



# • Part 1 -- Baptist History

## • Lesson 5 -- 1600-1800 A.D.

### • Baptist Influences in Colonial America, the Revolution, and the New Republic



Finally, we reach America, where the Baptists began to flourish as never before in history. The success of Baptists in America is largely attributable to religious and civil liberty which prevails in our country. And the religious and civil liberty which prevails in America, and has been exported throughout the world, is largely attributable to the doctrinal beliefs and sacrifices of Baptists.



Isaac Backus

Roger Williams and John Clarke in Rhode Island

Philadelphia Association

James Ireland and John Leland

Shubal Stearns, Daniel Marshall, and the Separate Baptists

Screven and Furman in Charleston

**BAPTIST INFLUENCES IN COLONIAL AMERICA, THE REVOLUTION, AND THE NEW REPUBLIC 1600-1800 A.D.**

**A. Colonial America and the Rhode Island Experiment.** Not until 1607, 115 years after Columbus discovered America, did England establish its first permanent settlement in the New World, for political and economic reasons, at Jamestown, Virginia. While Jamestown faded into history, another colony was established far to the north, in New England, a colony founded, not for political or economic reasons, but for religious purposes.

**1. The Pilgrims and the Puritans.** Intriguingly, the Pilgrims and the Baptists had a close relationship in both England and in Holland. Both groups had an independent, separatist spirit; but of course, the Pilgrims, with their Protestant origins, retained Protestant doctrines of infant baptism and marriage of church and state. It is not the purpose of this study of Baptist history to focus on God's glorious hand of provision and protection upon the Pilgrims when they arrived at Plymouth in 1620; but without a doubt, all subsequent generations of Americans owe a great debt to the pioneer and religious spirit of our Pilgrim forefathers.



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Ten years later, in 1630, after the Pilgrims proved that the English could settle New England, the Massachusetts Bay Colony was established in Boston (a little north of Plymouth) by a group of Puritans, who were likewise upset with the Church of England, but did not have the separatist tendencies of the Pilgrims. Their governor, John Winthrop, preached a famous sermon, "A City upon a Hill," which is still cited by modern leaders as evidence of the religious nature of America's founding. But it must be stressed that the Puritan ideal of "a city upon a hill" did not encompass religious diversity; the Puritans fled to America for religious liberty for themselves, not for others.



John Winthrop

Lest we Baptists be accused of historical bias against the Pilgrims and Puritans, consider what U.S. Supreme Court Justices have said (see [Appendix C -- U.S. Supreme Court Justices Know More about Baptist History than Baptists Do!](#)).

- Justice Souter in *McCreary County v. ACLU* (2005):

We are centuries away from the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre and the treatment of heretics [**Baptists**] in early Massachusetts, but the divisiveness of religion in current public life is inescapable.

- Justice Stevens in *Van Orden v. Perry* (2005):

Not insignificant numbers of colonists came to this country with memories of religious persecution by monarchs on the other side of the Atlantic . . . Others [**Baptists**] experienced religious intolerance at the hands of colonial Puritans, who regrettably failed to practice the tolerance that some of their contemporaries preached.

2. **Roger Williams**, the first Baptist leader in America, developed an independent spirit early in life.

- The Early Years in England.** Young Roger Williams, like young Martin Luther and young John Calvin, had a background in both the law and religion. With obvious language skills, he became a stenographer and office manager for Sir Edward Coke, the most famous lawyer in England. After his graduation from Cambridge, however, he became chaplain to a rich family in Essex, where he developed a dissenting viewpoint toward the Church of England. Determined to seek liberty of conscience, he left opportunities for advancement in England and sailed with his family to the New World, to Boston, where he became pastor in 1631.
- Dissent and Banishment in Massachusetts.** The only church allowed in Boston was the Puritan Congregational Church; everyone in town had to belong to the church and support it with their tithes. When Williams began to preach against such practices, he soon became *persona non grata*. According to *A History of Our Country*, a secular school textbook first published in 1953, Roger Williams, described as the "Apostle of

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Religious Freedom," "taught that the State had no control over a man's conscience . . . for these heresies he was exiled in 1635." Pastor Williams, his family, and a few followers vanished into the wintry wilderness of Massachusetts, finding relief only from Indian friends.



Roger Williams

- c. **Founding Providence and Liberty of Conscience.** In June 1636, Williams purchased land from the local Indians and founded the City of Providence. In 1638, the people of Providence approved the first public document in history which established both government by consent of the governed and liberty of conscience -- the Providence Compact.
- d. **Founding the First Baptist Church of Providence.** Up to this point in his life, Williams was not a Baptist, although he was likely familiar with Baptists John Smyth and Thomas Helwys in England. In Providence, he likely came under the influence of Baptists Ezekiel Holliman and Katherine Scott. After Holliman baptized Williams, they started the First Baptist Church of Providence in 1639. Intriguingly, after only a few months membership in that Baptist church, Williams voluntarily surrendered his membership, remaining friendly to the Baptists and their beliefs in believer's baptism, but choosing rather to resume the independent "Seeker" status.
- e. ***The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution*** was published by Roger Williams in 1644 in London, the foremost statement and defense of absolute liberty of conscience up to that point in history. Williams' beliefs impacted John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, as well as subsequent generations of Baptist preachers in the battle for religious freedom.



Thomas Jefferson

The influence of Roger Williams on advancing both religious and civil liberty in America is well attested to by several U.S. Supreme Court Justices (see [Appendix C -- U.S. Supreme Court Justices Know More about Baptist History than Baptists Do!](#)).

- Justice Black in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962):

**Williams**, who was one of the earliest exponents of the doctrine of separation of church and state, believed that separation was necessary in order to protect the church from the danger of destruction which he thought inevitably flowed from control by even the best-intentioned civil authorities . . .

- Justice Clark in *Abington School Dist. v. Schempp* (1963):

However, the views of Madison and Jefferson, preceded by **Roger Williams**, (fn6) came to be incorporated not only in the Federal Constitution but likewise in those of most of our States.

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- Justice Brennan in *Abington School Dist. v. Schempp* (1963):

It has rightly been said of the history of the Establishment Clause that "our tradition of civil liberty rests not only on the secularism of a Thomas Jefferson but also on the fervent sectarianism . . . of a **Roger Williams**." Freund, *The Supreme Court of the United States* (1961), 84.

- Justice Blackmun in *Lee v. Weisman* (1992):

fn 11. The view that the Establishment Clause was primarily a vehicle for protecting churches was expounded initially by **Roger Williams**. "[W]orldly corruptions . . . might consume the churches if sturdy fences against the wilderness were not maintained." M. Howe, *The Garden and the Wilderness* 6 (1965).

**3. Dr. John Clarke.** Dr. John Clarke was a medical doctor who also studied languages and religion in England before migrating in 1637 to Boston, which was in the throes of religious persecution. Anabaptism had been declared a crime, and it was illegal to believe or preach that "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). When a preacher named John Wheelwright was disenfranchised, disarmed, and banished, and later, when 76 citizens were disarmed by the Boston Court, Dr. Clarke assumed leadership of the banished brethren, convincing them to move before blood was shed.

- a. Founding Towns and a Church.** After a brief sojourn in New Hampshire, Dr. Clarke and his followers traveled to Providence, where Roger Williams convinced Dr. Clarke to settle on Aquetneck Island, which was purchased from the Indians in 1638 and renamed Rhode Island. The town of Portsmouth was started that year. The next year, when several believers migrated to the south end of the island, Dr. Clarke went with them and helped to found the town of Newport and the Newport Baptist Church, of which he was the first pastor.
- b. *Ill News from New-England*.** Roger Williams recounts a revival conducted in 1649 by Pastor John Clarke and other men in the Massachusetts town of Seekonk. One of the men baptized by Dr. Clarke was Obadiah Holmes, a former "separate" Congregational pastor who became a member of the Newport Baptist Church. In 1651, when Dr. Clarke returned to Massachusetts to minister to William Witter in Lynn, Obadiah Holmes journeyed with him, together with church member John Crandall.

The worst fears of persecution were realized in Massachusetts when the three missionaries were arrested for conducting an unauthorized church meeting and for practicing anabaptism. Both Dr. Clarke and Mr. Crandall were released, but Mr. Holmes remained in prison for nearly three months, released after receiving 30 lashes, the same sentence given to adulterers and rapists. When he was released from the post, Holmes told the magistrates: "You have struck me with roses."



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Subsequent to the Holmes lashing, Dr. Clarke wrote a tract exposing religious persecution in New England. Published in London, the tract's lengthy title was *Ill Newes from New-England: or A Narrative of New-England Persecution, Wherein Is Declared That While old England is becoming new, New-England is become old*. Aimed at convincing the king and other leaders of the need for religious liberty in New England, Dr. Clarke declared: "it is unBiblical, unchristlike, unnatural, and unspiritual to coerce conscience."

- c. **Apostles of Liberty.** Both Roger Williams and John Clarke traveled to England to obtain a charter for Rhode Island, a charter that would establish religious liberty for the first time in history in an entire colony. Dr. Clarke's labors took twelve years, but finally, in 1663, he obtained a charter from King Charles II. One sentence of that 1663 charter is inscribed on the West Facade of the Capitol building in Providence, as follows:

That it is much on their hearts (if they may be permitted) told for a **lively experiment**, that a most **flourishing civil state** may stand and best be maintained, and that among our English subjects may stand and best be maintained, and that among our English subjects, with a **full liberty in religious concernments**. [Emphasis added.]

### B. State of Baptist Churches in America in 1700.

Rhode Island was the first, but not the last, colony where Baptist churches were started in the 1600s.

1. **Massachusetts.** Not surprisingly, Baptists struggled to gain a beachhead in the American home of the Puritans.
  - In 1663, the First Baptist Church of Swansea, not far from Portsmouth, RI, was the first Baptist church in Massachusetts Bay Colony, started by Pastor John Myles when he and his entire congregation emigrated from Wales. This Welsh Baptist church was the first of several missionary minded Welsh churches later planted in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Virginia.
  - In 1665, Thomas Gould established the first Baptist church in Boston, despite constant persecution which did not cease until the Boston Court granted the church permission to meet in 1681.
  
2. **Pennsylvania and New Jersey.** William Penn, the founder of the colony of Pennsylvania and the leading Quaker in America, was the son of a Baptist father. His colony became fertile ground for Baptist churches.
  - Thomas Dungan, an Irish preacher, fled the persecution of Baptists under Charles II and migrated to Rhode Island, then to Cold Spring, Pennsylvania, in 1684, where he started the first Baptist church in that colony.
  - Elias Keach, the young son of English Baptist preacher Benjamin Keach, started a Baptist church in Pennepek in 1688. From there, Keach started several Baptist churches in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
  - In 1707, the first Baptist association of churches in America began when five churches in Pennsylvania, nearby New Jersey, and nearby Delaware created the Philadelphia Association. Such was the state of Baptist churches that only five churches initially joined.

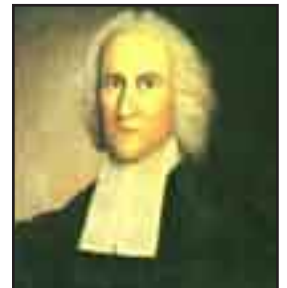
- 3. Maine and South Carolina.** The northernmost colony paved the way for the first church in the southern colonies. William Screven, a member of the Boston Baptist church, fed up with continued persecution by the Puritans in Boston, led a group of believers 60 miles north to Kittery on the southern tip of Maine in 1682 to start the first Baptist church in that state. Later, fed up with even more persecution in Maine, he and 28 church members took a boat to Charleston, South Carolina, in 1686, starting the first Baptist church in the southern colonies.

Praise the Lord for the early Baptist pioneers who paved the way for future expansion, but it was rough going for most of them. Indeed, when 1700 rolled around, there were less than 20 Baptist churches in all of America, only one of which was in the southern colonies. Yet, by 1900, just 200 years later, the largest non-Catholic group of Christians in America was the Baptists. How did God move so rapidly in raising up the Baptists? Interestingly enough, God's next step did not involve the Baptists at all.

### C. The Great Awakening -- Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and the New Lights.

Baptist churches, of which there were only 34 in the entire English colonies in 1734, had little or nothing to do with the start of the Great Awakening. But this seminal event in American history also lit the fuse for the explosive growth of Baptist churches thereafter.

- 1. Jonathan Edwards,** Congregational pastor in Massachusetts, was an unusual combination of theologian and revivalist. Grieved at the dullness of religion, Edwards sought a revival based upon two influences: firstly, a revival of the Puritans' strict Calvinistic teaching on the grace and sovereignty of God, and secondly, the necessity and power of immediate, personal religious experience. His famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," was used of God to begin a revival first in his church, then spreading across Massachusetts, into Connecticut, and throughout New England. America had never seen anything like it; but America hadn't seen anything yet!



Jonathan Edwards

- 2. George Whitefield,** a contemporary and friend of the Wesley brothers in England, traveled up and down the country of England and the colonies of America, preaching Holy Spirit-filled messages that "Ye must be born again" to large crowds of a size never seen before in old England or in the colonies (up to 10,000 people at one time). Many of the Puritan pastors strongly objected to Whitefield's emotional messages, while many Baptist preachers opposed Whitefield's Calvinistic emphasis on the grace and sovereignty of God.



George Whitefield

- 3. The New Lights or Separates.** Those pastors and Christians who favored the revivalistic style of Whitefield and the results of the Great Awakening, who became passionate in their love for the Lord and His Word, were called New Sides or New Lights. In many instances, the New Lights separated from their Old Light churches, resulting in numerous new

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churches starting in communities throughout America. These New Lights also became known as Separatists, described by historian John T. Christian as follows:

The converts who received the name of 'Separatists' were taught to throw aside tradition, and take the Word of God only as their guide in all matters of religious faith and practice. This was in perfect coincidence with all Baptist teaching . . .

Numerous Separatists searched the Scriptures and became Baptists; and numerous Separatist congregations became Baptist in their entirety. In between 1734, when the Great Awakening began, and 1776, the number of Baptist churches in Massachusetts increased from 9 to 37. The Calvinistic preachers spread the seed, and Baptists reaped the harvest.

### D. The Separate Baptist Revival Sweeps the South

- 1. A Yankee Sees the Light.** Shubal Stearns, born in Boston, was saved during a Whitefield revival and became a New Light preacher. During his years as a New Light preacher, he was impressed with the truth of believer's baptism, eventually being baptized as a believer and ordained to the Separate Baptist ministry in 1751. After serving in New England for several years, Stearns felt called of God to leave the northern colonies and to preach the Gospel in the spiritually destitute southern colonies which knew little other than the ritual of the Church of England.
- 2. A Team Begins in Virginia.** Stearns, his family, and several followers traveled southwest to Opeckon Creek, Virginia, where he joined a small Baptist church. To that place also journeyed Stearns' brother-in-law, Daniel Marshall, who shared Stearns' zeal to preach the Gospel. Stearns especially was a spellbinding preacher, while Marshall was the hardworking second man who brought to life the dreams and goals of Stearns. After a year of labor in Virginia, Stearns received a letter from friends in North Carolina, asking him to come to a community where there was no Baptist preacher within 100 miles; Stearns had received his Macedonian call.
- 3. Sandy Creek, North Carolina.** In 1755, Stearns, Marshall, their families, and other followers traveled down the Shenandoah Valley and across the Blue Ridge Mountains into North Carolina. They settled at Sandy Creek, first building a Separate Baptist church building, then building pioneer cabins, all in preparation for Stearns' dream of sending preachers and starting churches all over the South. Stearns preached loudly and emotionally, preaching hard against sin, and preaching, as Whitefield did, that "Ye must be born again." The Holy Spirit worked in that congregation, which soon grew to over 600 members -- in rural North Carolina! Within 17 years, the Sandy Creek church sent out 125 preachers and started 42 churches, stretching southward to Georgia, eastward to the Atlantic Ocean and to the Chesapeake Bay, and northward to the Potomac River.

**E. The Path to Independence.** Baptists played a crucial role in leading the colonies on the path to independence, in the struggle for independence, and in the passage of the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution.

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1. **Virginia, the Crucible of Liberty.** Colonial Virginia, a bastion of the Church of England, was greatly troubled by the growing number of Separate Baptists who resisted the typical efforts of the colonial government to enforce Anglican religion upon the citizens.
  - Baptists were fined for **not attending** the state church.
  - Baptists, ordered to pay their **tithes** to the state church, refused, resulting in the confiscation of land and goods.
  - Baptist preachers, ordered to obtain a **license to preach** from the state church, refused, resulting in arrest and imprisonment throughout the colony.
  - **Rewards** were offered to any citizen who would turn in a Baptist lawbreaker.
  - **Infant children** were taken by force from Baptist parents and baptized.
- a. **James Ireland and the Culpeper Jail.** James Ireland, converted from the Church of England to Baptist theology, a follower of Shubal Stearns, was baptized and commissioned into the Baptist ministry by Samuel Harriss, a fiery evangelist who had started several churches in his native Virginia. When he was threatened with fines and jail by an Anglican priest if he preached in Culpeper, Ireland did his duty to God, and for his efforts, was arrested and jailed. For five months, Ireland would stand at the window of the Culpeper jail and preach to the residents of that city.
- b. **Patrick Henry Defends Baptist Preachers.** In 1770, Patrick Henry, a Presbyterian lawyer imbued with principles of liberty, was busy defending Baptist preachers imprisoned in Chesterfield and Fredericksburg. In the Fredericksburg case, he argued to the court:



Patrick Henry

If I have rightly understood, the king's attorney of this colony has framed an indictment . . . or a crime of great magnitude, as disturbers of the peace . . . Did I hear it distinctly, or was it a mistake of my own? Did I hear an expression as if a crime, that these men are charged with? What!?! "For preaching the gospel of the Son of God."

2. **Isaac Backus** pastored the Middleborough First Baptist Church in Massachusetts from 1756 until his death in 1806, a period of 50 years in which he helped marshal in the Revolution, the Republic, and religious liberty in America. In his book entitled *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era, 1730-1805*, editor Ellis Sandoz included one of Backus' sermons, noting Backus' religious beliefs and place in history, as follows:



Isaac Backus

He is ranked with Roger Williams, John Leland, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison as a preeminent figure in the establishing of freedom of conscience in America. In William G. McLoughlin's words, Backus "was the most forceful and effective writer America produced on behalf of the pietistic or evangelical theory of separation of church and state."

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The contribution of Isaac Backus to religious liberty is further attested to by Justice O'Connor in *City of Boerne v. Flores* (1997) (see [Appendix C -- U.S. Supreme Court Justices Know More about Baptist History than Baptists Do!](#)).

[Isaac Backus, a Baptist minister who was a delegate to the Massachusetts ratifying convention of 1788, declared that "every person has an unalienable right to act in all religious affairs according to the full persuasion of his own mind, where others are not injured thereby." **Backus**, A Declaration of Rights, of the Inhabitants of the State of Massachusetts-Bay, in **Isaac Backus** on Church, State, and Calvinism 487 (W. McLoughlin ed. 1968).]

**F. The Struggle for Independence.** The rallying cry, "Taxation without Representation" was first voiced in America by Baptist preachers who objected to the colonial governments which forced Baptists to pay tithes to the Church of England. Baptists were among the earliest and most vociferous supporters of the new Continental Congress and of the call for independence from English tyranny.

**1. Revolutionary Pamphleteer John Allen.** In his 1982 opinion in *Larson v. Valente*, Justice Brennan noted the following:

But **Baptists** in Massachusetts chafed under any form of establishment, and Revolutionary pamphleteer John Allen expressed their views to the members of the General Court of Massachusetts in his declamation, *The American Alarm, or the Bostonian Plea, for the Rights and Liberties of the People*:

You tell your [colonial] governor that the Parliament of England have no right to tax the Americans . . . because they are not the representatives of America; and will you dare to tax the **Baptists** for a religion they deny? Are you gentlemen their representatives before GOD, to answer for their souls and consciences any more than the representatives of England are the representatives of America? . . . [I]f it be just in the General Court to take away my sacred and spiritual rights and liberties of conscience and my property with it, then it is surely right and just in the British Parliament to take away by power and force my civil rights and property without my consent; this reasoning, gentlemen, I think is plain. Quoted *id.* at 267-268

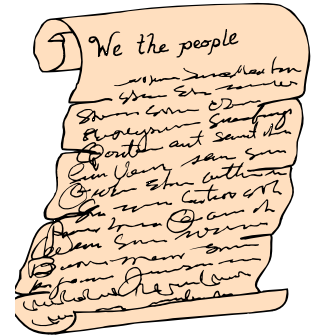
**2. Rhode Island, the First Colony to Declare Independence.** On May 4, 1776, two months before the Declaration of Independence, Rhode Island officially withdrew from England, repudiating any allegiance to King George III. The large number of Baptists in Rhode Island, which had been founded by Baptists, led the way in demanding freedom.

**3. Baptist Preacher and Patriot in South Carolina.** Richard Furman, a young pastor of a Baptist church in Charleston, South Carolina, a well known opponent of English tyranny and the Church of England, was chased out of Charleston by the English. Lord Cornwallis, who was at that time general of the British army in that region, declared that he "feared the prayers of that godly youth [Furman] more than the armies of Sumter and Marion."

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- 4. John Hart** was a Baptist farmer, businessman, politician, and patriot who was 60 years old when he became one of the New Jersey signers of the Declaration of Independence, even though the British army was lurking in the area. As soon as he signed the Declaration, he was forced to flee with his wife, leaving his extensive property holdings behind, which were wasted by the pursuing British troops.
- 5. Baptist Chaplains.** Numerous Baptist preachers served as chaplains in the Continental Army, the most famous of which was Evangelist John Gano of the Philadelphia Association of Baptist Churches. A firm friend and chaplain to General Washington, Gano convinced the father of our country of the Biblical truth of believer's baptism; there is record of Gano baptizing Washington at Valley Forge.

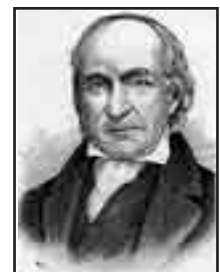
**G. The Struggle for the Bill of Rights.** The miraculous victory of the Continental Army over the British forces in 1783 was followed by a period in which the new nation stumbled and struggled through the period of the Articles of Confederation, a doomed venture which failed in part because of the patriotic fear of a centralized government. When the Constitutional Convention was called in 1787, God blessed their endeavors with the most remarkable constitution ever devised by man, a document which structurally undermined future tyranny by having a system of checks and balances through three separate branches of government -- executive, legislative, and judicial.



Nonetheless, a battle raged over the proposed Constitution. It had a significant problem -- it did not contain a Bill of Rights. In 1999, the Library of Congress published *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic*, a lengthy series in which the authors noted: "Many Americans were disappointed that the Constitution did not contain a bill of rights that would explicitly enumerate the rights of American citizens and enable courts and public opinion to protect these rights from an oppressive government . . ."

Can you guess which group of Americans "were disappointed that the Constitution did not contain a bill of rights"? Justice O'Connor noted in her 1997 dissenting opinion in *City of Boerne v. Flores* (see [Appendix C -- U.S. Supreme Court Justices Know More about Baptist History than Baptists Do!](#)) the following: "[Additionally, **Baptists** and other Protestant dissenters feared for their religious liberty under the new Federal Government and called for an amendment guaranteeing religious freedom.]"

One of the states opposed to ratification was Virginia. According to the Library of Congress article, "The Virginia Ratifying Convention and [James] Madison's constituents, among whom were large numbers of Baptists, who wanted freedom of religion secured, expected him to push for a bill of rights . . ." The leading Baptist in Virginia, Pastor John Leland, secured a promise from Madison that if Leland would support Madison's bid for office, that Madison would support a Bill of Rights as amendments to the Constitution. The first freedom in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was a restatement of Baptist doctrinal distinctives: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."



John Leland

### H. Personal Application. How does this lesson help you with the following?

#### 1. Personal walk with Jesus, family life, and church life

- Both Roger Williams and John Clarke had loving wives who followed their husbands into exile, like Sarah, not knowing where the Lord would lead her husband. Ladies, are you ready, willing, and able to follow your husband wherever the Lord leads him? Ephesians 5:22: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."
- The Great Awakening began in Jonathan Edwards' church. Edwards wrote that the revival in his church started with the young people. How are the teenagers doing in your church?

#### 2. Contending for the faith. Do you have the faith of Obadiah Holmes, to endure scourging for the cause of Christ?

- When Dr. Clarke traveled to England to seek a charter, his replacement as pastor of the Newport Baptist Church was Obadiah Holmes.
- One of the men observing the scourging of Obadiah Holmes was Henry Dunster, a Puritan scholar and minister who was appointed in 1640 as the first president of a fledgling college dedicated to preparing preachers of the Gospel -- Harvard. Obadiah's testimony caused Mr. Dunster to examine the Biblical support for infant baptism. In 1653, Mr. Dunster capitulated to the Bible and rejected infant baptism. His reward on Earth -- he was fired as president of Harvard. Colossians 3:2: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

#### 3. Spreading the Gospel. Roger Williams was much unlike his fellow preachers in another remarkable way -- he believed that the native Indians had souls and needed to hear the Gospel of Christ. Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." What are you doing to reach individuals or groups which have been untouched by the Gospel?



#### 4. Advancing religious and civil liberty in America and around the world. Both Roger Williams and John Clarke paid a heavy price for the cause of religious liberty. What price are you willing to pay?

- Are you willing to stand for liberty when government encroaches upon our freedoms?
- Are you willing to forego governmental handouts to churches when the government offers aid or grants to our churches?
- Are you willing to be another John Clarke, active in both building a local Baptist church and building a government which provides religious liberty for all?

The first freedom -- freedom of religion -- is the foundation, the root, of all other freedoms found in the Bill of Rights. If the root is severed, the other freedoms will die. We need more Isaac Backuses and more John Lelands to continue the battle for our freedoms.