

Mike Huckabee is right:

There would be no America without Jews

The far left and right do not know history

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Last month, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee caused a bit of a stir for saying the following: “One of the reasons that [the United States and Israel] are tied together is because it is upon the Jewish foundation that Christianity was formed, and upon the Jewish and Judeo-Christian foundation, Western civilization was formed. Without that foundation, there would not be an America. It is as simple as that.”

Of course, everyone on the horseshoe left and right lost their minds to the point of apoplexy.

“How could anyone be this ignorant?” they shouted in unison. “Don’t these MAGA neanderthals know that our nation’s founding had nothing to do with religion and most assuredly had nothing to do with the Jews?”

How do we know who is right? Is it Mr. Huckabee or his detractors? If only someone had conducted peer reviewed research we could point to, we could put this debate to rest.

Well, it turns out someone has. In his book “America’s Prophet: How the Story of Moses Shaped America,” Bruce Feiler tells us that in 1973, two political scientists (Donald Lutz and Charles Hyneman) undertook a comprehensive survey of American political rhetoric during the Founding era. Their methodology included reading “everything published in America between 1760 and 1805.”

This herculean effort took “ten years and covered 15,000 documents, including 2,200 for which they recorded every reference cited.”

What did they discover? Mr. Feiler summarizes it: “Thirty-four percent of all cited material in their research was from the Bible, compared with 22 percent for the Enlightenment writers and 9 percent for the classics. The Bible was cited four times as often as Montesquieu, ten times as often as Locke, and thirty times as often as Hobbes.”

That's not all. Even more specific was the fact that an overwhelming percentage of the biblical references came from one particular Old Testament book: the Book of Deuteronomy.

Why Deuteronomy? Well, maybe we should let our Founding-era thought leaders speak for themselves. Here are just a sampling of what they had to say:

In 1788, Samuel Langdon, president of Harvard, argued that America should adopt the same form of government that God handed down to Moses on Sinai. "The Republic of the Israelites is an example to the American States," he wrote. "The Jewish government was a perfect republic."

Ezra Stiles, the president of Yale, agreed and added this: "God is now giving this land to us who in virtue of the ancient covenant are the Seed of Abraham. ... The Lord freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm, and by his awesome power, and by signs and portents. He brought us to this place and gave us this land flowing with milk and honey."

These two statements from Messrs. Langdon and Stiles were far from anomalous. In fact, all nine of the first colleges founded on American soil before the revolution offered instruction in Hebrew. Yale's seal depicted an open Bible with the Hebrew inscription *Urim v'Thummim* — rendered in the seal's Latin motto as "Light and Truth." The seals of Dartmouth and Columbia included Hebrew as well.

Even Harvard had a recitation in Hebrew in its annual commencement until 1817. The evidence is overwhelming. The debt our Founders felt we owed to Israel and its model of government cannot be disputed, and this sentiment was not just from professors and preachers. Take, for example, Thomas Paine, arguably the most secular and anti-religious of all the Founders, who explicitly cited the Jewish leaders Gideon, Samuel and David as he argued that the United States should sever ties with the British monarchy and adopt a republican form of government. Then there is Benjamin Franklin.

He proposed that the official seal of the new nation include an image of "Moses standing on the shore and extending his hand over the sea thereby causing the same to overwhelm Pharaoh who is sitting in an open chariot, [with] a crown on his head and a sword in his hand. Rays from a pillar of fire in the clouds reaching to Moses, to express that he acts by the command of Deity." Franklin also wanted the seal to read: "Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God."

Thomas Jefferson agreed with Franklin, adding that the seal should include an “image of the children of Israel in the wilderness, led by a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night.” The list goes on. One could write a book on the topic (as indeed Mr. Feiler did), and the conclusion of the matter is clear: Mr. Huckabee is right. There would be no America without the Jews. “It’s as simple as that.”

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