Let the evidence speak

Schmidt said one of the exhibit's primary goals is to encourage Americans to study original historical documents

rather than relying solely on modern interpretations.

"We want visitors to encounter the history of this country and see, in the primary documents, what impact the Bible actually had on the people who built it," he said.

He also acknowledged that America's founders did not agree on every religious point.

"Many of the founders disagreed about religion, and disagreed sharply, but they were still shaped by the Bible's language and arguments," Schmidt said. "We want people to engage with that evidence and come to their own conclusions."

Looking toward America's next chapter

As preparations continue for America's 250th anniversary celebration, the exhibit serves as a reminder that the nation's earliest leaders frequently turned to biblical language when discussing liberty, justice and human dignity. While historians continue to debate the degree of that influence, the original documents themselves remain an important part of America's story.

The approaching anniversary is also an opportunity to pray for our nation, to thank God for His faithfulness throughout our history, and to ask Him to guide America toward another generation that honors Him.

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