



The Biblical Heritage Center's

DISCOVERING THE BIBLE

Viewing the ancient messages of our Bibles in their cultural & historical context. Understanding the journey of our biblical heritages.

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Learning About the Past to Understand the Present -- Continued

By Jim Myers

The 18th century would witness a tremendous amount of political and religious activity in America. 2,000 **Quakers** came from England to settle in Pennsylvania in 1700. They would be followed by **Presbyterians** who organized their first church in the America a few years later. In 1720 the **Great Awakening** in America began with the arrival of the **German evangelist T. J. Frelinghuysen in New Jersey**. By 1725 the revival had spread throughout the Thirteen Colonies and there were mass conversions. **Jonathan Edwards** preached throughout the colonies and became a very influential leader. The Great Awakening would last until 1770 and greatly influence the new American population.

Meanwhile, at the University of Oxford, brothers **John and Charles Wesley** organized the 25-member **Holy Club** for spiritual exercises and ministry to prisoners, the poor, and to neglected children in 1732. The same year **George Whitefield** came in contact with the Wesleys at Oxford and the book they gave him would play a role in his conversion in 1735. Three years later **Whitefield** began holding revival meetings throughout England and North America that would continue from 1738 to 1770. **It is estimated that Whitefield was heard by 80% of entire American population.**

The **Hassidic sect of Rabbinic Judaism** was founded in 1750. After February and March earthquakes in London in 1761, a soldier named **William Bell** began to preach that **the world would end on April 5th**. He caused **mass hysteria to break out** and Bell was arrested and locked up in a London insane asylum. In 1770 a French nun **Jeanne Le Royer** predicted tribulations, **the coming of the Antichrist, the end of papacy, and finally the end of world in 2000**. Another Frenchman in the following year, **L. S. Mercier** published anonymously in Amsterdam *L'An 2440 (Memoirs of the year 2500)*, which describes **the future human civilization with no war, no slavery, no popes, orderly traffic in Paris, a universal language, and world peace**. **United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing** (Shakers) was founded at **Niskeyuna, NY** in 1774.

In 1776 the **Declaration of Independence** was signed and the American population was 3,000,000 people. It was also in 1776 that **Adam Smith** published *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, the most influential work in modern political economy (wealth being capitalism and machines). Two years later the **Universalists** organized their first church in America. In 1787 the **Society of the United Brethren for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen** was formed in Pennsylvania.