

The Wisdom of History

Part I

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THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

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Professor Fears received his Ph.D. from Harvard University and is an internationally distinguished scholar and author of numerous studies in Greek and Roman history, the history of freedom, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*; *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*; *The Theology of Victory at Rome*; and *The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology*. He has edited a three-volume edition of *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*.

Professor Fears has been a Danforth Fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a Harvard Prize Fellow. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellow, and twice a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Germany. His research has been supported by grants from the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Zarrow Foundation, and the Kerr Foundation. He is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*.

On 24 occasions, Professor Fears has been recognized for outstanding teaching excellence. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, students chose him as University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year. In 2003, he received the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA) Great Plains Region Award for Excellence in Teaching. UCEA is the national association for colleges and universities with continuing education programs. In 2005, Professor Fears received the National Award for Teaching Excellence from UCEA, which cited his "outstanding teaching and contribution to continuing higher education."

In 2005, Professor Fears was the recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. In 2005, students at the University of Oklahoma named him "Most Inspiring Professor." In 2006, the state-wide Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence awarded him its medal for Excellence in College and University Teaching.

Professor Fears is very active in speaking to broader audiences. His comments on the lessons of history for today have appeared on television and in newspapers across the United States. He is a regular guest on national talk radio programs. Each year, he leads study trips to historical sites in Europe and the United States.

The *Wisdom of History* is the sixth course Professor Fears has produced with The Teaching Company. His other courses include *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, *Churchill*, and *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*.

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The Wisdom of History

Scope:

The Wisdom of History is defined as the ability to use the lessons of history to make decisions in the present and to plan for the future. The Founders of the United States used the lessons of history to do just that. The success of our Constitution is enduring testimony to their ability to think historically and, thus, to apply the wisdom of history to the great task of building a new republic in a new world. This course examines the lessons that history might hold for the contemporary United States, particularly in a post-9/11 world. To apply the wisdom of history, we focus on six questions of profound importance for America today:

1. Is there meaning to history? Do we learn from history? And are there consequences to our failure to learn from history?
2. Is freedom a universal value? If so, then why is world history largely a story of tyranny, misery, and war?
3. Why has the history of the world seen the rise and fall of superpowers and empires? Why has the Middle East been, throughout history, the crucible of conflict and the graveyard of empires?
4. What do the lessons of history teach America about the destiny of a nation that is both a democracy and a superpower?
5. How do we distinguish between a politician and a statesman, and what makes a great leader in a time of crisis?
6. What will the wisdom of history teach later generations about America and its place in history?

The Wisdom of History builds upon five earlier courses from The Teaching Company: *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, *Winston Churchill*, and *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*. Produced in the fall of 2000, *A History of Freedom* traced the idea of freedom in Europe and the United States. *Famous Greeks* and *Famous Romans* were courses in Classical history emphasizing the outstanding individuals who made that history. *Winston Churchill* was a detailed examination of an individual statesman who changed the history of the world. *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life* was a search for universal moral and religious values through a study of seminal works of literature that still speak to each of us.

The Wisdom of History distills the narrative of these courses into broad thematic lessons. Far more, however, *The Wisdom of History* reflects my own intellectual growth and the transformation of our country in the wake of September 11, 2001. This terrorist attack upon our country is a watershed in American history and presents the United States with a challenge as profound as the American Revolution, the Civil War, and World War II. *The Wisdom of History* was conceived in my conviction that if America and its leaders are to meet that challenge, then we must learn and apply the lessons of history.

September 11 and the ensuing American involvement in the Middle East forces Americans to consider anew their naïve belief that we are immune to the laws of history that have marked the destiny of every empire and democracy before us. The Middle East barely appeared in our consideration of *A History of Freedom* and only tangentially in *Famous Greeks* and *Famous Romans*. Our foreign policy since 9/11 places the Middle East at center stage in our reflections on the lessons of history.

Current foreign policy is a continuation of our belief at least since World War I that America must make the world safe for democracy. However, the simple empirical lesson of history is that freedom is not a universal value. Throughout history, nations, like many individuals, have chosen the perceived security of autocratic rule over the awesome responsibilities of self-government. This has been the historic choice of the ancient and modern Middle East, China, Russia, and Latin America. Having chosen autocracy over freedom, these areas of the world received little attention in *A History of Freedom*. They now play a major role as we ask why world history is primarily a story of tyranny, oppression, and war.

The repetition of such a tale of woe suggests that the ancient Greeks and Romans and the Founders of the United States were correct in their assessment that history is cyclical. Because human nature never changes, similar circumstances will always produce similar events. Because human nature prevents our learning from history, we are doomed to repeat it. Thus we consider, as did the Founders, the portentous lessons to be learned from the rise and fall of the democracies and empires of the past. However, the Founders also believed that these cycles of rise and fall could be delayed, even broken, by leaders and citizens wise enough to guide themselves by the lessons of history.

In the American Revolution, the Civil War, and World War II and the Cold War, democracy proved its superiority to dictatorships in producing leaders worthy of the challenge. However, such leaders were but a reflection of the robust love of freedom held by their fellow citizens. We conclude our course by asking if we can find in the lessons of history the wisdom to choose such leaders today and what the lessons of history teach us as private individuals, as well as citizens.

To find these answers, we begin our course in Lecture One by defining what we mean by the *wisdom of history* and by stating in bold terms the 10 primary lessons of history that we shall learn in this course.

Lectures Two through Four ponder the history of the 20th century and our own brief new millennium as evidence of the first lesson of history, that is, that we do not learn from history.

Throughout the 20th century and still today, we Americans continue to believe that freedom is a universal value. All men and women in all places and times want freedom. However, this belief flies in the face of the lessons of history. In Lecture Five, we define what we mean by *freedom* and explore the unique character of freedom in the United States.

The lessons of history teach us that freedom is not a universal value. Power and empire are, in fact, the universal values of human history. The core of our course, Lectures Six through Twenty-Six, discusses the lessons of the superpowers of the past for America today.

In Lectures Seven through Nine, we ask why the Middle East has been the crucible of conflict and the graveyard of empires throughout history.

The United States is both a democracy and a superpower. In Lectures Ten through Twelve, we follow the Founders of our country in reflecting on the lessons of the ancient Athenian democracy for a modern nation intent on bringing the values of democracy to the entire world. To these same Founders, Rome, as well as Athens, was a model for our new republic. Lectures Thirteen through Sixteen consider the lessons that the rise and fall of the Roman Empire hold for the contemporary United States.

The fall of the Roman Empire took place amidst the rise of Christianity and Islam. Lectures Seventeen and Eighteen examine religion as a primary force for historical transformation and the rise and fall of empires.

The United States has inherited the consequences of the imperial powers of the last five centuries in Europe, the Middle East, the Far East, and Latin America. Lectures Nineteen through Twenty-Five discuss the lessons of these great empires and their enduring impact on contemporary politics throughout the world.

The lessons of history might make us pessimists. Our Founders knew the lessons of history but remained optimists. For them, as for us, history should be a guide, not a straight jacket. In Lectures Twenty-Six through Thirty-Four, we have as our theme America and the unique course the United States has charted in world history. Here, we find our models for what distinguishes a true statesman and leader from the politicians, tyrants, and tin-pot dictators who strut across the stage of history. We ask whether by combining the legacy of the past with the power of modern technology, the United States can chart a new course in history.

The Founders believed that history has profound lessons for the individual as well as the nation. We conclude our course in Lectures Thirty-Five and Thirty-Six by addressing the lessons of history for you and me as citizens and as private individuals.

Lecture One

Why We Study History

Scope: The phrase *wisdom of history* is defined as the ability to think historically, that is, to use the lessons of the past to make decisions in the present and to plan for the future. Winston Churchill is our model of a great leader who learned and applied the wisdom of history. His ability to think historically gave him the tools as a statesman to save his country and, perhaps, the world from the tyranny of the Nazis. As a private individual, Churchill used the wisdom of history to prepare himself for his great destiny by—in his own words—“never giving up.” Our course is based on 10 fundamental lessons of history:

1. We do not learn from history.
2. Science and technology do not make us immune to the laws of history.
3. Freedom is not a universal value.
4. Power is the universal value.
5. The Middle East is the crucible of conflict and the graveyard of empires.
6. The United States shares the destinies of the great democracies, the republics, and the superpowers of the past.
7. Along with the lust for power, religion and spirituality are the most profound motivators in human history.
8. Great nations rise and fall because of human decisions made by individual leaders.
9. The statesman is distinguished from a mere politician by four qualities: a bedrock of principles, a moral compass, a vision, and the ability to create a consensus to achieve that vision.
10. Throughout its history, the United States has charted a unique role in history.

Outline

- I. The phrase *wisdom of history* refers to the ability to use history—the lessons of the past—to make decisions in the present and to plan for the future. We’ll begin our reflections on the lessons of the past in the late summer of 1945 with Winston Churchill in the ancient city of Syracuse.
 - A. Churchill, the greatest statesman of the 20th century, became prime minister in 1940, when his country seemed on the verge of defeat. He had led his country to victory over a dangerous foe and had worked to build a coalition with the United States and the Soviet Union to achieve that victory. In 1945, however, the voters turned him out of office.
 - B. At the time, Britain did not hold regularly scheduled elections. When the war against Germany was over, Churchill could have easily, as he was advised, postponed an election. His advisors told him that he would lose; the voters blamed the Conservative Party for the war and backed the Socialists, who promised major social reforms. Many soldiers also believed that Churchill was a warmonger.
 - C. Churchill insisted that the war had been fought for democracy and that an election must be held. The result was a crushing defeat for the Conservative Party and a landslide victory for the Labour Party. Churchill stepped down as prime minister.
 - D. He had come to Syracuse to reflect on his long life, the history that he had seen, and his fears that the mistakes of the past were destined to be repeated in an age made more frightening by nuclear energy and the atomic bomb.
- II. Churchill must have pondered the number of changes that had taken place in his life, how many times he had been counted out, and the fact that he had never given up.
 - A. He had been counted out in school, and his father had written him off as a social wastrel. Nonetheless, he had gone to India, served with great distinction in the army, become a war hero, and by the time he was 26, was wealthy as an author and lecturer. He was a member of Parliament, a bestselling author, and a decorated war hero.
 - B. Churchill had seen the British Empire at its height, and he believed that it was a great vehicle for good, that democracy and empire could march hand in hand. But in the Great War, he had fallen from power. He had

conceived of a bold offensive and had learned how clever politicians could be at undermining a man with principles.

1. His campaign at Gallipoli had failed, and he had taken full responsibility for it. In 1916, he went into the trenches and again proved his bravery.
 2. At the end of World War I, he wrote *The World Crisis*, a deep study of the lessons of history, concluding that World War I had been unnecessary. Moreover, Churchill saw that peace could have been established on a lasting basis after the war, had the world leaders been willing to learn from history.
- C. Churchill watched as a new threat arose, a revived Germany, at a time when he was out of favor with his own party and the media. He wrote the biography of his ancestor, John, the duke of Marlborough, who had made England a great continental power. Then, he turned to *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples*.
- D. As he was writing this book, with the view that Britain and the United States were two great bastions of freedom and had charted a unique course in history, he saw the British government appease Germany. He saw the failure of the British people, including the prime minister, to understand that power, not freedom, is the dominant force throughout history.
- E. Churchill led his country to victory in World War II. Knowing that one tyranny cannot be defeated only to allow another to take its place, Churchill watched with growing concern as the Americans began to appease the Soviet Union.
1. He saw the utter inability of his successor, Clement Attlee, to recognize the existence of absolute moral values and, thus, to fail to stand up to tyranny.
 2. He came to the United States in 1946 and tried to warn us that the Soviet Union had established a dictatorship and that an “iron curtain” was falling across Eastern Europe. Again, we chose not to listen to this unpopular message. We wanted to believe in peace, but Churchill knew that if we want peace, we must prepare for war.
- F. Churchill never gave up, and his vision was an optimistic one. In 1948, he would stand in Geneva, while Europe was still in ruins, and predict that one day a European commonwealth would emerge with Britain, France, and Germany standing hand in hand. He also believed that Britain’s fortunes would become ever more linked to those of the United States. In 1951, he was chosen again as prime minister.
- G. Churchill, a historian himself, is the prime example of a leader who learned the lessons of history. This course explores the lessons of history that can guide us today in our involvement in the Middle East and in our role as the superpower of freedom in the world.
- III.** We may sometimes refer to the following 10 lessons of history as laws, but they are more like signposts to guide us in the right direction.
- A. The first of these lessons is that we do not learn from history, and the consequences of this failure are tragic. This law explains why the same cycles of oppression and war—brief glimpses of freedom before a return to tyranny—have occurred throughout history.
- B. The second law is that science, technology, the global economy, and the *information superhighway* do not make us immune to the lessons of history. We tend to believe that the lessons of the past simply do not apply in our advanced age of instant communication, but people held the same misguided belief in 1914.
- C. We also tend to believe, as a nation—and our foreign policy has been based on this belief—that freedom is a universal value, but this is simply not true.
1. In this course, we will distinguish among national freedom, that is, freedom from foreign control; political freedom, the freedom to elect officials and to make laws; and individual freedom, to live as one chooses as long as others are not harmed.
 2. We will see that freedom is not a universal value; if it were, perhaps so much of world history would not be a recurring story of war, tyranny, misery, and oppression.
- D. The fourth law of history is that power—the desire to dominate others—*is* a universal value. We see this throughout history, from the very beginning of civilization, in individuals seeking to become absolute despots and in empires or superpowers expressing the national statement of this universal value.

- E. Fifth, we will learn that the Middle East is the graveyard of empire. From the beginning of civilization, invaders have repeatedly come to the Middle East with good intentions, and repeatedly, these invaders have failed, frequently bringing down their own empires in the process.
 - F. The sixth lesson of history is that America shares the destiny of the great democracies, republics, and superpowers of the past. The Founders of our country understood that the Athenian democracy and the Roman Empire offered profound lessons for our democracy and our republic.
 - G. The seventh lesson is that religion and spirituality, along with a lust for power, are the most profound motivators in human history. It is difficult for Americans to understand societies, such as those in the Middle East, in which religion provides a comprehensive worldview.
 - H. The eighth lesson is that great nations rise and fall because of human decisions, not anonymous social or economic forces. This course asserts that history is made by great individuals, such as Winston Churchill, Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, or the Founders of our country. Decisions made by such leaders can lead a nation to greatness or bring about its ruin.
 - I. A corollary to the eighth lesson is the idea that there is a distinction between a politician and a statesman. We will see that a true statesman has bedrock principles, a moral compass, the ability to build a consensus to achieve a vision, and the vision itself.
 - J. Finally, the last lesson is that America has charted a unique role in history, from its foundation to our own day. With our country's unique foundation in freedom and guided by science and technology, America may still be able to lead the world into a new age of peace and prosperity—if we are willing to learn from the past.
 - 1. We live now in an ahistorical age. Although we have a good deal of historical knowledge, we do not think historically.
 - 2. We must learn to use history as the Founders did—to make decisions at a critical time.
 - 3. As a group, the Founders met the definition of true statesmen, establishing the country on a bedrock of principles, based on an absolute sense of moral values and with a vision of peace, prosperity, and security for citizens of the future.
- IV. When the Founders set out on the difficult task of creating a new constitution for a new republic in a new world, they were consciously guided by the lessons of the past.
- A. James Madison, before coming to the Constitutional Convention in 1787, spent the winter studying the Roman historians Polybius and Tacitus. When the *Federalist Papers* were published, Madison repeatedly tried to persuade his fellow citizens to ratify the constitution, turning frequently to the lessons of the past.
 - B. The Founders of our country were uniquely successful. Not only did they declare their independence from the greatest empire of the time, but they won that independence on the field of battle. They then went on to give us a constitution that still ensures liberty under law more than 200 years later.
 - C. When they crafted that constitution, we were 13 struggling republics along the eastern seaboard, and communication was no different than it had been in the time of Julius Caesar. Yet that same constitution works for us today, when we are the superpower of the world and can communicate with other nations instantaneously. The Constitution itself and the generation of our Founders are the best justifications for exploring the wisdom of history.

Essential Reading:

Fears, *Churchill*, Lecture Eleven.

Lord Acton, "The Study of History," in *Selected Writings II*, pp. 502–554.

Supplementary Reading:

Butterfield, *Man on His Past*.

Ellery, *Frontiers of History*.

Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*.

Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*.

Questions to Consider:

1. At the outset of our course, do you believe that history has lessons for us today?
2. Do you believe that human nature never changes?

Lecture Two

World War I and the Lessons of History

Scope: In the long scope of human history, the period from World War I to our own day constitutes contemporary history. The span of the last 100 years has become the greatest age of technology, science, education, and knowledge in history. It is also the age of the greatest and most destructive wars in history and of human suffering on a scale without equal in history. It is the age of the most savage tyrannies in history. Why? We begin our search for an answer with World War I. The 20th century really began not in 1900 but in the summer of 1914. In that summer, many wise men and women were convinced that technology and the global economy meant that another great European war was impossible. In fact, the Great War not only was the most destructive in history, but it laid the foundation for wars and political problems still with us today.

Outline

- I.** During the early summer of 1914 in Europe, political, military, academic, and business leaders were confident that there would never be another great European war. Their belief was based on several factors.
 - A.** The world was united economically. The United States, Britain, France, Germany, and Russia were tied together in a free-market economy. Business leaders would not allow war to interfere with commerce.
 - B.** Science and technology bound Europe and the United States together and made war unthinkable. The machine gun, advanced artillery in its day, made war too destructive. The telegraph, telephone, and movies united the world by spreading information.
 - C.** The spread of democracy also united Western Europe and the United States. This era was an age of unabashed imperialism; young Englishmen and Frenchmen believed they were on a civilizing mission to bring law and liberty to other parts of the world.
- II.** On June 28, 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, was shot by a terrorist who believed in bringing all Serb-speaking areas, including Bosnia, into a greater Serbian kingdom. The Serbs viewed as dangerous Ferdinand's policy on Bosnia, which in 1914 had been annexed by Austria.
 - A.** The generation that blundered into World War I did not learn from history, although most of the statesmen were highly educated. For them, the security of Europe was based on the idea that a balance of power preserves peace. As long as Russia, France, Germany, Britain, Austria, and Italy were roughly balanced in power, then no great war could break out.
 - B.** Study of the Classical world would have shown differently. The greatest war of Greece broke out because of a balance of power between the allies of Sparta and the allies of Athens.
 - C.** Winston Churchill knew that wars of democracy lasted longer and were more destructive than the Napoleonic wars had been. An emperor or a king, if his army is defeated in battle, can quickly make a treaty and end the confrontation. But once democracies are drawn into war, the conflicts are prolonged.
 - D.** Working on the false assumption that a balance of power ensures peace, the European diplomatic core watched as Austria made a series of ultimatums to Serbia, which then turned to Russia for protection. Russia began to mobilize its forces. The German emperor vowed to stand with Austria.
 - E.** The popular belief that another great war was impossible led politicians and the public to believe that these events were not as drastic as they seemed to be.
- III.** On July 28, Austria declared war on Serbia. Germany then declared war on Russia and France. The German army began to swing into France and neutral Belgium, prompting Britain to join the conflict. Suddenly, Europe had embarked on a war of tremendous magnitude, involving Russia, Britain, France, and Belgium against Germany and Austria.
 - A.** World War I was terrible beyond imagination, with staggering casualties inflicted by machine guns and heavy artillery. Again, in the days of Napoleon, a ruler could admit an error and retreat. But now,

governments were accountable to their citizens—and they had roused their populations into a frenzy of patriotism.

- B. The war dragged on until it truly became the Great War. The finest scientific minds developed new weapons, faster machine guns, and a wartime airplane. Poison gas was the nightmare of the trenches.
 - C. In 1915 and 1916, Italy and Romania joined the war and, in 1917, the United States. Finally, in 1918, Germany and its allies were defeated. The U.S. entry into the war provided the power, material, and soldiers to tip the balance. The war ended, leaving 11 million soldiers dead, a staggering number compared with previous wars.
- IV. Had European and U.S. statesmen looked to the past, they would have understood what a new war would mean. The U.S. Civil War of 1861–1865 was a war between two democracies, the Confederacy and the United States.
- A. The Civil War was the first modern war in which the telegraph played a major role, along with new rapid-firing rifles. The Civil War was longer and bloodier than anyone expected—it dragged on for four years and cost the lives of 623,026 men.
 - B. European statesmen and generals did not study the U.S. Civil War. In fact, they continued to use the tactics of Napoleonic wars, throwing thousands of men in frontal charges after heavy artillery bombardments.
 - C. The political landscape of Europe would never be the same. The Austro-Hungarian Empire disappeared. The Russian monarchy was toppled. The German emperor fled, and Germany became a republic. Britain’s and France’s grips over their colonial empires began to weaken.
- V. The war ended because Germany was defeated in battle and because the American president, Woodrow Wilson, offered hope in the form of a peace plan based on bringing democracy to the world. Wilson is an instructive instance of the refusal to learn from history.
- A. A former Princeton history professor, Wilson was born in 1856, on the eve of the Civil War. He grew up impressed by the struggles of the South during Reconstruction. He should have known the lessons of history.
 - B. Wilson became president of Princeton, then governor of New Jersey. He was a realist who believed in absolute values. Like American statesmen throughout the 20th century, he believed that if democracies were established, peace would reign. World War I was fought “to make the world safe for democracy.”
 - C. In Paris, Wilson was surrounded by crowds in search of this new age he had promised. But the realities of policy made it necessary to satisfy the British and French with a harsh treaty imposed on Germany, which was not allowed to participate in the discussions.
 - 1. Enormous reparations were imposed, and portions of Germany were demilitarized. To the Germans, this outcome was a *Carthaginian peace*, akin to the punitive measures the Romans had imposed on Carthage.
 - 2. Having humiliated Germany, the statesmen of the Versailles Treaty set about creating and recognizing governments in Europe. In the reorganization, it became clear that democracy could be just as great a source of ethnic oppression as tyranny.
- VI. Much of Europe began to turn to dictatorship instead of democracy. Italy’s Mussolini was one of the first dictators to rise to power. In the United States, Wilson could not get the Senate to accept the peace treaty.
- A. In 1918, Wilson, a Democrat, told the Republicans to expect a bipartisan policy—but then pleaded with the American people to vote for Democrats in Congress. The Republicans never forgave him.
 - B. The Senate questioned not only the Versailles Treaty but the League of Nations, the foundation for Wilson’s new era. Wilson’s idea was a confederation of nations that would meet, discuss their differences, and resolve the world’s issues peacefully. Truly, that would be an end to war.
 - C. But the United States never signed the treaty with Germany or entered the League of Nations. Wilson took his cause to the American people, crossing the nation in a train and writing his own speeches. He urged American citizens not to break faith with the men who had sailed across the Atlantic to fight for democracy and an end to war.

- D. On this trip, Wilson suffered a stroke that ended his ability to function as a president. He had believed that science, technology, and democracy could erase the evils of the past, but he did not learn from history. World War I began the 20th century, and we still live with its consequences today in the 21st.

Essential Reading:

Churchill, *The World Crisis, 1911–1914*, pp. 1–37, 202–227.

Supplementary Reading:

Fears, *Churchill*, Lecture Five.

Manchester, *The Last Lion*, vol. I.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think a single event, such as the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, could plunge the world of today into global conflict?
2. Do you think that the weapons of mass destruction today can be compared with poison gas and the other weapons of World War I? Or do you think that today is on such a different plane that no comparisons are valid?

Lecture Three

Hitler's Rise and the Lessons of History

Scope: Winston Churchill called World War II the “unnecessary war.” If we had learned and applied the lessons of history after World War I, Adolf Hitler would have remained a homeless drifter, and we would never have witnessed Nazism and World War II. Hitler is a preeminent example of two of our lessons of history: first, that freedom is not a universal value and, second, that power is. The German people raised Adolf Hitler to power and followed him into catastrophe. This is one of the most chilling and instructive examples of the lesson that throughout history, many people and nations have preferred the perceived security of dictatorship to the responsibilities of self-government and true freedom.

Outline

- I. We are the heirs of the 20th-century refusal to learn the lessons of history. World War I was our first example. In this lecture, we consider World War II.
 - A. Woodrow Wilson believed that freedom was a universal value and that the world could be made safe for democracy. He failed utterly. Wilson had brought peace, but he died an embittered old man.
 1. Wilson had bedrock principles and a strong moral compass. He believed deeply in democracy and had a vision of the world as one great democracy.
 2. But Wilson could not build a consensus based on that vision. His treaties were not signed. The United States did not enter the League of Nations. He left a generation of deeply isolationist Americans, who believed that the nation must never again be drawn into a European war.
 - B. The news of the Armistice, signed November 11, 1918, reached a young German corporal, Adolf Hitler, who was convalescing from a poison gas attack.
 1. When Hitler received that word, he would write later, his world collapsed. Engulfed in shame and bitterness that his country had lost the war, he took it upon himself to avenge the honor of Germany.
 2. Hitler stands as enduring proof that it is power and the desire for power—not freedom—that are constant values. This lesson of history is true not only of individuals but of entire nations.
 3. National freedom—the idea of self-determination, that is, the inalienable right of a people to declare themselves a nation, independent of any other nation—has been far more powerful throughout history than political liberty or individual liberty. Hitler took as his mission in life to ensure the national freedom of Germany.
- II. Hitler was born April 20, 1889, in Austria, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Much is sometimes made of the fact that he was born outside Germany, but he was clearly German.
 - A. Hitler's father, a customs official, had risen as far as his talents would take him in the empire, which was rigidly classified on the basis of social birth and education. He retired when Hitler was a young child. His mother doted on young “Wolfie.”
 - B. Such an inauspicious childhood disguised the man who would be driven by power to enslave Europe and cause the deaths of 50 million people.
 - C. Hitler was good in school but hated authority. His teachers said that he was smart but undisciplined. He dropped out of school, wishing to go to Vienna to study art. But without a high school diploma and no marked artistic ability, he was rejected from art school.
- III. Hitler wandered, finally moving to Munich to escape conscription into the Austrian army. He had nothing against war, but his loyalties did not lie with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Living in homeless shelters in Germany, he learned about history.
 - A. Hitler saw history as one titanic struggle. In fact, he would name his memoirs *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*). In this age of Darwinism, the theories trickled down to ordinary people as survival not only of the fittest individual but of the fittest nation.

- B. Hitler also imbibed nationalism, one of the most powerful lessons of history. For Germans, the idea of a nation's freedom meant that all German speakers in Europe should be brought together in one nation.
 - C. Along with this idea frequently came a sense of superiority to other nations. Before 1914, a perverted science of racism was popular. In England, some believed that the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic races were superior to all others. Many of the best minds of the day taught this reprehensible doctrine, and Hitler absorbed it.
- IV.** The start of World War I was the liberating moment of Hitler's life. He entered the army, serving with bravery and distinction. Those who knew him later said that he was the best comrade one could have, brave and calm under fire.
- A. Hitler won an Iron Cross, an unusual honor for someone with his background. He had a dangerous job as a messenger, running between the trenches amid shelling and machine-gun fire. He flourished in war.
 - B. In March 1918, the excitement of the war ended. Hitler, a man with no power, no background, and no education, was shattered. He stayed in the army, tasked with investigating radical organizations on the left and right.
 - C. For Germany, the introduction of democratic government brought defeat, dismay, and a sense of betrayal. Democracy was never established there between the wars.
- V.** Hitler believed that the situation at the end of the World War I was providential.
- A. He joined the then-small National Socialist German Workers' Party, which taught what he believed: The German army had been victorious in battle but had lost the war because Jews and Socialists had betrayed it. "From that moment," Hitler said, "I realized my destiny. It was to restore the honor of Germany, to make it great again, and to rid Germany of the Jews and the Socialists."
 - B. In these early days of the party, 1920–1921, Hitler realized that he had a gift. Although he had not taken the standard courses in rhetoric, he could move crowds with his speeches.
 - C. According to Hitler, the trick was to say a few things over and over again and to lie. A good speaker told the opposite of the truth. Hitler slandered the Jewish people repeatedly, and Germans wanted to hear the message that they had lost the war because they had been betrayed.
 - D. The party's attempt to overthrow the government failed—but even that incident turned into a triumph for Hitler. He was arrested, brought to trial, and told the judge, "Yes, I did it, and I'll do it again." The German people loved his audacity. He went to prison, where he dictated *Mein Kampf*, in which he laid out his rise to power. Like Machiavelli, he believed that power was an end in itself. For Hitler, that end was to restore the honor of Germany and to destroy the Jewish people.
- VI.** The Great Depression of 1929 hit Germany hard. Young, middle-class people flocked to the National Socialist Party, as it was then known, to nationalism based not on freedom but on the subordination of all elements in the state to one party. In January 1933, Hitler came to power and immediately set out to put his policy into practice.
- A. Pundits and politicians in Europe and the United States who had read *Mein Kampf* disbelieved Hitler's plan. After all, Germany was tied into the global economy and part of the League of Nations, and nobody wanted another war.
 - B. But Hitler did want another war. The best evidence that history is made by great individuals is Adolf Hitler. World War II would never have happened without him.
 - C. Hitler carried Germany along with him. People had jobs. Germany began to rise again in the world of nations. Socialists were thrown into jail, and Jewish people began to suffer.
 - D. Across Europe, people asked how the Nazis could strip citizens of their rights and imprison them, but at the same time, Europeans were reluctant to interfere in German affairs. Few understood, as Churchill did, that the act of stripping one group of people of their rights and dignity in a far-off place could have far-reaching repercussions.
- VII.** Hitler reintroduced military conscription and announced Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations. In 1936, as Britain and France stood by, German forces entered the Rhineland, a clear violation of the Versailles Treaty.

- A. Hitler's hold on the German people was enormous. The best German lawyers joined the Schutzstaffel, the SS, begun as Hitler's personal guard but now a bureaucratic apparatus meant to impose Nazi ideology and policies. As Hitler's brownshirts marched through the streets, the German people felt that their honor had been restored.
- B. Hitler began his territorial expansion, first annexing Austria. The Austrians had desired this move, but it was forbidden by the Versailles Treaty. Politicians of the day did not oppose the annexation because Austria was viewed as the "German backyard."
- C. Such politicians as Stanley Baldwin, English prime minister in 1936, and Neville Chamberlain, his successor in 1938, were reluctant to share with the public unpleasant truths about the potential for another, larger war.
- D. As Hitler's demand for territory grew, Britain sought trade agreements with Germany, reasoning that a free-market economy with German participation would prevent another war. The politicians believed in freedom but had no moral compass. To win elections, they lied, telling the British people that Britain was prepared for war when they knew it wasn't.

VIII. By 1939, Hitler was at the apex of his power. He had restored the grandeur of Germany. But was Hitler a statesman?

- A. He believed in the principles of National Socialism, in racial superiority, and in the utter subordination of all people to his desire for power. His nightmare vision led to the deaths of millions.
- B. Hitler used technology and science—radio, movies, and superior military technology—to maintain his hold on Germany and to achieve a consensus for his vision. But he lacked a moral compass. He believed that he was beyond good or evil, beyond the judgment of history.
- C. In this way, he differed from his nemesis, Winston Churchill, who had an unswerving moral compass. But Churchill could not achieve his vision of a world living in freedom in the 1930s because he could not make others understand the wisdom of history.

IX. Hitler's rise to power was unthinkable without democracy. He would never have risen to power in the old age of the kaiser, but the forces unleashed by democracy made possible National Socialism and his criminal career. Wilson had made the world safe for democracy. Now Hitler reaped the benefits.

Essential Reading:

Churchill, *The Second World War, I*, pp. 3–401.

Supplementary Reading:

Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin*, pp. 3–516.

Churchill, *The Aftermath, 1918–1928* (volume 5 of *The World Crisis*).

Fears, *Churchill*, Lectures Six through Eight.

Questions to Consider:

1. Some historians and political commentators have argued that American statesmen have too rigidly believed that appeasement is a bad policy. Do you agree?
2. Could World War II have been avoided, as Churchill believed?

Lecture Four

World War II and the Lessons of History

Scope: Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin are both terrifying illustrations of the lessons of history and the refusal to learn from those lessons. Hitler and Stalin demonstrate the fact that the lust for power is far more enduring than the love of freedom. Nazism and Communism both also illustrate our seventh lesson of history—the power of ideas. Evil as they were, Nazism and Communism were both like religion, providing a worldview and morality—perverted but powerful—for the true believer. The defeat of Hitler and Nazi Germany illustrates our eighth lesson of history: Great empires rise and fall because of decisions made by individual leaders. The failure of Allied leaders to learn the lessons of history meant that the end of World War II brought not freedom but tyranny and oppression to much of the world.

Outline

- I.** Hitler demonstrated that power, not freedom, is a universal value and motivating force throughout history. Tyrants, superpowers, and empires possess this lust to dominate. Although some Americans saw Hitler as an anachronism, he was a terrible forecast of things to come.
 - A.** The rise of National Socialism under Hitler illustrates that religion is the single most powerful force in shaping history. Religion in this sense is a worldview, a comprehensive set of values for understanding the universe and one's place in it.
 - B.** National Socialism portrayed Hitler as a savior sent by God to achieve a kind of universal salvation for the German people. It was a terrible perversion of religion, but it served to motivate the people.
 - C.** Hitler believed that soldiers consumed by the religious fervor of National Socialism could always defeat the democratic soldiers of France, Britain, and the United States.

- II.** Another law of history is that empires rise and fall because of individual decisions made by individual leaders at critical moments.
 - A.** Xerxes, king of the Persian Empire, had no need to conquer Greece, but in 480 B.C., he launched the greatest invasion the world had ever seen (discussed in The Teaching Company course *Famous Greeks*). He sought to restore the honor of his country and to avenge his father's failure to conquer Athens 10 years earlier.
 - B.** Similarly, Hitler sought to avenge Germany's defeat in World War I. With all of Europe except Britain in his grasp, he could not be content. He invaded the Soviet Union on June 22—the same day that Napoleon had invaded Russia—in 1941, when the two nations were still at peace.
 - C.** Hitler knew that Napoleon had invaded Russia, marched to Moscow, and retreated, losing most of his 600,000-man army. Still, Hitler did not learn from history. In particular, he was blind to the concept of *hybris*, the Greek idea that a downfall follows outrageous arrogance, which itself stems from moral blindness.
 - D.** Hitler's *hybris* led to catastrophe. In Russia, he ran up against an even crueler tyrant, Joseph Stalin. As Winston Churchill noted, power can take the form of a tyrant, an individual who believes that his own ideas and gratification are worth the suffering of millions. Hitler and Joseph Stalin both imposed their will on well-educated, industrious people.

- III.** Ten years older than Hitler, Stalin was born in 1879 in Georgia, then part of the Russian Empire. Like Hitler, he came from modest circumstances. His father was a cobbler.
 - A.** Stalin had little interest in school. Like Churchill and Hitler, he received bad grades and lacked discipline. He was sent to the Russian Orthodox seminary in Tiflis, Georgia, where he was expelled for reading unauthorized literature, particularly the writings of Karl Marx.
 - B.** *Communism*, like National Socialism, is a perversion of religion. It provides a comprehensive worldview, finding proof in historical class struggles and modes of production. Its messianic lesson lies in the idea that Communism must triumph.

- C. Stalin was a deeply convinced Communist to the end of his days. In his teens, he became active in the small Communist Party of Russia, organizing workers in the oilfields of Baku. He knew Lenin and played a significant role in the Russian Revolution. When Lenin died, Stalin began his climb to power.
- IV. Old Bolsheviks in the late 1920s believed in the Communist Party's mission to solve the social, economic, and political problems of the Soviet Union. Not so Stalin—he grasped power to hold onto it. Like Hitler, he kept Machiavelli at his bedside.
- A. The better educated leaders of the Soviet Union, including Leon Trotsky, found themselves outsmarted. Stalin was no genius, but by 1929, he was absolute master of the Soviet Union.
 - B. Stalin began his great purges in the 1930s, using terror as a tool. There are two types of great leaders: those like Churchill, who appeal to all that is noble in people, and those like Hitler and Stalin, who appeal to all that is evil and base.
 - C. Stalin appealed to the envy and greed of the Soviets, who betrayed their fellow citizens in the hope of advancing in their jobs or avoiding the gulag. Yet many ordinary Soviets believed that Comrade Stalin, because he was simple and modest, could not know of the terrible crimes committed under his regime.
 - D. Stalin was far more paranoid than Hitler. Because he believed that everyone was out to get him, his philosophy was to get them first. Throughout the 1930s, he ruled the Soviet Union by terror—with the help of millions of Soviet citizens.
 - E. Stalin also conducted purges of the Red Army, which convinced Hitler that the Soviet Union would not fight. But it did fight, demonstrating the strong ties of loyalty Soviets felt for their country, despite the horrors of their government. The Soviets stopped the German army. Meanwhile, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.
- V. Hitler committed his next act of *hybris* when he declared war against the United States. Under Hitler's treaty with Japan, Germany was under no obligation to fight. This act of *hybris* would finally bring down the Third Reich.
- A. Far more cataclysmic than World War I, World War II left 60 to 80 million dead—liquidated in the camps, frozen through exposure, starved to death, or killed in battle.
 - B. Science was never more active in warfare. The Americans, British, Japanese, and Germans all worked feverishly to build an atomic bomb. One of our lessons is that science and technology do not make us immune to the laws of history; in fact, scientists will build any weapon that governments will fund.
 1. Not just Truman but any U.S. president would have used the atomic bomb to end the war. We could not justify invading the Japanese islands and losing the lives of American soldiers if we had an alternative in the bomb.
 2. Of course, others would acquire this technology, and the world would stand on the brink of nuclear holocaust. Only a scientist utterly convinced that there is no value in history could have, in good conscience, developed the bomb in the belief that it would not be used.
 3. As we know, the atomic bomb was dropped, and Japan surrendered.
- VI. Even before the Japanese surrender, the great powers met in Potsdam, Germany, in July 1945. Europe was in ruins. By then, Franklin Roosevelt was dead and Churchill would be voted out of office. Only Stalin—shrewd and utterly without scruples—remained. Harry Truman and Clement Attlee, who succeeded Churchill, were putty in his hands.
- A. Britain's Socialist Labor Party saw some merit to Communism. Truman was a strong Democrat. Both Attlee and Truman felt profound gratitude for the losses sustained by the Soviet Union.
 - B. Churchill tried to convince these leaders and the people of Britain and the United States that Stalin was as much a tyrant as Hitler, bent on enslaving all of Eastern Europe.
 1. According to Churchill, Stalin realized that such nations as Poland had been the corridor for repeated invasions of Russia. He also wanted to spread Communism around the world at any cost.
 2. Churchill understood that war is a natural part of history and that force would be necessary to stop the Soviet Union. The voters saw him as a warmonger and removed him from office.

- C. The United States had a huge army in Europe and possessed the atomic bomb. For one time in history, one nation possessed the technological means to bring peace to the world.
- VII.** Truman failed at almost everything he did until he got into politics, but he made a name for himself by traveling around the country and talking to ordinary citizens.
- A. Roosevelt chose Truman as vice president, in part because he was such a nonentity that Roosevelt believed he would look good by comparison.
 - B. Truman ultimately grew into the job of president, surrounded by such advisors as George C. Marshall, one of America's noblest public servants.
- VIII.** But Truman and his advisors did not understand the depths of Stalin's evil, and they allowed him to control Eastern Europe. Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and the Baltic countries would endure more than 40 years of tyranny. Millions would die in the gulag.
- A. The apparatus of science and technology was bent to Stalin's will. He controlled the minds of Soviet citizens through newspapers, radio, and movies. Individuals were as cut off from the outside world as if they had lived in the days of Peter the Great.
 - B. By late 1948 and early 1949, Communism had spread to China, which also became a totalitarian Communist dictatorship. All the moral, economic, and military authority the Americans had at the end of the war was being squandered.
 - C. For the next 40 years, the world would live in the shadow of nuclear disaster. Indeed, we still live in that shadow.
- IX.** Truman instituted a massive plan to rebuild Germany and Japan. They were given democratic governments and tied politically and economically into the United States.
- A. In this task, Truman became one of the great American presidents. He believed in democratic liberty and possessed a moral compass. His primary goal was to prevent another world war.
 - B. But he couldn't achieve a consensus among Americans. In fact, he left office with some of the lowest approval ratings in history. Another generation had failed to learn the wisdom of history. The world would come, again and again, to the brink of catastrophe.

Essential Reading:

Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin*, pp.517–980.

Supplementary Reading:

Conquest, *Stalin*.

Ferrell, *Truman and the Cold War Revisionists*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Would you consider Stalin to be a great statesman?
2. World War II ended more than 60 years ago and its legacy is still with us. What part of this legacy will still pose major problems 60 years from now?

Lecture Five

Is Freedom a Universal Value?

Scope: The three forms of *freedom*—*national freedom*, *political freedom*, and *individual freedom*—have achieved a unique balance in the United States. The American ideal of freedom is the product of a confluence of five currents of thought stemming from the Old Testament, ancient Greece and Rome, Christianity, England, and the American frontier. Each of these historical currents has added fundamental elements to the American ideals of national, political, and individual freedom. The result is a balance in which a strong national freedom is deeply rooted in constitutional liberty and the inalienable rights of the individual. History teaches that America has a unique legacy of freedom and one that may not be easily transplanted to other parts of the world, including the Middle East.

Outline

- I. Is freedom a universal value?
 - A. Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, major decisions have been made and great wars fought in the belief that freedom is desired by people in all places and all times (discussed in The Teaching Company course *A History of Freedom*).
 - B. World War I was fought to make the world safe for democracy. World War II was a struggle of democracy against fascism. The Cold War tried to prevent the spread of totalitarian Communism.
- II. *Freedom* takes three forms: *national freedom*, *political freedom*, and *individual freedom*.
 - A. National freedom is the freedom of an entity—a nation, even a tribe—to be independent of foreign control.
 - B. Political freedom includes the right to vote, to participate in the assembly, and to have a fair trial.
 - C. Individual freedom, the freedom to live as you choose as long as you harm no one else, includes freedom of thought and speech, as well as economic and religious freedom.
 - D. The United States has achieved a remarkable intermingling of national, political, and individual freedom. We have never known foreign conquest. We take political freedom for granted—even during the Civil War, in 1864, we had an election. We have individual freedom to a degree seldom equaled in history.
 - E. These types of freedom are not mutually inclusive. For example, North Korea has national freedom but no political or individual freedom. The same was true for Hitler’s Third Reich. The Roman Empire had no national or political freedom but had enormous individual freedom. Throughout history, nations have been willing to give up political and individual freedom to protect themselves against foreign intrusion or invasion.
 - F. Ancient civilizations had no clear concept of political or individual freedom. Ancient Egyptians did not have a word for *freedom*. Mesopotamia had a word for it, but it meant the gift of a sovereign, such as the privilege of not paying taxes for a specified period.
- III. The unique evolution of freedom in the United States has given us the illusion that the rest of the world also desires our kind of freedom. History shows that many civilizations have chosen otherwise.
 - A. China had a concept of national independence early on, but it never developed the idea of freedom. The *Analects of Confucius* talks of order, not freedom (discussed in The Teaching Company course *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*). The Chinese chose to accept the benefits of order and authoritarian rule over the awesome responsibility of self-government. In China, order flows from the leader, who sets a model of dutiful obedience for the people. China has flourished without an idea of freedom.
 - B. The early civilization that arose in the Indus Valley did not develop national or political freedom. Instead, it turned to the writings of Buddha, which emphasize spiritual freedom. The individual search for salvation was most significant.
 - C. The spread of democracy in the 20th century is largely attributable to the example of the United States. We made political freedom a founding principle in the Declaration of Independence with the famous words:

"all men are created equal, and they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights... Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

- IV.** Five currents of thought stemming from the Old Testament, ancient Greece and Rome, Christianity, Britain, and the American frontier have shaped the American view of freedom.
- A.** The Old Testament is the most noble example to come down to us from the ancient Near East of an idea of freedom—essentially national freedom. In the book of Exodus, God calls Moses to lead his people out of bondage in Egypt to receive the Ten Commandments, a set of laws.
1. The Old Testament is largely the story of how Israel reached greatness—and national freedom—because it followed the laws of God, then collapsed because it deviated from that path.
 2. From the Old Testament, Americans inherited the idea of themselves as a chosen people, given freedom so that they can bear a special mission to the world.
 3. The Old Testament was important for the Founders of our country, in particular James Madison. Sermons played a key role in motivating the American people during the American Revolution.
- B.** From ancient Greece and Rome, we derive two crucial features of the American ideal of freedom: political freedom and natural law.
1. In ancient Greece and Rome, political freedom was essential to one's duties as a citizen. Freedom—to vote, to serve in the army, to hold office—was a responsibility.
 2. However, individual freedom was limited. Pericles defended the right of individuals to live as they chose as long as they didn't harm others. Nonetheless, Socrates was put to death for blasphemy and for corrupting the youth of Athens because he did not worship the Athenian gods and, thus, did not fulfill his duties as a citizen.
 3. Rome continued the Greek ideal of natural law, the belief in an absolute law based on universal justice and truth. Found in Socrates, this notion was carried into the world by the Roman Empire, whose written law stated that all men are created equal and are endowed with the right of liberty.
 4. As we know, slavery was practiced in ancient Rome; thus, many of its people were denied liberty. But the idea of natural law would pass from Rome to Christianity.
- C.** Christianity provided another ideal that is crucial to freedom, the limitation of government power. This concept, developed in the 4th and 5th centuries, holds that the world is divided into two separate spheres, the sphere of God and the sphere of man. The sphere of God is superior.
1. Early Christianity asserted that people owed absolute obedience to their rulers, but that governments themselves were appointed by, and owed obedience to, God.
 2. Throughout the Middle Ages, popes clashed with emperors and kings. Repeatedly, the pope triumphed because he possessed the keys to heaven and the ability to excommunicate rulers from the church. Even the powerful Holy Roman Emperor or the king of England could be barred from the sacraments of God and, hence, salvation. From these clashes came the idea of limiting the power of government.
 3. Christianity enriched the heritage of the United States through the transmission of natural law, through its continuation of the idea of God's choice, and through the proposition that government, just like the individual, comes under the law of God.
 4. Protestant Christianity brought the idea of a chosen people elected by God to spread his word, as with the Puritans, who left England in search of religious freedom in the New World. This idea of individual choice, guided by God, led early Americans to assert that the king was violating their rights as British subjects.
- D.** The fourth current of thought came from Britain and the ideal of a government of laws. The concept of common law, law that is common to the realm, began with the Magna Charta in 1215.
1. Throughout English history, kings tried to assert their personal authority, but the law of England took primacy.
 2. The American Founders were convinced that the British Parliament could not violate their rights as Englishmen, including the rights to bear arms, meet in assemblies, and choose their own magistrates. Parliament, like the king, was not above the law.
 3. The Declaration of Independence brought together two great currents of thought: natural law, which declared that all men are created equal and endowed with certain rights, and common law, which held that governments are instituted to secure the individual rights of the people.

- a. When people judge that their government no longer secures their rights, they have the *duty* to overthrow that government and establish a new one.
 - b. Thomas Jefferson listed the ways in which King George and Parliament had violated the colonists' rights as Englishmen. He didn't create new ideas but harmonized the general sentiments of the age.
- E. The fifth and final element of American freedom is the idea of the frontier. From Jamestown in 1607 into the 19th century, the American frontier has meant freedom, equality, and a chance to start anew.
- 1. In 1775, the year the Battle of Lexington was fought, Daniel Boone led the first group of settlers through the Cumberland Gap. The settlement they founded, which ultimately became part of Kentucky, was named Lexington, after the battle.
 - 2. Some of our greatest leaders, including George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, were raised on the frontier. The frontier gave people from the Old World a new identity.
- V. The legacy of freedom in the United States is unique and precious, but it may not be easy to transplant to other parts of the world. For example, Russia was shaped by the same Old Testament background, deeply ingrained Christianity, and the traditions of Greece and Rome. What it lacks is the English tradition of limited government. Its frontier became a gulag instead of a place of freedom.

Essential Reading:

Adler, *The Idea of Freedom*

Fears, *A History of Freedom*, Lectures Fifteen through Twenty-Eight.

Fears, "Freedom: The History of an Idea."

Supplementary Reading:

Kirk, *Roots of American Order*.

Zacharia, *The Future of Freedom*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. Give further examples of national freedom without individual or political freedom.
- 2. Give further examples of political freedom without individual or national freedom.

Lecture Six

Birth of Civilization in the Middle East

Scope: At least since World War I and Woodrow Wilson, American foreign policy has been based on the belief that the whole world wants democracy and, thus, that freedom is a universal value. However, history shows that many nations have chosen the perceived security of despotism over the responsibilities of freedom. Great civilizations have risen and fallen without a concept of freedom. In ancient Egypt, the civilization that built the pyramids did not even have a word for *freedom* in its language. Ancient Mesopotamia understood freedom only in the sense of choosing submission to the rule of an all-powerful king.

Outline

- I. History shows that freedom is not a universal value, partially because power is a primary motivating force of human actions. Men seek power and use it to dominate others. This lesson of history is evident in the rise and fall of the first empires in the Middle East.
 - A. The Middle East consists of Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Palestine, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other countries on the Arabian Peninsula. This region is the birthplace of civilization, the crucible of conflict, and the graveyard of empires.
 - B. Civilization began around 3000 B.C. in Egypt and Mesopotamia (now Iraq). The two areas had some interaction but mostly developed independently of each other.
 - C. Civilization involves the emergence of four elements not seen in earlier forms of human organization: the development of complex governments, the fashioning of metal tools and weapons, the invention of writing, and the building of monumental structures.
 - D. The *birth of civilization* was a response to climatic change. In Egypt, the marshland began to dry up, leaving only the land along the Nile River as arable. The necessity of feeding themselves led people to turn to authoritarian rule.
- II. Around 3000 B.C., King Menes (known as Narmer in Egyptian records) unified the lands of Upper and Lower Egypt. Under his rule, the overflowing Nile was channeled to irrigate crops. In return, the Egyptians gave up any notion of freedom. In fact, the Egyptian language has no word for *freedom*.
 - A. All power in Egypt from this earliest time devolved upon the pharaoh, who was viewed as a god on Earth. The supreme god was Ra, god of the Sun. He had come to Earth and fathered a child with pharaoh's mother. Egyptians believed that the gods had chosen them to be special and had given them pharaoh.
 - B. Under the government of pharaoh, metallurgy and writing emerged quickly. A system of hieroglyphs was developed initially to record the tribute (goods) brought in from the various lands of Egypt.
 - C. Monumental architecture developed with astonishing rapidity. Only 500 years after the unification of Egypt, the pyramids were built as a tribute to the power of pharaoh.
 1. The pyramids were part of a giant public works program. When the Nile overflowed, farmers needed other work; thus, records show that they were tasked to build the pyramids.
 2. These monuments reflected pharaoh's desire for immortality. The Egyptians deeply feared death but, knowing they must die, designed ways to navigate the trickery of the afterlife. The pyramids were pharaoh's steps to the stars—to eternity.
 - D. Egypt became an absolute monarchy of god on Earth, surrounded by priests and bureaucrats. Some of the earliest writings from Egypt offer advice to young bureaucrats that would be familiar today: Don't make waves. Do what you're told. Never let anybody go away mad. Promise people anything that they want but don't necessarily do it.
- III. As in Egypt, civilization arose in Mesopotamia around 3000 B.C. with no concept of freedom. The first civilization in the Land of the Two Rivers—the Tigris and Euphrates—was Sumer. From there, civilization spread to the north.
 - A. The Mesopotamians had a word for freedom, but it meant a gift from the all-powerful king. He was not god on Earth, as in Egypt, but he was chosen by god to rule.

- B. As in Egypt, climatic change in Mesopotamia led to the development of civilization. Civilization began in such cities as Ur and Babylon, where the priest, who could control irrigation and plot the seasons, gave power to the king.
 - C. In both Egypt and Mesopotamia, the birth of civilization was marked by autocratic rule and the growth of empire. In Mesopotamia, imperialism—one city’s desire to dominate another—drove the mechanism of history.
 1. The cities of Sumer were unified. By about 2600 B.C., Sargon of the city of Akkad, one of the first great conquerors in history, rose to prominence in the Middle East.
 2. By about 1900 B.C., the empires of Akkad and Babylonia reached fruition, thanks in part to the law code of Hammurabi, ruler of the first pan-Near Eastern empire. Hammurabi had produced a code of laws that he claimed was god-given and that included a good deal of humane legislation, along with such fundamental practices as “an eye for an eye.”
 3. In Egypt, the empire grew by uniting its own lands, then moving into Libya. Early in the second millennium B.C., Egypt was conquered by outside invaders, who were eventually driven out. Egypt then became a mighty imperial nation striking deep into the heartland of the Middle East.
- IV. The greatest of the Middle Eastern empires was the Persian Empire (546–330 B.C.), in present-day Iran. Its rise to prominence demonstrates the instability of the balance-of-power concept.
- A. Around 560 B.C., the Middle East was divided into four great powers, Egypt and the kingdoms of Lydia (Asia Minor), Babylon (Baghdad), and Media (northern Iran.) They thought they could live in peace and prosperity, but their fragile balance of power collapsed before a new, massive force, Persia.
 - B. The Greek historian Herodotus relates a story of the king of Media around 580 B.C. that incorporates the fundamental elements of tyranny.
 1. The king, Astyages, tries to thwart a prophecy that his grandson will topple his kingdom by ordering the child killed. As we might guess, the child is not killed but is raised by a shepherd and eventually brought before the king.
 2. When the king discovers that his second-in-command, Harpagus, had not carried out his original orders, he has the son of Harpagus fed to his father at a banquet.
 3. The king’s grandson, Cyrus, is sent back to his real parents. Ultimately, he would overthrow his grandfather’s kingdom, unite the Persians, and establish the vast Persian Empire. Cyrus’s son, Cambyses, united this empire with Egypt.
 - C. This story illustrates the Greeks’ view of the history of the Middle East, highlighting the difference between the Greek love of freedom and the Middle Eastern willingness to accept absolute rule.
 1. In the ancient Middle East, the king was an absolute ruler. Individuals had no rights, except those allowed by the king.
 2. The king was not only law itself but was bound by no scruples, although there were limits on his power. For example, the Egyptians believed that the pharaoh was chosen by the gods to rule with justice. If he failed to rule with justice, nature would be derailed, and the Nile would not flow.
 3. Even those in the highest positions—such as Harpagus, second-in-command under the king of the Medes—had no rights and no protection. In Egypt, all land was regarded as pharaoh’s property. In the Persian Empire, everyone from the highest vizier to the lowliest peasant was regarded as the king’s slave.
 - D. The rise of the Persian Empire saw an expansion toward the Mediterranean Sea and the land of the Scythians, today’s Turkmenistan and Afghanistan. For the Greeks, this expansion illustrated *hybris*, the extreme arrogance that precedes a fall. Cyrus, we are told, met his death trying to take over the land of the Scythians in an unnecessary preemptive war.
 - E. The Persian Empire shows us the Middle East as a geopolitical concept—a geographic region that involves major political issues. As we will see in our next lecture, this region extends from the limits of the Persian Empire in what we would call Pakistan today, to the Danube River, and out to the Pillars of Hercules and across North Africa.

Essential Reading:

Hallo and Simpson, *The Ancient Near East*.

Supplementary Reading:

Frankfort, *The Birth of Civilization in the Ancient Near East*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Compare the birth of civilization in the ancient Middle East with the political impact of technology and science today.
2. Why do you think that ideas of the divinity of the ruler were the intellectual conceptualization of early empires?

Lecture Seven

The Trojan War and the Middle East

Scope: From the birth of civilization until our own day, the Middle East has been the crucible of conflict and the birth of empires. The first war we know about in any detail was the struggle between the Hittites and Egyptians for dominance in the Middle East of the 13th century B.C. The power vacuum created by the collapse of these two empires led to the most famous war of antiquity, the Trojan War. Given epic grandeur by Homer in the *Iliad*, the Trojan War was an actual historical event. It demonstrates for us that the idea of a balance of power is a fragile and dangerous mechanism for maintaining peace. The Trojan War also illustrates the dangers of undertaking a preemptive war in the Middle East and the lesson that empires rise and fall because of decisions made by individual leaders.

Outline

- I. The Greek historian Thucydides believed that the Middle East was enormously important in the analysis of how power determines history. He began his history with the Trojan War (c. 1250–1240 B.C.), which took place following the collapse of the Egyptian and Hittite empires.
 - A. The Hittite Empire was centered in what we would today call Turkey. In the 13th century B.C., the Hittites controlled the production of iron, a valuable natural resource. The Egyptian pharaoh, Ramses II, sought to conquer the Hittites to gain control of their iron resources.
 - B. The armies of the two empires met at the Battle of Kadesh in 1274 B.C., the first historical battle about which we have detailed information. Ramses rode into an ambush, but he fought his way out, held off the Hittites until the rest of his army arrived, and claimed victory. In fact, the battle seems to have been a draw.
 - C. The two powers signed the first detailed peace treaty in history, which divided the Middle East into spheres of influence. The Egyptian Empire reached to the middle of Syria; the Hittite Empire extended to the north of Syria and into Asia Minor. Like most similar attempts to establish a balance of power, this one failed. Both empires began to decline, and by 1250 B.C., a power vacuum existed in the Middle East.
- II. Two new powers—the Greeks (or the Achaeans, as Homer called them) and the Trojans—sought to move into this vacuum, again, in the quest for iron. But in Homer’s version of the story, the Trojan War began with a banquet of the gods.
 - A. Every god and goddess was invited except the goddess of discord. In retaliation, she rolled a golden apple into the banquet inscribed with the words “to the fairest.” Those who fought most ferociously for the apple were Hera, the wife of Zeus; Aphrodite, the goddess of love; and Athena, the goddess of war and wisdom.
 - B. The goddesses asked Zeus to decide who should receive the golden apple, but Zeus passed the decision on to a mortal, Paris, the son of King Priam of Troy. Paris chose Aphrodite to receive the apple because she had offered him the most beautiful woman in the world in return for his vote. Of course, the most beautiful woman was Helen, wife of the king of Sparta.
 - C. Paris went to Sparta, met King Menelaus, and was welcomed as befit his royal bearing and birth. When the king departed on business, he invited Paris to stay as his guest, but Paris abused his hospitality and eloped with a willing Helen.
 1. The Greeks saw the elopement as an act of terrorism. Menelaus called on his allies, the kings of Greece, to avenge this act. The Greeks mustered a large armada and army. Each king was an independent ruler but accepted the command of Agamemnon.
 2. Agamemnon and his warriors launched a preemptive war against Troy. The two sides could have negotiated, but honor was at stake. The Greeks wanted not only to see the return of Helen but to conquer Troy.
 3. The Greeks believed that the war would end soon, but it dragged on for years. There were no negotiations, only battle after battle, because the cost of withdrawal was too high.
- III. Homer began his story in the ninth year of the Trojan War. He understood that the lessons of this mighty war could be distilled in one episode: the wrath of Achilles.

- A. To supply their needs, the Greeks had ravaged the coastal cities, bringing back food, gold, and women. In the course of these raids, both Achilles and Agamemnon brought back beautiful girls, but Apollo visited a plague on the Greeks for Agamemnon's capture of the daughter of one of his priests.
 - B. The Greek chieftains, led by Achilles, told Agamemnon to return the priest's daughter. Agamemnon, feeling threatened, demanded Achilles' captive in return. Achilles consented but refused to continue in battle.
 - C. The *Iliad* tells of the grievous war that followed.
 - 1. The Trojans, thinking that victory was near, attacked again and again. Achilles ultimately returned to battle and killed Hector, the brother of Paris and the bravest of the Trojans; Achilles then desecrated Hector's body before returning it to his father.
 - 2. The last line of the *Iliad* —“They celebrated the funeral rites of Hector, breaker of horses” (*Hôs hoi g'amphiepon taphon Hektoros hippodamoio*)—marks Hector's funeral rites. The *Iliad* ends as life must end, with death.
- IV. Homer's audience knew, however, that the Trojan War continued. The real conflict was about dominance in the Middle East and access to the iron of the Hittite Empire.
- A. One morning in the 10th year of the war, the Trojans awoke and found that the Greeks had gone, leaving nothing except a huge wooden horse as a tribute. The Trojans believed that peace had finally come.
 - B. Of course, that peace was an illusion. Once inside the gates of Troy, the Greek warriors burst from inside the horse and began their butchery. When the morning was over, Troy was in ruins, its men dead, its women and children enslaved.
 - C. Troy, which once had visions of becoming a superpower, was destroyed. The victorious Agamemnon went home to be murdered by his wife. Odysseus wandered. The gods brought destruction upon vanquished and victors alike.
 - D. Within a generation of the fall of Troy, the mighty cities of Greece were attacked by a new band of invaders. For 200 years, all of the Middle East was in turmoil and disarray. The iron that had been worth so much bloodshed was forged into new weapons of war.
 - E. Among the people who move to a new land during this time of turmoil were the people of Israel, who moved out of Egypt and into Canaan, a land they believed God had given them. That history is another legacy of the Middle East.

Essential Reading:

Fears, *Famous Greeks*, Lectures One through Four.

Homer, *Iliad*, Books I and XXIV.

Supplementary Reading:

Wood, *In Search of the Trojan War*.

Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you believe that the Middle East is the crucible of conflict?
2. Has the role of oil in modern society changed any of the lessons of the Middle East?

Lecture Eight

Ancient Israel and the Middle East

Scope: Two fountainheads of our civilization, Greece and Israel, were shaped by conflict in the Middle East. The nation of Israel rose in the historical context of the collapse of the Egyptian Empire and the Trojan War. Like Homer's epic of the Trojan War, the historical books of the Bible are based on actual events. Under King David and King Solomon, Israel became a regional power in the Middle East in the 10th century B.C. The book of Samuel describes these events, and its author may be counted as the first true historian. This first work of historical writing illustrates that empires rise and fall because of leadership, good and bad. The author of the book of Samuel sees the destiny of Israel as dependent entirely upon an all-powerful God. Absolute submission to the will of God is the requirement for the national freedom and greatness of Israel. The Old Testament presents a story of a nation that, time and again, falls away from obedience to God and is punished. This vision teaches that there is a profound moral dimension to history and that private and public morality cannot be separated.

Outline

- I.** From the beginning of civilization in the Middle East, empires rose and fell as leaders grasped power, spread their domains, and lost their dominance. After the fall of Troy, from about 1240 B.C. to 1040 B.C., the eastern Mediterranean region saw constant turmoil and migrations. We begin this lecture in the mid-11th century B.C., with the enduring kingdom of Israel.
 - A.** Unlike other ancient languages and religions from this part of the world, Hebrew and Judaism have survived. The Old Testament, which chronicles the rise and fall of Israel, is read every day by millions of people around the world.
 - B.** The Israelites, like the Greeks, were a historically minded people. While Egypt and Mesopotamia recorded the deeds of their kings, Israel and Greece actually drew on the past to guide the present and plan for the future.
 - C.** The first true work of history was the book of Samuel, composed around 950 B.C. It is the story of the rise and fall of Israel as a regional superpower.
- II.** Around 1240 B.C., the prophet Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, and Pharaoh's army was destroyed in the Red Sea. The people of Israel received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai.
 - A.** Judaism is a historical religion rooted in the liberation from Egypt and the acceptance of submission to a single God. As long as Israel followed the law of God, it would prosper; deviation meant a fall from power and disarray.
 - B.** The Israelites arrived in the land that is now Israel and Palestine by the early 12th century B.C. As it is today, this land was home to many different ethnic groups, although they had strong similarities.
 - 1.** The Israelites called their new land Canaan, and in fact, the Canaanites spoke a language close to Hebrew and practiced a religion similar to Judaism.
 - 2.** Also living in Canaan were the Philistines and wandering tribes, such as the Amalekites and the Ammonites.
- III.** Living according to God's will, the early Israelites had no earthly king but were governed by judges, tribal leaders, and prophets. Around 1020 B.C., after a military defeat by the Philistines, they saw the need for a king to unite them and protect them against invaders.
 - A.** The Israelites worshiped God at the Ark of the Covenant, a wooden structure bearing his laws. The Philistines captured this Ark and placed it in their own temple.
 - B.** The Israelites asked the prophet Samuel for a king. God was displeased with this request but chose Saul, a mighty warrior. Samuel warned the Israelites: You will prosper as long as your king walks in the way of God, but if he deviates from God's law, beware of the consequences.

- C. Saul retrieved the Ark and led the Israelites in many victories over the Philistines. Then God directed Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites, but Saul spared the Amalekite king and the best animals. Samuel insisted on absolute obedience to God and killed the king of the Amalekites himself.
- IV.** After Saul's disobedience, God chose a new leader for the Israelites, a shepherd boy named David. God led young David onto a battlefield to face the Philistines' champion Goliath, a giant more than nine feet tall.
- A. David struck down Goliath with his slingshot and cut off his head with Goliath's own sword. He became a warrior and a general for Saul and led victory after victory over the Philistines.
- B. But Saul became envious of David and decided to kill him. David escaped and became a renegade, fighting the Philistines with his own band of men until, in a great battle, Saul and his son Jonathan were killed.
- C. We are told in Chronicles that all the deeds of David were recounted by the prophets Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. The book of Samuel was an attempt to explain the ways of God to man and to explain to the Israelites why David's kingdom rose and fell.
- D. David united the tribes of Israel into a kingdom, defeated its enemies in battle, and established the city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital around 950 B.C. Under his rule, the land of Israel spread to the north of Syria.
- V.** As King David got older, he sought peace, remaining at home rather than going out to battle. He committed a series of private sins, violations of God's law, that brought on the destruction of his family, his rule, and his nation.
- A. In his palace, David saw the beautiful Bathsheba. He took her as his own but didn't tell her husband, Uriah the Hittite, a noble warrior in his army.
- B. Fearing that Bathsheba might be pregnant, David called on Uriah to visit her, so that any conception would be traced to Uriah. But Uriah refused to go as long as the battle raged on, and David gave up. David then told his general, Abner, to see to Uriah's death in battle.
- C. The book of Samuel raises a profound, still relevant question: Can private morality be separated from public morality? Does a leader's private, immoral act have public consequences? In David's case, it brought disaster.
- D. With Uriah dead, David married Bathsheba. Her firstborn died, an early sign of God's displeasure. Her next child, Solomon, would one day rule Israel, but in the meantime, the house of David was torn apart.
1. David's son Amnon conceived a lustful desire for his half-sister Tamar. When she refused to be with him, he pretended to be sick and would eat for no one else but her. When she went to his room, he raped her.
 2. Another son, Absalom, murdered Amnon, his half-brother. Craving power, Absalom revolted against his father, and David was driven out of Jerusalem.
 3. David rallied his army, but in the ensuing battle, Absalom was killed, leaving David in grief.
- VI.** David finally realized that he had strayed from the path of God but still abused his power. An angry God gave him three choices for his people: war, pestilence, or famine. David chose pestilence for three days, and hundreds of Israelites died.
- A. David told God that he had learned absolute obedience. God ordered him to buy a threshing floor, the future site of the temple that David's son, Solomon, would build.
- B. Under Solomon, Israel once again became a great power. The magnificent temple was built, and the glory of Israel was known throughout the land.
- C. But Solomon, too, broke the word of God. He married many women, each with a foreign god. God decided to break the power of Israel. When Solomon died, Israel was split in two separate nations, Israel and Judah.
- D. According to the Old Testament, God gave these nations many chances to return to him. Time and time again, their leaders performed acts of personal immorality. Finally, in 722 B.C., the Assyrians conquered part of Israel. The Babylonians conquered the rest, including Jerusalem, in 586 B.C. The Jews were taken off to Babylon.

VII. To the Founders of our country, the Old Testament presented the history lesson of a chosen nation and the importance of serving as a model to the world. For ancient Israel, the model was absolute, unquestioning obedience to the law of God, with no separation between the secular and the sacred.

Essential Reading:

Bible, 1 and 2 Samuel.

Supplementary Reading:

Flannagan and Brueggemann, "Samuel, Books 1–2."

Van Seters, *In Search of History*.

Wright and Fuller. *The Book of the Acts of God*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you think that the Hebrews took the step beyond merely recording historical facts to writing an interpretation of the past?
2. Is there still any tendency in American political life to equate public and private morality?

Lecture Nine

Ancient Greece and the Middle East

Scope: The concept of the moral dimension of history lay also at the foundation of the beginning of historical writing in the Greek world. Herodotus composed his *Histories* in an effort to explain the ways of the gods to men. He sought to understand through history why nations rise and fall. He found his explanation in the concept of *hybris*, the outrageous arrogance that leads to disastrous decisions by those in power. Herodotus traced the rise and fall of the empire of Iran as the superpower of the Middle East. *The Persian Wars* illustrates the lesson that power, not freedom, is the universal human value and that empires rise and fall because of poor leadership by individuals, not because of anonymous social, economic, or climatic causes.

Outline

- I. The desire for power runs throughout history, from ancient to modern times. In the Middle East, Israel rose and fell as a regional superpower (c. 1020–586 B.C.), as described in the Old Testament’s books of Samuel, the first true work of history.
 - A. Samuel is an attempt to interpret past events, to explain how Israel had declined from a great and powerful nation to one in exile. The answer: King David’s failure to obey God’s commandments led to his personal and political downfall.
 - B. Even skeptics of theological interpretations of the past can see in David’s story the human qualities—greed, deception, and bad judgment—that have repeatedly caused kingdoms to fall. A law of history is that great empires fall because of their leaders’ decisions.
 - C. The Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in 538 B.C. as the result of the rise of the Persian Empire.
 1. We have seen how this empire grew by fusing the legacies of Egypt and Babylon with religious fundamentalism.
 2. The leader of Persia, Cyrus, represents an aspect of Middle Eastern history that we see repeatedly: a leader suddenly emerging from obscurity, uniting a number of tribes, and sweeping across the Middle East.
 3. In a brief period, from 546 to 539 B.C., Cyrus toppled the existing political structure of the Middle East and created the new empire of Persia. He allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and even paid to rebuild their temple.
- II. Darius ruled the Persian Empire as king from 520 until 486 B.C. His land stretched all the way from modern-day Pakistan to Romania. Its influence—not its dominion but its influence—stretched all the way to Carthage, Tunisia, and Morocco.
 - A. The Persian Empire was large but highly organized, divided into 20 *satrapies* (provinces) and linked by a superb road system and a free-market economy. The Persian army was the largest and best army of its day, with a top-notch cavalry and a core of infantrymen known as “the immortals.”
 - B. The king of Persia was an absolute despot, and every subject in his empire technically was his slave. He was chosen by the god Ahura Mazda, who had pressed into his hand the sword of victory and conquest.
- III. In 498 B.C., a revolt broke out along the coast of Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), an area then inhabited by Greeks.
 - A. Darius put down the revolt, but only after the Athenians had burned the Persian city of Sardis. In response, Darius decided to punish the Athenians and to conquer all of Greece. These Persian Wars, undertaken by Darius and his son Xerxes, were the subject of the second true work of history, by the Greek historian Herodotus.
 - B. About 445 B.C., 40 years after the Persian Wars, Herodotus wrote his *Historiai* (*Histories*), meaning “researches.” He sought to answer the question of why nations rise and fall—why great nations were once small and why weak nations were once great. He wanted to understand if invariable laws of history explained these changes.

- C. Specifically, Herodotus studied why 31 Greek cities that were far weaker and less economically and technologically advanced than the Persians were able to defeat the vast Persian army.
 - D. Herodotus's book was also the first attempt to explain why the Middle East is different from the West. He noted conflict between the two regions from the very start, including the Trojan War. The Persian Wars were one more struggle in a series he believed would continue as long as humanity.
- IV.** Herodotus's history begins with the rise of the Persian Empire. The kingdom of Lydia, one of four kingdoms in the Middle East, was ruled by Croesus (from 560 B.C.), a powerful and wealthy king who had conquered the Greek cities of Asia Minor.
- A. Croesus had asked the Athenian statesman Solon to name the happiest man in the world, expecting Solon to identify Croesus. But Solon said that no nation or individual is happy until the end is known, a warning about the precariousness of all power.
 - B. By 546 B.C., a new power, Persia, under the leadership of King Cyrus, had united all of Iran. Croesus worried about this development on his eastern frontier and asked the Greek oracle at Delphi whether he should launch a war against the Persian Empire.
 - C. Encouraged by his own interpretation of the oracle's answers, Croesus launched his great war—and was defeated. In one winter, the new empire of Persia conquered what had once been the superpower of Lydia.
 1. Captured, Croesus was to be burned alive. At the last minute, he shouted a prayer and a wish for others to learn what he had learned about history.
 2. Croesus recounted Solon's advice and acknowledged his own greed and errors. The kingdom that fell was his, not his enemy's, because Croesus did not learn the wisdom of history.
 3. Cyrus spared Croesus and made him an advisor. Under Cyrus, the Persian Empire flourished. After he died, Darius became king.
- V.** Herodotus intended his history as a lesson to the people of Athens as they embarked on their empire. Because he understood that people frequently learn from the mistakes of others, he pointed to the mistakes of the once-mighty Persians.
- A. Darius wanted to conquer Athens, but the city defeated his much larger army on the nearby plains of Marathon.
 1. This event should have taught the Persians that their army was not invincible.
 2. Further, the Persians should have learned that a small army of free men—in this case, the Greeks—fighting against an invasion of their country will defeat a much larger professional army fighting as the slaves of a despot.
 - B. In 480 B.C., the son of Darius, Xerxes, returned to Greece with an even larger army of more than a million men and a thousand warships. Xerxes himself rode in the battle chariot of the god Ahura Mazda.
 - C. This great force rolled over every nation in its path. Only 31 out of hundreds of Greek cities, led by Athens and Sparta, fought against the Persians. Many others, including Thebes, supported the Persians. It seemed as if Xerxes would prevail.
 1. At the pass of Thermopylae, 300 Spartans and 5,000 of their allies battled the Persian army. The Spartans sent their allies home, but the 300 stayed and died. Xerxes lost 20,000 men.
 2. Xerxes burned Athens in retaliation for the burning of Sardis, but against his counselors' advice, he fought a naval battle in the Bay of Salamis off the coast of Athens, and his fleet was destroyed.
 3. Xerxes returned home but left behind 300,000 men. Too much was at stake—his power, his glory—to simply give up the war. In 479 B.C., the Greeks destroyed the army of Xerxes.
- VI.** The Persian Empire began to decline, and the empire of Athens began to rise. Herodotus found an explanation in the concept of *hybris*, outrageous arrogance that leads to the abuse of power and self-destruction. Xerxes made the choice to invade when he did not have to. He found that free men defending their country could not be conquered.

- A. In 445 B.C., the Athenians began to occupy parts of the former Persian Empire. They wanted to conquer the Persian fortress city of Sestos to keep the Persians from returning. The Spartans disagreed; they wanted to retake the Greek cities in Asia Minor but leave the other Persian lands alone.
- B. The Athenians (without the Spartans) captured Sestos, crucified its governor, and stoned to death his 10-year-old son. Athens did not learn from the history of Persia—the lesson of the downfall resulting from an abuse of power—as told by Herodotus. The Athenians paid the historian richly—then ignored his lessons.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, *The Histories*.

Supplementary Reading:

Fears, *Famous Greeks*, Lectures Seven through Eleven.

Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think *hybris* confirms the view that human nature never changes?
2. Herodotus wrote from the perspective that Greeks were superior to Persians because Greeks loved freedom. Do you think this “ethnocentric” view negates the value of his history?

Lecture Ten

Athenian Democracy and Empire

Scope: In the wake of the defeat of Persia, the Athenians became the dominant superpower in the Greek world. Athens was both a democracy and an empire. The Athenian democracy rested on values fundamentally identical with the American democracy. Pericles ranks along with Churchill and Lincoln as one of the three greatest democratic statesmen in history. The Athenian democracy teaches us that empire and democratic freedom are compatible, that democracies do not necessarily make peaceful neighbors, and that wars undertaken to spread democratic values can end in defeat and disaster.

Outline

- I. *Hybris*, outrageous arrogance that leads to the downfall of a leader and his people, began as a theological concept. Indeed, later on, in Christianity, *hybris* was a word for sin.
 - A. As we saw with the people of Israel, both the guilty and the innocent suffer as a result of *hybris*.
 - B. At the basis of the concept is free will. For example, the Persian Empire was not destined to fall, but Xerxes made decisions that, ultimately, led to its downfall. Again, we're reminded of our lesson of history that empires fall because of individual decisions made by leaders.
- II. With the defeat of the Persians, the Greeks believed that a new era of freedom had dawned. Greece in the 5th century B.C. consisted of a number of independent states, of which Athens and Sparta were two separate, independent democracies.
 - A. Sparta had a balanced democracy. As in the United States, a decision of the people as a whole could be overturned by a supreme court. It had a strong commander-in-chief in the form of two kings. It had a rigorous educational system to inculcate patriotism in its citizens.
 - B. Athens was more of a pure democracy. There was no supreme court to overturn decisions of the people. The majority was absolute. The Athenians also valued the freedom to live as one chose as long as others weren't harmed.
 - C. Athens and Sparta were the two superpowers of Greece. Sparta developed a land coalition of neighbors in the Peloponnesian peninsula, and Athens developed an empire of the sea.
 - D. Athens captured the Greek cities along the coast of Asia Minor and encouraged them to join an Athenian coalition, which included about 243 member states by 450 B.C. This large empire was made possible by the *trireme*, the great warship of the day.
- III. The leader of the Athenian Empire was Pericles, who ruled from 462 to 429 B.C. He was one of the three greatest democratic statesmen in history, along with Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill.
 - A. Though born an aristocrat, Pericles was absolutely devoted to democracy and democratic freedom. He had an unswerving moral compass, a sense of absolute right and wrong.
 - B. Pericles envisioned Athens as the top superpower of the pan-Hellenic world. As the democratic leader of a democratic nation, he had a consensus to achieve that vision.
 - C. The values of the Athenian democracy were much like our own. Like the United States, Athens was a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. It believed in majority rule, self-made law, and personal liberty.
 - D. The Athenians, unlike the Spartans, also believed in the good life. Citizens worked hard to get rich and enjoy luxuries. They loved wisdom and beauty but fought bravely when needed.
 - E. The individual Athenian had rights that were guaranteed by law, but freedom was also a responsibility. The right to vote carried the obligation of military service. Every Athenian man served in the military. The Athenians had slavery—as did the United States when it was founded.
- IV. Athens was also an empire, a word that, to the Greeks and Romans, simply meant power exercised over another area. The Athenians were unabashedly imperialistic. They viewed their state as a model to the world.

- A. The Athenian Empire spread not by force but by moral authority. Athens saw itself as bearing the gifts of democracy, liberty, and equality to the world. It believed that the nations in its alliance were better off than they had been because they were now free and democratic.
 - B. Churchill also believed that the British Empire was a force for good and often referred to the destiny of the empire of Britain. In his way, Lincoln was an empire builder, as well; he forged unity out of a confederation of states. Lincoln, too, believed in the empire as a force for bringing democracy to the world.
 - C. Pericles’s vision of imperial destiny was that Athens would, through its moral authority, unify the widespread Greek world, from the Black Sea and the coast of Asia Minor through the Greek mainland to Sicily and southern Italy.
- V. A second great Greek historian, Thucydides, described the rise and destiny of the Athenian Empire, including the great war between Athens and Sparta. He wrote his history as a manual for statesmen to learn lessons from the ancient past, just as Herodotus had done with the Persian Empire.
- A. Both Herodotus and Thucydides understood that human nature does not change. Similar circumstances produce similar events. We are moved by the conflicting emotions of greed, jealousy, and the desire for power, on the one hand, and love and freedom, on the other hand. Therefore, the lessons of history are eternally valid.
 - B. Thucydides believed that a democracy can function well as long as it has a single outstanding leader to whom society looks for moral authority. As long as Pericles led the Athenians, their democracy functioned well. Thucydides also understood that history is about power.
 - C. Thucydides saw that science and technology do not make us immune to the lessons of history. In fact, he began his history of the war between Athens and Sparta with a summary of even earlier history to show how economic and technological growth had led not to peace but to bigger empires and bigger wars.
 - 1. The greatest of these wars, the one between Athens and Sparta, marked the apex of the economic and technological growth of Classical Greece. It was sparked by the growing power of the Athenian Empire and the fear it provoked in the Spartans.
 - 2. Like others before it, the war between Athens and Sparta was a preemptive strike in which both sides thought they were using their best judgment in a precarious situation.
- VI. Athens and Sparta had lived in an uneasy peace from about 446 to 435 B.C. Then, Athens interfered in a civil war in the city of Corcyra, on the northwest coast of Greece, which wasn’t part of either the Athenian or the Spartan alliance.
- A. Athens’s role in the insurgency was challenged by Corinth, a powerful Spartan ally and a commercial rival of Athens. Corcyra was part of Corinth’s sphere of influence.
 - B. Pericles brought the issue before the Athenian assembly, which consisted of every male old enough to serve in the army. To Pericles, this insurgency was not a small war in a corner of Greece but a Spartan test of the will of Athens.
 - 1. If we back down, Pericles said, the Spartans will make new, greater demands. Our will must be firm. We have a right to interfere in this insurgency.
 - 2. The Spartans persisted, and the situation began to intensify. Once again, Pericles appealed to the Athenian people to stand firm and stay the course in the struggle.
 - C. Pericles wanted the all-out war that ensued because he believed that Athens, not Sparta, should dominate Greece. He believed that Sparta would lose because Athens had the money and technological superiority to win. He wanted to fight a war of attrition at sea.
 - D. Pericles led Athens into war to ensure its political power and to spread its democracy to the world. It was a preemptive war, based on the idea that Sparta was determined to fight, but that Athens could win.
- VII. But, Thucydides tells us, one problem with war is “imponderables,” unforeseen consequences—in this case, a plague that struck the Athenians.
- A. Part of Pericles’s strategy was to bring all Athenians inside the city walls to protect them from the Spartans invaders. In 430 B.C., typhoid swept through Athens, killing as many as 1 in 10 citizens.

- B.** Furious with Pericles, the citizens charged him with embezzlement. Pericles denied wrongdoing and said that he was being investigated because the citizens were unhappy with the course of the war.
1. Pericles insisted that he had not promised a quick victory but a long although winnable war of attrition. Athens must see the war through to victory; as a superpower, retreat was not an option.
 2. Pericles added that future generations would remember a victorious Athens as the greatest of Greek powers and a model to the world.

Essential Reading:

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles*.

Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Books 1–2.

Supplementary Reading:

Hanson, *A War Like No Other*.

Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that empire and democracy are compatible?
2. Do you believe that a world filled with democracies would be a world of peace and prosperity?
3. Do you think that the existence of slavery at Athens makes the Athenian democracy different from democracy in America today?

Lecture Eleven

The Destiny of the Athenian Democracy

Scope: America and Athens share a fundamental conviction in foreign policy: It is the duty of the strong to aid the weak. A nation with the power to overthrow an evil regime must use that power in support of good; otherwise, it is almost as guilty as the oppressive nation. A corollary to this policy is the idea that it may be necessary to launch a preemptive war to strike the evil regime before it can strike at democracy. Democracies in these situations frequently believe that their armies will be welcomed as liberators. The wisdom of history suggests that these are dangerous delusions. The histories of Athens, revolutionary France, and the United States all point to the great risks inherent in preemptive wars to spread the ideals of democracy.

The lesson of history is that later generations will judge both ancient Athens and modern America to have been imperial democracies. The question of whether a democracy can rule an empire is, thus, highly relevant. The great historian of the Athenian democracy, Thucydides, answered no. In his view, a democracy lacks continuity in policy. The attention span of the voters is too short and their understanding of the complicated issues of foreign policy too limited. The public is too easily diverted and swayed by partisan politics and the financial and sexual scandals that dog politicians. For Thucydides, the tragic proof of this lay in the preemptive war that Athens launched in 415 B.C. in an effort to conquer Sicily.

Outline

- I. In this lecture, we continue our focus on Classical Greece and the destiny of Athens, the world's first democracy.
 - A. The Founders of the United States believed that Greek and Roman history were the most important sources of lessons of the past. While the rest of history was a story of monarchies and tyrannies, Greece and Rome served as examples of democracies and republics and how they rose to greatness, declined, and fell.
 - B. Democracy is not incompatible with empire, although today, we prefer the term *superpower*. Both empires and superpowers are powers that dominate, in one way or another, many other political units.
 - C. Domination does not necessarily mean forced annexation. The Athenians rarely annexed other Greek cities. In most cities, the Athenians were welcomed; trade and commerce flourished because these cities became part of a large, free-market economy.
- II. Pericles, the leader of Athens, believed that the growth and fruition of the Athenian democracy's ideals required a war against Sparta—the Peloponnesian War, begun in 431 B.C.
 - A. Much like Pericles, Winston Churchill rallied his people and other politicians to fight a war. He told the British people that giving into Hitler's small demands in such far-off countries as Czechoslovakia would lead to ever-greater demands, until Britain, by failing to stand up to Hitler, would squander its moral authority.
 - B. Churchill's argument was similar to that of Pericles. Even after their leader's death in 429 B.C., the Athenians continued to fight. The war dragged on for 10 years. As Thucydides noted, the best technology leads to the longest, biggest wars.
 - C. Thucydides also understood that wars between democracies are different from wars between kings and tyrants. A king can be defeated in battle, sign a treaty, and end the war. But democracies remain in conflict to the finish. An unconditional surrender is a hallmark of a democratic war.
 - D. The war stretched both Athens and Sparta to their limits. By 421 B.C., both sides had had enough. A peace treaty was signed.
- III. However, the treaty left the situation much the way it was before the war started. Almost as soon as it was signed, discontent arose on both sides. By 415 B.C., this discontent had reached a fever pitch.

- A. In Sparta, old-timers believed that their nation had given away its honor and left unfinished a war against tyrannical Athens. In Athens, Alcibiades, the nephew of Pericles, led the dissenters. His father had died in war, and Pericles had adopted the boy as his son. Alcibiades was attractive, brilliant, and charismatic.
 - B. Alcibiades was moved by a vision—not the vision of Pericles or democracy but of himself as king of Athens, the world’s superpower. He addressed the Athenian assembly: What did we gain by the treaty with Sparta? The reasons Pericles gave us to start the war still exist. Sparta is just waiting for a chance to strike again.
 - 1. Alcibiades told the citizens that he had secret knowledge of Sparta’s plans to launch a new attack on Athens, with the help of Corinth and the city of Syracuse, on Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean. He argued for a preemptive strike against Syracuse and the rest of Sicily.
 - 2. Athens was to aid Segesta in its conflict with Selinus (both on Sicily), then move on to attack Syracuse. The Athenians were told that they would be welcomed as liberators of Sicily from the tyranny of Syracuse.
 - C. Nicias, broker of the peace between Athens and Sparta, argued against another war. There was no evidence of Sparta’s plans except the word of Alcibiades, and the civil war in Segesta did not merit the involvement of Athens.
 - D. The assembly sided with Alcibiades and voted to send 35,000 troops and 134 warships to Sicily. To hold Alcibiades in check, it chose two other commanders, the businessman Nicias and the battle-tested Lamachus. Although it is inadvisable to start a major expedition with a divided command, the Athenians did so.
- IV.** Shortly before the ships were to sail, a scandal arose. All the Herms of Athens—statues of the god Hermes erected at crossroads—were defaced, except the one in front of Alcibiades’s house.
- A. The assembly investigated, accepting anonymous accusations. Many citizens pointed to Alcibiades, who demanded the right to face his accusers in a court trial. The assembly denied his request because a trial would delay the expedition. It decided to settle the matter when Alcibiades returned.
 - B. The expedition set sail in early June. With superb ships and the best troops, Athens sailed to conquer Sicily.
 - C. Alcibiades assured the Athenians that they would be welcomed in Italy. But on the Italian peninsula and in Sicily, cities denied entrance to their harbors, arguing that all of Sicily was neutral, part of neither the Athenian nor the Spartan alliance. Only two small cities, Naxos and Catania, would receive the Athenians.
 - D. Alcibiades wanted to remain in Sicily and south Italy to persuade other cities to join Athens, while Nicias argued for a return to Athens and Lamachus sought a strike against Syracuse. Lamachus ultimately sided with Alcibiades, and the expedition spent a year sailing around Sicily before running out of money.
- V.** In the fall, an Athenian prison ship arrived to take Alcibiades home to face charges. His supporters had sailed with him on the expedition; now, his enemies controlled the assembly. Alcibiades jumped ship and disappeared, reaching Sparta and revealing Athens’ presence in Sicily.
- A. In 414 B.C., with Nicias and Lamachus in command, the Athenians finally began the siege of Syracuse.
 - 1. The undertaking was far more difficult than they expected. Lamachus was killed in action, and Nicias, who never wanted war, was left in command.
 - 2. Recall that Thucydides had warned of the “imponderables” in war. Who could have predicted that a scandal would remove Alcibiades from command, Lamachus would be killed, and Nicias would be left in charge of a huge expedition?
 - B. On the advice of Alcibiades, Sparta—backed by Syracuse and Corinth—sent a major force to Sicily. By winter, the war was turning disastrous for Athens. The enemy fleet cut off supplies to the Athenian army, and Sicily was determined to destroy the Athenians.
 - C. The Athenian assembly debated the matter. Casualties were heavy, and the Sicilians had not welcomed the Athenians. But to retreat would be to admit weakness. More men and warships would tip the balance. In spring 413 B.C., a new expeditionary force sailed to conquer Syracuse.

- D. When the new fleet arrived, it found that the Athenian navy had suffered a terrifying defeat. The Syracusans had the Athenians entirely blockaded. After one more naval defeat, the Athenians retreated, under constant harassment, down the coast of Sicily. Finally, Nicias begged the Spartan commander to stop the slaughter.
- E. Nicias was tortured to death by the Syracusans, a fitting end for a man who led so many others to disaster. The surviving Athenians were enslaved, only to die in the rock quarries of Syracuse. Of the thousands of Athenians and hundreds of ships that sailed to conquer Sicily, only a few returned. It was not the destiny Athens had envisioned.

Essential Reading:

Plutarch, *Life of Alcibiades*.

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Books 7–8.

Supplementary Reading:

Hanson, *A War Like No Other*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you refute the argument that democracies are warlike?
2. Pericles told the Athenians that isolationism was not a viable policy for a superpower. Do you agree?

Lecture Twelve

Alexander the Great and the Middle East

Scope: Alexander the Great was uniquely successful among leaders in his ability to solve the problem of the Middle East, yet in Winston Churchill's definition, Alexander was a tyrant. He believed his own ideas and vision were worth the suffering of millions. He was drawn to the Middle East by a complex set of motives seen repeatedly in history: ambition, self-interest, and the sincere desire to lead the world into a new era of peace and prosperity. Alexander applied superior military technology and absolutely ruthless military force to achieve and hold his conquest. He understood the Middle East as a strategic whole. He set out to win the hearts of the Middle East by becoming a Middle Easterner. He ruled not by imposing Greek ideals but by accepting the ethnic and religious diversity of the Middle East and its long tradition of absolute rule.

Outline

- I. Why did ancient Athens fail to conquer Sicily? And why did that failure prove to Thucydides that a democracy cannot rule an empire over the long term?
 - A. The Athenians failed not because their expedition was a bad idea but because it was not executed well. Recall the lesson of history that empires fail because of mistakes in judgment by individual leaders and, in a democracy, by citizens, too.
 1. The Athenians wrongly assumed that the Sicilians would welcome them as liberators.
 2. They underestimated the resistance of Syracuse, another democracy. Once mobilized by the threat of destruction, the Syracusans fought. Democracies, once galvanized, are formidable foes.
 3. Athens mistakenly divided leadership among Alcibiades, Nicias, and Lamachus. In times of crisis, democracies are often unwilling to entrust absolute authority to a leader.
 4. Finally, Athens allowed a scandal to force it into bad decisions. Losing badly in Sicily, the Athenians did not leave but sent another expedition, compounding the disaster. Had the Athenian fleet returned instead, Athens would have lost prestige but kept its armada and army intact.
 - B. Athens' failure led Thucydides to conclude that a democracy cannot rule an empire.
 1. A democracy is fickle—voters change their opinions too often—but an empire requires continuity of policy.
 2. A democracy allows itself to be distracted by silly issues, such as scandals.
 3. In a democracy, voters lack the experience to deal with complicated foreign policy issues.
 4. Democracies lack the will to fight to a conclusion a war whose object is not clearly the survival of the country. Great democratic leaders tell voters clearly why a war is being fought and what the goals are.
 - C. The Founders of the United States shared some of Thucydides's concerns. In the original Constitution, the democratic element in foreign policy is small. The most democratic body in our government, the House of Representatives, has little role in foreign policy. Real control rests with the Senate and the commander-in-chief, the president.
 - D. Our foreign policy today is much more democratically run and subject to the vagaries of the voting public. A chief question of our time is whether a democracy like ours can find a lasting resolution in the Middle East.
- II. Alexander the Great was a world historical figure who brought history to an entirely new level. He is the only leader, so far, to have solved the problem of the Middle East, bringing peace, order, and prosperity to the region by military victory, political settlement, and popular support.
 - A. From the outset of his reign, Alexander desired to conquer the Middle East, including the Persian Empire. He mobilized military and technological forces to achieve his goal and was ruthless in his use of force, both to conquer Persian armies and to quell insurgencies.
 - B. Alexander also became a Middle Easterner. He did not impose Greek values on Middle Eastern people but adopted their ways and customs.

- III.** Alexander was barely in his 20s when his father, King Philip of Macedonia, was assassinated in 336 B.C. Philip had transformed a struggling kingdom on the periphery of the Greek world into a regional superpower with an invincible army and an organized administration.
- A.** The Greek cities elected Philip to lead an expedition against Persia. Its purpose was to liberate the Greek cities along the coast of Asia Minor and to avenge the Greek gods for the Persians' act of sacrilege in burning the temples of Greece.
 - B.** But as we've seen, history is unpredictable. At the outset of the campaign, Philip was killed by an assassin's dagger. Power fell to the young Alexander. No one expected his kingship to last, but this young man, raised by his father to be a soldier and a diplomat and educated by Aristotle, had other ideas.
 - C.** Alexander had a vision of the Middle East as a strategic whole, stretching from today's Pakistan in the east; through Afghanistan and Iran; to Syria, Israel, Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq; and to the Balkans in the west. The Danube River marked its limit.
- IV.** Alexander's first military expedition in 335 B.C. crossed the Danube to the Balkans, a move that secured his rear as he began his campaign and consolidated his power in the area. In spring 334 B.C., Alexander's army landed in Asia Minor. In one summer, Alexander liberated the Greek cities of Asia Minor from Persian rule—a task that Spartan kings had failed at for three years.
- A.** In 333 B.C., Alexander had his first great battle against the army of the Persian king Darius at the River Issus. Alexander defeated the Persians by concentrating maximum force at a critical moment (discussed in The Teaching Company course *Famous Greeks*). Darius fled from the field, and Alexander did not pursue him.
 - B.** With his vision of the Middle East as a strategic whole, Alexander moved systematically down the coastline of Phoenicia (Lebanon). He battered the city of Tyre into submission. He then crossed into Egypt, where his troops spent the winter.
 - C.** In Egypt, Alexander began to understand how to rule the Middle East. Greeks generally regarded Middle Easterners as inferior, but Alexander understood that a significant culture had built the pyramids.
 - 1.** He visited the oracle of the Egyptian god Amon-Ra, equivalent to the Greek god Zeus, and asked how he should rule the world. The priest told him to rule with justice and respect for those under his power, reminding him that he had been sent by the gods to bring peace and order to the world.
 - 2.** Alexander understood that to rule the Middle East, he needed an ideology to bring together the various ethnic groups. *Ideology* is a common set of values that mobilizes a community to work together for a common end.
 - 3.** Alexander understood the history of monarchy as the rule of a just king to whom all could look for fairness and prosperity. From that moment on, he was determined to rule as king of the Middle East.
- V.** Alexander next marched toward Gaugamela [in present-day northern Iraq], where he defeated a huge Persian army. Darius fled again, and Alexander marched into Persepolis, the Persian capital, and was crowned as king of Babylonia.
- A.** Rather than treat the Persians with contempt, Alexander followed their customs. He dressed as a Persian king, learned to speak Persian, and allowed Persians to crawl up to him in an ancient sign of subservience.
 - B.** Alexander tracked down Darius in the summer of 330 B.C. in northern Iran, but he was already dead, perhaps killed by his own men. Alexander treated Darius's body with respect. But as an honor guard carried it back to Persepolis, Alexander had a decree read stating that Darius had failed as a king.
 - C.** Alexander integrated Persians into his army and appointed Persians as provincial governors. Then he began to carry out the systematic conquest of central Asia, what is today Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan.
 - D.** In 327 B.C., he marched into India and won a smashing victory over the Indian maharaja Porus. Once again, he showed magnanimity, asking Porus to help him enlarge the kingdom.
 - E.** Alexander sailed down the River Indus and into the ocean. Having reached the perceived end of the world, he offered up a sacrifice to the gods. His army returned to Babylon, near modern Baghdad. He did not go back to Macedonia but ruled the Middle East from the Middle East.

- F. Alexander's conquests met with much resistance, and he did not deal lightly with insurgencies. When towns and cities revolted, he moved in with absolute force, killed the males, and sold the women and children into slavery. Macedonian officers who opposed giving Middle Easterners positions as governors were also killed.
- VI. Alexander believed that he had been called to govern the Middle East. From 324 to 323 B.C., he began to put his vision into place.
- A. Alexander became convinced that Aristotle was wrong in teaching that Greeks were superior to Middle Easterners. He believed that people should be judged on the basis of their character, not their race or ethnicity.
 - B. To break down prejudices, Alexander turned to marriage. His soldiers married their common-law wives. Alexander's first wife was the daughter of an Afghan war chief. His second and third wives were Persians.
 - C. Alexander dreamed of the human race united under his rule. Conquest was needed to carry out this grand vision, and in 323 B.C., he once again prepared an expedition, this time to Carthage.
 - D. Alexander's vision would not be realized. At age 32, he died of illness in the summer of 323 B.C., leaving a legacy of a true mingling of civilizations.
 - E. Of all the conquerors who passed through the Middle East, only Alexander was revered by Middle Easterners themselves. His success still awes us as we deal with the Middle East today.

Essential Reading:

Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander the Great*.

Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*.

Supplementary Reading:

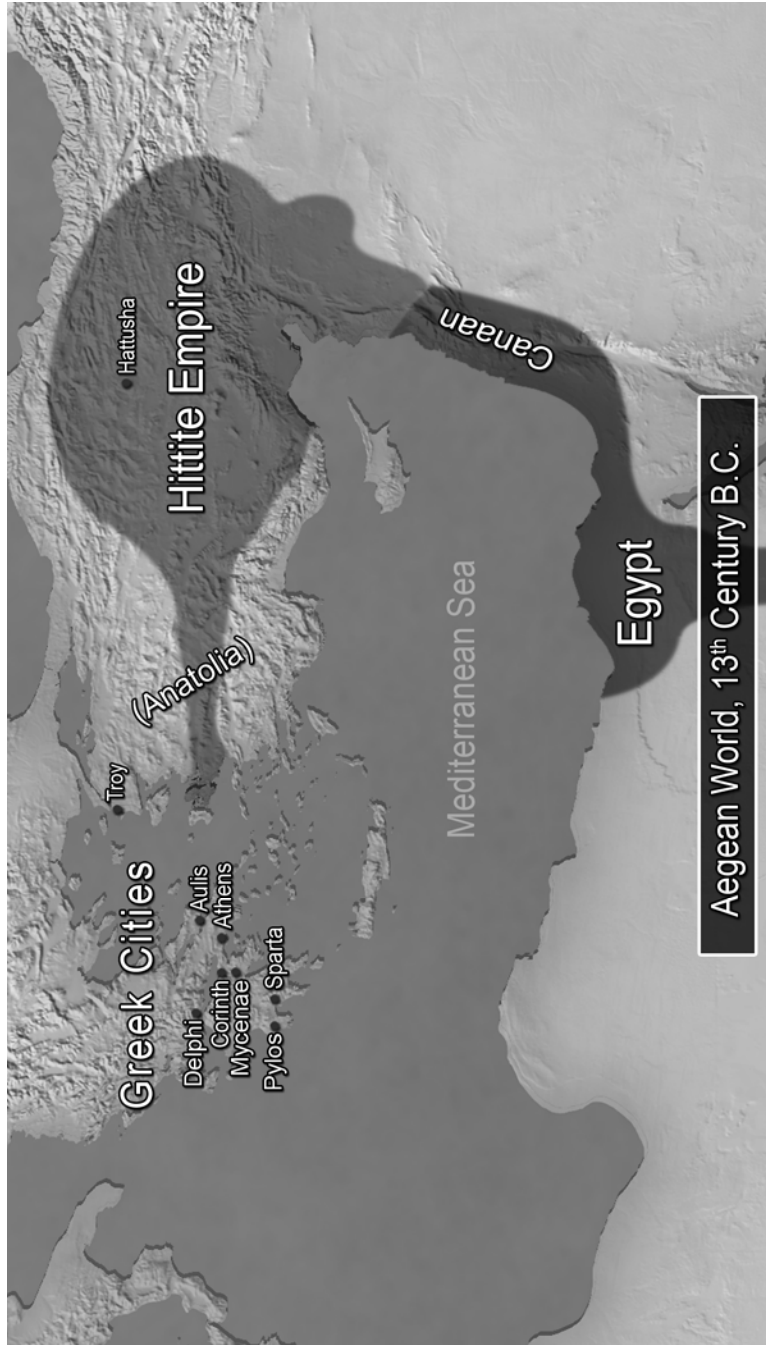
W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can Alexander offer any lessons to modern politicians, or are his times and circumstances too remote to be of any use?
2. Do you believe that the ruthless use of power is applicable to the business world or any other aspect of professional life?

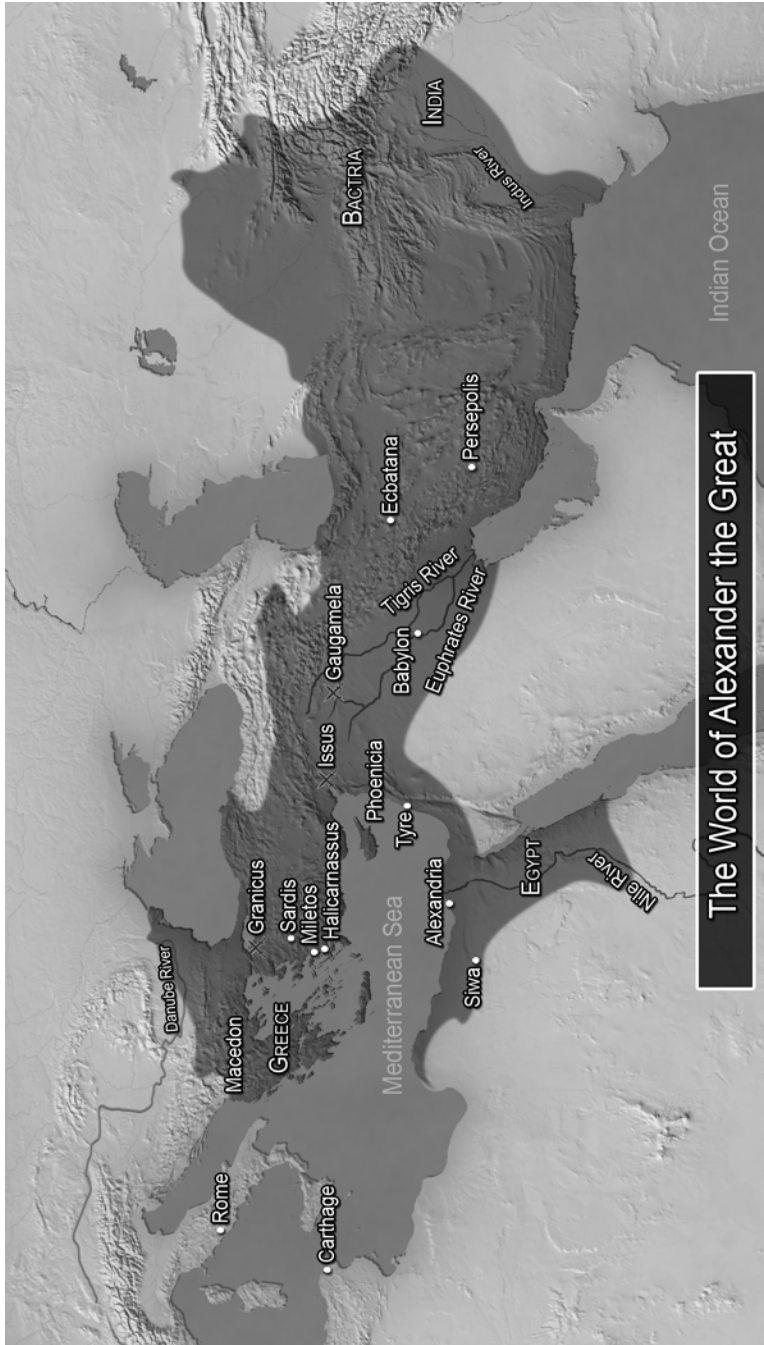








Classical Greece



The World of Alexander the Great

Timeline

B.C.

3000	Birth of civilization in Egypt and the Near East
2500	Pyramids of Giza in Egypt; Indus Valley civilization in India
2000	Stonehenge
1760	Shang Dynasty in China, first historical dynasty in China with writing and bronze artworks
1295–1225	Ramses II, pharaoh of Egypt; historical context for the Exodus
1250–1240	Trojan War
1027–256	Zhou Dynasty in China
1000	Beginning of Sanskrit literature
563–483	Buddha
551–479	Confucius
546–330	Persian Empire conquers and rules the Middle East
490–404	Golden age of Athenian democracy
336–323	Alexander the Great
259–209	Ch'in Shih Huang-ti, first true emperor of all China
218–146	Rise of the Roman Empire
48–31	Julius Caesar and Augustus establish monarchy in the Roman Empire
31 B.C.–180 A.D.	Golden age of the Roman Empire

A.D.

6	Birth of Jesus
312	Conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine to Christianity, which becomes the official religion of the empire
476	Fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe
622	Hegira of Muhammad
800	Charlemagne establishes what will become the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation
988	Russia converts to Greek Orthodox Christianity
1066	Norman Conquest of England
1096–1272	Crusades
1194–1500	Gothic art and architecture dominate Europe
1215	Magna Charta
1155–1227	Genghis Khan
1304–1527	Renaissance
1440–1521	Golden age of the Aztec Empire in Mexico

1453–1683.....	Golden age of the Ottoman Empire
1492.....	Columbus reaches the New World
1517–1648.....	Reformation
1558–1603.....	Queen Elizabeth I of England
1648–1789.....	Age of the Enlightenment
1775–1789.....	American Revolution and Constitution—the Founding
1789–1815.....	French Revolution and Napoleon
1804–1806.....	Lewis and Clark expedition
1804–1824.....	Liberation of Latin America from colonial rule
1816–1914.....	Golden age of the British Empire
1861–1865.....	American Civil War
1914–1918.....	World War I
1929–1953.....	Joseph Stalin rules the Soviet Union
1933–1945.....	Adolf Hitler rules Germany
1939–1945.....	World War II
1945–	Scientific and technological revolution
1948–1976.....	Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong) rules China
1990–	United States as world’s only superpower

The Wisdom of History

Part II

J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.



THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.

David Ross Boyd Professor of Classics, University of Oklahoma

J. Rufus Fears is David Ross Boyd Professor of Classics at the University of Oklahoma, where he holds the G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty. He also serves as the David and Ann Brown Distinguished Fellow of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs. He rose from Assistant Professor to Professor of History at Indiana University and was chosen as Indiana University's first Distinguished Faculty Research Lecturer. From 1986 to 1990, he was Professor of Classical Studies and Chairman of the Department of Classical Studies at Boston University. He is currently the David and Ann Brown Distinguished Fellow of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs.

Professor Fears received his Ph.D. from Harvard University and is an internationally distinguished scholar and author of numerous studies in Greek and Roman history, the history of freedom, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*; *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*; *The Theology of Victory at Rome*; and *The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology*. He has edited a three-volume edition of *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*.

Professor Fears has been a Danforth Fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a Harvard Prize Fellow. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellow, and twice a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Germany. His research has been supported by grants from the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Zarrow Foundation, and the Kerr Foundation. He is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*.

On 24 occasions, Professor Fears has been recognized for outstanding teaching excellence. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, students chose him as University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year. In 2003, he received the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA) Great Plains Region Award for Excellence in Teaching. UCEA is the national association for colleges and universities with continuing education programs. In 2005, Professor Fears received the National Award for Teaching Excellence from UCEA, which cited his "outstanding teaching and contribution to continuing higher education."

In 2005, Professor Fears was the recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. In 2005, students at the University of Oklahoma named him "Most Inspiring Professor." In 2006, the state-wide Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence awarded him its medal for Excellence in College and University Teaching.

Professor Fears is very active in speaking to broader audiences. His comments on the lessons of history for today have appeared on television and in newspapers across the United States. He is a regular guest on national talk radio programs. Each year, he leads study trips to historical sites in Europe and the United States.

The *Wisdom of History* is the sixth course Professor Fears has produced with The Teaching Company. His other courses include *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, *Churchill*, and *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*.

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The Wisdom of History

Scope:

The Wisdom of History is defined as the ability to use the lessons of history to make decisions in the present and to plan for the future. The Founders of the United States used the lessons of history to do just that. The success of our Constitution is enduring testimony to their ability to think historically and, thus, to apply the wisdom of history to the great task of building a new republic in a new world. This course examines the lessons that history might hold for the contemporary United States, particularly in a post-9/11 world. To apply the wisdom of history, we focus on six questions of profound importance for America today:

7. Is there meaning to history? Do we learn from history? And are there consequences to our failure to learn from history?
8. Is freedom a universal value? If so, then why is world history largely a story of tyranny, misery, and war?
9. Why has the history of the world seen the rise and fall of superpowers and empires? Why has the Middle East been, throughout history, the crucible of conflict and the graveyard of empires?
10. What do the lessons of history teach America about the destiny of a nation that is both a democracy and a superpower?
11. How do we distinguish between a politician and a statesman, and what makes a great leader in a time of crisis?
12. What will the wisdom of history teach later generations about America and its place in history?

The Wisdom of History builds upon five earlier courses from The Teaching Company: *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, *Winston Churchill*, and *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*. Produced in the fall of 2000, *A History of Freedom* traced the idea of freedom in Europe and the United States. *Famous Greeks* and *Famous Romans* were courses in Classical history emphasizing the outstanding individuals who made that history. *Winston Churchill* was a detailed examination of an individual statesman who changed the history of the world. *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life* was a search for universal moral and religious values through a study of seminal works of literature that still speak to each of us.

The Wisdom of History distills the narrative of these courses into broad thematic lessons. Far more, however, *The Wisdom of History* reflects my own intellectual growth and the transformation of our country in the wake of September 11, 2001. This terrorist attack upon our country is a watershed in American history and presents the United States with a challenge as profound as the American Revolution, the Civil War, and World War II. *The Wisdom of History* was conceived in my conviction that if America and its leaders are to meet that challenge, then we must learn and apply the lessons of history.

September 11 and the ensuing American involvement in the Middle East forces Americans to consider anew their naïve belief that we are immune to the laws of history that have marked the destiny of every empire and democracy before us. The Middle East barely appeared in our consideration of *A History of Freedom* and only tangentially in *Famous Greeks* and *Famous Romans*. Our foreign policy since 9/11 places the Middle East at center stage in our reflections on the lessons of history.

Current foreign policy is a continuation of our belief at least since World War I that America must make the world safe for democracy. However, the simple empirical lesson of history is that freedom is not a universal value. Throughout history, nations, like many individuals, have chosen the perceived security of autocratic rule over the awesome responsibilities of self-government. This has been the historic choice of the ancient and modern Middle East, China, Russia, and Latin America. Having chosen autocracy over freedom, these areas of the world received little attention in *A History of Freedom*. They now play a major role as we ask why world history is primarily a story of tyranny, oppression, and war.

The repetition of such a tale of woe suggests that the ancient Greeks and Romans and the Founders of the United States were correct in their assessment that history is cyclical. Because human nature never changes, similar circumstances will always produce similar events. Because human nature prevents our learning from history, we are doomed to repeat it. Thus we consider, as did the Founders, the portentous lessons to be learned from the rise and fall of the democracies and empires of the past. However, the Founders also believed that these cycles of rise and fall could be delayed, even broken, by leaders and citizens wise enough to guide themselves by the lessons of history.

In the American Revolution, the Civil War, and World War II and the Cold War, democracy proved its superiority to dictatorships in producing leaders worthy of the challenge. However, such leaders were but a reflection of the robust love of freedom held by their fellow citizens. We conclude our course by asking if we can find in the lessons of history the wisdom to choose such leaders today and what the lessons of history teach us as private individuals, as well as citizens.

To find these answers, we begin our course in Lecture One by defining what we mean by the *wisdom of history* and by stating in bold terms the 10 primary lessons of history that we shall learn in this course.

Lectures Two through Four ponder the history of the 20th century and our own brief new millennium as evidence of the first lesson of history, that is, that we do not learn from history.

Throughout the 20th century and still today, we Americans continue to believe that freedom is a universal value. All men and women in all places and times want freedom. However, this belief flies in the face of the lessons of history. In Lecture Five, we define what we mean by *freedom* and explore the unique character of freedom in the United States.

The lessons of history teach us that freedom is not a universal value. Power and empire are, in fact, the universal values of human history. The core of our course, Lectures Six through Twenty-Six, discusses the lessons of the superpowers of the past for America today.

In Lectures Seven through Nine, we ask why the Middle East has been the crucible of conflict and the graveyard of empires throughout history.

The United States is both a democracy and a superpower. In Lectures Ten through Twelve, we follow the Founders of our country in reflecting on the lessons of the ancient Athenian democracy for a modern nation intent on bringing the values of democracy to the entire world. To these same Founders, Rome, as well as Athens, was a model for our new republic. Lectures Thirteen through Sixteen consider the lessons that the rise and fall of the Roman Empire hold for the contemporary United States.

The fall of the Roman Empire took place amidst the rise of Christianity and Islam. Lectures Seventeen and Eighteen examine religion as a primary force for historical transformation and the rise and fall of empires.

The United States has inherited the consequences of the imperial powers of the last five centuries in Europe, the Middle East, the Far East, and Latin America. Lectures Nineteen through Twenty-Five discuss the lessons of these great empires and their enduring impact on contemporary politics throughout the world.

The lessons of history might make us pessimists. Our Founders knew the lessons of history but remained optimists. For them, as for us, history should be a guide, not a straight jacket. In Lectures Twenty-Six through Thirty-Four, we have as our theme America and the unique course the United States has charted in world history. Here, we find our models for what distinguishes a true statesman and leader from the politicians, tyrants, and tin-pot dictators who strut across the stage of history. We ask whether by combining the legacy of the past with the power of modern technology, the United States can chart a new course in history.

The Founders believed that history has profound lessons for the individual as well as the nation. We conclude our course in Lectures Thirty-Five and Thirty-Six by addressing the lessons of history for you and me as citizens and as private individuals.

Lecture Thirteen

The Roman Republic as Superpower

Scope: America is an empire founded to spread freedom across a continent and the world. This idea would not have surprised our Founders. But the Founders would have worried about what history teaches concerning the consequences of empire for a free republic. Republican Rome was their model, but they feared that one day America would come to resemble Rome of the Caesars. History teaches that it is difficult to be a superpower with a constitution designed for a small city-state, such as Rome, or for 13 struggling republics along the eastern seaboard of North America. Rome was ultimately forced to choose whether to remain a republic or become a superpower. Its choice determined the future of Europe and the Middle East down to our own day.

Outline

- I. The next four lectures focus on the lessons of the Roman Empire for America today.
 - A. Alexander the Great left no heir when he died. His generals carved up his empire, including Ptolemy in Egypt and Seleucus in Syria.
 - B. The Romans inherited Alexander's vision to build and run the most successful empire in history. The Roman Republic was the model for the Founders of our country, both of vices to be avoided and virtues to be emulated.
 - C. The historians Polybius and Edward Gibbon studied the Roman Empire as a model for the present and the future. They looked for examples to be followed by future statesmen and individuals.
 1. Writing in the 2nd century B.C., Polybius attributed the Roman Empire's early success to a balanced constitution and the fact that every Roman citizen was inculcated with civic virtue.
 2. Writing in the 1770s and 1780s, Gibbon traced the decline of the Roman Empire, in part as a lesson to the British Empire of his day, which seemed intent on following the course of Rome.
- II. Rome began as a small city by the Tiber River. In 509 B.C., the Romans drove out the last of their kings and swore never again to have a monarch. From then on, Rome was a republic, a representative government in which the people are sovereign.
 - A. The *balanced constitution* of Rome mixed three fundamental elements: broad popular support (the democratic element), leadership by a small group of wise advisors (the aristocratic element), and strong executive leadership (the monarchical element).
 - B. The Roman constitution rested power in two elected *consuls*, executives whose primary function was to serve as commanders-in-chief. One consul's "no" vote could override the other's "yes" vote. When they had an army in the field, their power was absolute—except over the purse strings, which were controlled by the Senate.
 - C. The Senate was indirectly elected, as our Senate was originally. In Rome, a man who reached a certain step on the ladder of offices could be brought into the Senate by its members, where he served for life unless removed by the Senate. About 300 senators controlled the purse strings and guided foreign policy.
 - D. The senators could not make law, but traditionally, no law was presented to the people without the recommendation of the Senate. The Roman people were the ultimate sovereigns. They elected magistrates, decided questions of war and peace, and passed all laws.
- III. In Rome, every citizen was taught to be a patriot. Fathers taught their children to read and write and about Roman history and traditions. The Roman army was a citizen militia of males 18 and older. The Romans believed that a professional standing army had no purpose except to oppress the liberties of a free people.
 - A. Our Founding Fathers believed that Rome had risen to greatness because of the moral fiber of its people. The Romans were pious people who believed that the gods had chosen them to rule an empire. They were faithful and honest. Allies were protected; enemies were destroyed.

- B. The Romans did not believe in preemptive or undeclared wars, but they were warriors first and foremost, always defending their liberty. The proudest claim a Roman could make was to have fought for his country.
 - C. In its long history, ancient Rome was officially at peace only twice. Through war and diplomacy, Rome united small tribes into the Latin League. Step by step, Rome expanded until, by the year 270 B.C., it was the master of Italy up to the Po River.
 - D. The Romans established a coalition of all Italian city-states, including the Greeks of the south, tying each of them to Rome by individual alliances.
- IV.** Soon after Italy was unified, Rome went to war with Carthage (264–241 B.C.); the conflict was justified, in the Roman view, because the Carthaginians had attacked Roman allies. This was a naval war, but Rome was not a naval power and lost many battles.
- A. But the Romans did not give up. After failing to build efficient ships of their own, they captured a Carthaginian ship, put it on a beach, and taught themselves to row. Finally, they defeated the Carthaginians. As a result, Rome gained its first overseas territory, Sicily.
 - B. Carthage, a great commercial city, and Rome, an agrarian democracy, struggled for dominance in the western Mediterranean. They fought again in an all-out war from 218 to 201 B.C. Again, Rome saw itself as the victim of Carthaginian aggression.
 - 1. Hannibal, Carthage’s military genius, invaded the lands of Rome. In three great battles, he killed one in four Italians of military age and threatened Rome itself.
 - 2. Rome conquered Carthage, then turned to the kingdoms of the Hellenistic east. By 167 B.C., Rome was master of the Mediterranean world.
 - C. Rome became a superpower, dominant militarily, politically, and economically. Its statesmen learned Greek, the language of diplomacy and culture, and Greek ideas were adapted to fit a Roman mold. The favored philosophy of Rome was the Stoic view of a world ruled by those worthy to be its masters.
- V.** Rome, the empire and the republic, offers fascinating history lessons. The Founders of the United States regarded it with both awe and trepidation.
- A. The Founders believed that a nation with a balanced constitution vitalized by citizens’ civic virtue would expand, as Rome had done. They also believed, along with Polybius and Gibbon, that empire brings with it dangerous consequences. Among them, the ancients believed, were wealth and contact with foreigners, which corrode civic virtue and destroy the constitution.
 - B. The Spartans recognized this danger, which is why they were reluctant to build an empire after defeating the Persians. They did not want to destroy their civic virtue.
 - C. The Founders asked, as the Romans did, whether a republic can rule as a superpower. By the 1st century B.C., Rome was trying to rule an empire with a constitution made for a small city-state by the Tiber.
 - D. Similarly, the United States is a superpower with a constitution made for 13 struggling republics along the eastern seaboard. Our constitution is based on the Roman constitution, both made for small city-states.
- VI.** By 70 B.C., the weaknesses in Rome’s government were clear. The empire’s wealth had completely corrupted the powerful Senate. In fact, wealth corroded every aspect of Roman political life.
- A. Ordinary Romans were better off than ever, but the gulf between wealthy businessmen and senators and ordinary citizens was huge. Money eroded the political process. The only way to get elected in 70 B.C. was to spend lavishly.
 - B. To get citizens’ votes, politicians sponsored gladiatorial games. Wealthy businessmen traded campaign contributions for political favors. Newly elected provincial governors recouped their campaign expenses by plundering the provinces.
 - C. The Senate and the governors reflected the corruption of the ordinary Roman. The small farmer was almost gone in Italy by the 1st century B.C. Rome replaced its citizen militia with a professional army. The Founders traced the demise of Roman liberty to the decision to give up the citizen militia.

- D. Rome had always resolved its differences peacefully and for the good of the country. Now, there were two major political parties, the Optimates and the Populares.
1. The Optimates stood for old moral values. They supported political reforms from within the Senate.
 2. The Populares—which literally means “democrats”—believed that Rome needed more democracy, not less. It needed leaders responsive to the popular will.

- VII. Rome had a serious problem in 70 B.C. with pirates who terrorized the Mediterranean and took hostages, including senators’ wives held for ransom. One hostage, a young student named Julius Caesar, later caught the perpetrators and had them crucified.
- A. When the Senate failed to stop this network of terrorists, the citizens gave absolute power to Cnaeus Pompey, a military commander. In six months, he destroyed the terrorist network.
 - B. The people, again overriding the Senate, made Pompey commander-in-chief, with absolute authority in the Middle East. To handle the rogue regime of Mithradates, Pompey used ruthless force, annexing some areas and turning others into client states dominated by Rome.
 - C. The Romans had lost confidence in their republican government. They stood at a crossroads and asked: Do we wish to be a superpower or a free republic? Do we want a dictator who will give us good government, the wealth and prestige of empire, and personal freedom, or do we want the awesome, toilsome responsibility of self-government?

Essential Reading:

Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire*, Book VI.

Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, pp. 94–115.

Supplementary Reading:

Fears, *Famous Romans*, Lectures One through Fourteen.

Starr, *The Emergence of Rome*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What other parallels between the Roman Republic and the United States occur to you?
2. Based on what they learned from Roman history, the Founders of our country believed that a large professional army was a danger to the liberty of a republic. Do you agree?

Lecture Fourteen

Rome of the Caesars as Superpower

Scope: The Roman Empire was, in the terms of its day, a global empire, marked by a global economy, a global culture, and a global political world. The Roman Empire conjures up visions of oppression, because we tend to see a dichotomy between the ideals of empire and those of freedom. In fact, the Roman Empire did far more than the Roman Republic to advance the cause of individual freedom. The Roman Empire offers a model of how to achieve peace and prosperity over a large geographical area, while securing individual rights, ethnic autonomy, and local political freedom. The Romans grew to the challenge of empire and provide an enduring model that an empire can be a great force for the public good and world peace and prosperity. The model of the Roman Empire teaches the lesson that we must judge an empire by the values for which it stands.

The Roman Empire was an age of creativity with few parallels in history. It was, in its own way, as creative as our own age of technology and science. As America today builds upon the intellectual heritage of Europe, so Rome built upon its legacy from Greece. In art, literature, and architecture, the Roman Empire laid the cultural foundations for the next 1,000 years of European history. Roman science and medicine shaped the history of both the medieval Christian and Muslim worlds. In law and religion, the legacy was even greater and remains with us today on a daily basis.

Outline

- I.** By the 1st century B.C., the Roman Empire, the superpower of its day, began to crack under the weight of its wealth, political scandals, and other problems. A gridlocked Senate could not resolve pressing social, economic, or foreign policy issues.
 - A.** As a result, ordinary citizens lost faith in republican freedom. They wanted a leader who would solve Rome's political problems and give them prosperity and individual freedom.
 - B.** Julius Caesar and his adopted son, Augustus Caesar, solved these problems and introduced two centuries of unparalleled peace and prosperity throughout the empire. Julius Caesar was a great general and a visionary politician. Augustus Caesar was probably the most successful statesman in history.
 - C.** Julius Caesar believed that Rome could no longer stand as a republic. It needed a strong leader. By 44 B.C., he had risen to supreme power as dictator for life.
 - D.** After Caesar's assassination, Augustus came to power, knowing that the Roman citizens still wanted to think of themselves as free. He left in place the façade of the old republican constitution but held all real power himself.
 - E.** The Roman Empire of the 1st and 2nd centuries B.C. provides a uniquely instructive lesson in history. The Roman people gave up political freedom in return for individual freedom and to remain a superpower. Rome became a military dictatorship of the Caesars—Augustus, Nero, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius.
- II.** The vast Roman Empire of the 1st and 2nd centuries B.C. stretched from Britain to Iraq, from the forests of Germany to the sands of the Sahara. It included what is today western and central Europe, parts of the Middle East, and northern Africa.
 - A.** One language, Latin, was spoken throughout the empire. One coinage united commerce. One law protected all inhabitants. Roman citizens' individual rights were more clearly defined under the empire than they had been under the Roman Republic.
 - B.** High-quality roads and bridges crossed the empire—some are still used today. A free-market economy brought the goods of the world to citizens. It was an age of social mobility, in which men were born slaves, bought their freedom, and became multimillionaires.
 - C.** The seas were kept clear of pirates and terrorism, thanks to a professional army of 360,000 soldiers. The Roman troops were drawn evenly between citizens and noncitizens. By serving in the army for 25 years, the latter became Roman citizens. By 212 A.D., every freeborn inhabitant of the Roman Empire became a citizen. Thus, a city had grown into the entire world.

- D.** Rome was a tolerant empire. The emperors built temples to the gods of Gaul and Egypt and were regarded as pharaohs in Egypt. This tolerance spawned tremendous creativity.
 - 1.** The basis of science was established during the empire for the next 1,000 years of European civilization. Galen's medical textbooks were used in Europe in the 15th century A.D. Ptolemy's map of the world was still the standard in Europe in 1492.
 - 2.** The architectural foundations for the next 1,000 years were laid. The Pantheon, designed by the emperor Hadrian (117–138 A.D.), spawned the intellectual framework and construction techniques for Gothic cathedrals.
 - 3.** In art, the Column of Trajan portrayed military campaigns in narrative reliefs. The use of such visual forms to convey the message of imperial victory became the basis of Christian mosaics in churches of the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. in Rome.
 - E.** Christianity spread over this vast empire. The early church fathers believed that it had been God's will to send a Messiah to the world in the age of Augustus to ensure peace and spread the Gospel.
 - F.** In the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., the foundations of Roman law were laid, and this law became the basis of the legal codes of France, Germany, Italy, and Latin America.
- III.** The Roman imperial system produced a set of able, dedicated leaders with few parallels in history. Augustus shaped the empire. Claudius conquered Britain and began administrative changes that would create one of the best civil service organizations of its time. There were no grand wars or struggles. Historian Edward Gibbon described this age, the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., as the happiest in human history.
- A.** The civil service of the Roman Empire in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. was large but efficient. The bureaucrats saw their mission as bringing peace and order to the world.
 - B.** The Roman Empire was multicultural and diverse. The Romans did not force inhabitants to learn Latin or Greek or prohibit the worship of native gods.
 - C.** The empire was also expansionistic. Claudius conquered Britain, and Trajan carried out a long, successful war against the Dacians in what is now Romania.
 - D.** The imperial age was one of philanthropy. Many Roman ruins seen today—aqueducts, baths, and gymnasiums—were the gifts of successful, civic-minded Roman citizens. Emperors sponsored professors and other learned commentators.
 - E.** In this prosperous free-market economy, citizens paid taxes to support roads and other public benefits. The Roman emperors understood personal investment and its benefits for the general economy.
- IV.** The emperor and his advisors made all important decisions, but government otherwise was decentralized. Local political life was extremely active. However, foreign policy problems remained difficult to resolve, particularly on the frontiers of the empire.
- A.** Augustus was a shrewd judge of the limits of expansion. He tested the waters first in the Near East, where he came to an understanding with Iran.
 - B.** In 9 A.D., the Romans decided to expand into German lands, then ruled by tribes. Three legions marched into Germany and were destroyed. The Roman army stopped at the Rhine River. Augustus saw no purpose in expanding deep into Germany.
 - C.** Augustus also set limits in the Middle East, along the northern border (central Europe), and to the south (northern Africa).
- V.** Augustus Caesar inherited the throne of the Roman emperor at age 19 after the assassination of Julius Caesar. He returned to Rome from Greece, raised an army, and punished the assassins. By 31 B.C., he had risen to supreme power over the Roman world.
- A.** The world he inherited was in the midst of chaos and economic disaster. The provinces wanted to break away. The Roman people were disenchanted. Augustus Caesar revived the empire, step by step.
 - B.** In 27 B.C., Augustus announced his retirement from political life, leaving his successors to determine how to govern the provinces and maintain prosperity. In a carefully orchestrated demonstration, the Senate begged him to stay. Thus, Augustus held onto a few of his powers, and those powers would grow over the

years. His new name, Emperor Caesar Divi Filius Augustus, meant the “Conquering General Caesar, the Son of God, Augustus, the Messiah.”

1. *Imperator* expressed his absolute domination of the army. As *Caesar*, he continued the vision of the Roman Empire under an absolute ruler, bringing peace and prosperity to all. *Divi Filius* was not blasphemy but literally meant that Augustus was the son of the deified Caesar, who had risen to the stars. The best rendition of *Augustus* is “the Messiah.”
2. Across the empire, he was hailed as the “prince of peace,” the savior of the human race. Through his wisdom, prudence, and patriotism, Augustus created a model empire.

Essential Reading:

Fears, “Natural Law.”

Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapters I–III.

Supplementary Reading:

Kelly, *The Roman Empire*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that a global economy ensures peace?
2. The Romans saw national freedom of the many ethnic groups in the empire as disruptive forces. Does that have lessons for today?

Lecture Fifteen

Rome and the Middle East

Scope: The Middle East offers a key to understanding the history of Rome. Rome first became involved in the Middle East out of self-interest and treaty obligations. It began with military intervention against a rogue regime. The Romans were then forced into nation building, then occupation, and finally, annexation. Terrorism was linked to the Middle East throughout the Roman Empire. The problems of the Middle East were fundamental to the failure of Rome's republican constitution and, later, to the fall of its empire. The attempt of the Romans to bring stability, peace, and Roman political values to Judea illustrates why the Romans found the problems of the Middle East so intractable.

Outline

- I.** Of all the areas ruled by the Roman Empire, the Middle East was the most problematic. The Romans never fully solved the region's problems, and this failure ultimately led to the fall of the empire. The area of Judea, now Israel, was particularly troubling.
 - A.** In 6 A.D., Augustus Caesar received a delegation from Judea, seeking Roman annexation of the region. Judea had long been under Roman domination but not direct control. Augustus wanted to leave Judea, with its many feuding ethnic groups, as a client state of the Roman Empire.
 - B.** On the other hand, Judea was strategically vital to Rome because it was next to Egypt, an important source of grain. Much of Egypt's grain was brought to Italy, where it kept bread prices low and the people happy.
 - C.** Across the Roman border was the empire of Persia (Iran), which had made a peace agreement with Augustus in 19 B.C. Julius Caesar had dreamed of conquering Persia, but Augustus knew his limits. If he stirred up the Iranians, they might invade with their formidable army.
 - D.** With much concern, Augustus decided to annex Judea. The Romans sought to build a Judea that was technically independent but under Roman control, with basic Roman forms of government and a king who functioned as a client king of Rome. The Judeans didn't want a king, however; they wanted to be part of the Roman Empire.
- II.** The annexation treaty set down the rights and privileges of the Jewish people in Judea, who had largely supported the Caesars.
 - A.** For example, Augustus agreed that the Romans' regional capital would be in Caesarea, not Jerusalem. In addition, Roman coins that circulated inside Judea would not have the image of the emperor on them, in keeping with the Second Commandment's ban on graven images.
 - B.** Also in Judea were a number of other ethnic groups, including the Samaritans and Greeks, both native Greeks and those who had adopted Greek customs and language.
 - C.** The Gospels and the book of Acts offer insight into the problems the Romans faced in the Middle East and why the region proved so troublesome. In the Gospel of Luke, for example, we read that the first task of the annexation was to carry out a census so that everyone could be taxed. Many Jewish people opposed the census and the tax. Judeans already harbored much resentment over foreign influence.
 - D.** For a group called the zealots—who were terrorists in Roman eyes—any foreign occupation broke God's commandment that he alone was king of Israel. From the beginning of Roman annexation, they stalked the streets of Jerusalem and other cities, killing Roman soldiers. They saw themselves as fighting for the freedom of Israel.
 - 1.** By these acts of terrorism, the zealots hoped to provoke a Roman military response that would unite the Jewish people and foment a rebellion against Roman rule.
 - 2.** They and others sought to establish a new kingdom of Israel, which would regain its status as a mighty power.
- III.** One incident recounted in the Gospels reveals why the Middle East proved so intractable.
 - A.** A teacher, Jesus, aroused hostility among influential Jews in Judea, including the Pharisees, who were also teachers, and the Sadducees, important citizens whose worship was connected with the temple.

- B. The Pharisees and Sadducees began to prepare a dossier on Jesus and brought his activities to the attention of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.
 - 1. Pilate, a typical Roman civil servant, wanted to resolve the situation without making waves or calling attention to himself in Rome.
 - 2. Pilate also knew that Augustus's successor, Tiberius, was a suspicious, paranoid old man, not unlike Joseph Stalin. Tiberius put to death any governor he thought was weak on treason.
 - C. Passover was a sacred Jewish holiday and the most difficult time of year in Judea. The Roman governor had permission to call up more troops to prevent riots. As in other parts of the empire, the governor also relied on a local council to handle community matters. Judea's council, the Sanhedrin, consisted of 71 leading Jewish citizens, including Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - D. The Sanhedrin had found Jesus guilty of blasphemy and brought him to Pilate, who reminded them that blasphemy was not a crime under Roman law. Even Jesus, who was not a Roman citizen, had basic guarantees of individual freedom.
 - 1. The Sanhedrin insisted that Jesus be put to death, charged him with treason, and threatened to contact Tiberius if Pilate did not find him guilty.
 - 2. Pilate tried to pardon Jesus but ultimately caved in to the crowd. Deemed a traitor by the Romans, Jesus was executed by crucifixion.
- IV. With the spread of Christianity, more problems arose in Judea. All the Roman governors were worried about ethnic violence, and in Judea, a Roman citizen, Paul, was spreading the Gospel and inciting riots.
- A. In traveling about the empire, Paul was protected by his status as a Roman citizen. By 64 A.D., however, the Roman government turned against this new religious group in Judea, and Paul and Peter perished in the first of many persecutions.
 - B. This persecution shows the character of Roman rule in the Middle East. The Jews were protected and were not required to worship the Roman emperor as a god. But the Christians were not protected and were put to death for refusing to worship the emperor, as required of all Roman citizens.
 - C. The situation in Judea worsened. The Romans tried to let each ethnic group rule itself, but time and again, violence broke out. In 66 A.D., this violence became a full-scale insurgency. The Romans regarded the instigators as terrorists, but the Jews saw themselves as freedom fighters.
 - 1. In 70 A.D., under a new emperor [Vespasian], Jerusalem was captured and the Jewish temple was destroyed. A small group of Jews held out in the fortress of Masada, but a Roman army slowly battered it into submission. The Jewish patriots killed themselves and their families rather than surrender.
 - 2. Even today, Israeli army recruits take their oath of allegiance at Masada, where their ancestors fought so bravely. Judea, known to us from the New Testament, is the most important example of Rome's intractable problems in the Middle East.

Essential Reading:

Gospel of John and Book of Acts.

Josephus, *The Jewish War*.

Supplementary Reading:

Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31 B.C.–A.D. 337*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. Augustus believed that Iran was the key to stability in the Middle East. Do you agree?
- 2. The decision of Augustus about Iran in 19 B.C. was based on a prudent assessment of Rome's resources. Should America make that same assessment in terms of its policy in the Middle East?

Lecture Sixteen

Why the Roman Empire Fell

Scope: Since the time Rome was declining and falling, historians and moralists have tried to explain why. The Middle East provides a major key. Rome's involvement in the Middle East became a quagmire from which the Romans could not withdraw. It strained the military and financial resources of the empire. More than that, focus on the Middle East distracted the Roman emperors from other critical foreign policy issues, especially in central Europe among the Germanic and other tribes that the Romans considered barbarians. Despite Rome's efforts, Iran could not be drawn into the Roman orbit. Ultimately, Iran, revitalized by religious fundamentalism, and the Germanic tribes united to shatter the Roman order. The fall of the Roman Empire is one more illustration of the lesson that the Middle East is the graveyard of empire.

Outline

- I. In this last lecture on the Roman Empire, we learn a crucial lesson from the study of history: The Roman Empire offers a model of how a superpower can bring peace and prosperity to a large part of the world over an extended period of time. The Romans achieved this feat in three ways.
 - A. The empire used complete military dominance and ruthless force when necessary.
 - B. It allowed ethnic groups to govern themselves internally and respected their customs and values.
 - C. At the same time, it recognized that every nation, even a superpower, must have a common set of shared values.
 1. The Roman emperors fostered the cults of many different divinities, but all with the idea that to be moral, people need gods and that Classical Greek culture offered the right moral values for the empire.
 2. Under Roman rule, Greek civilization throughout the eastern Mediterranean underwent a renaissance. It was a new age of excellence in Greek art, literature, and philosophy. Roman emperors from Julius Caesar to Marcus Aurelius wrote and spoke in Greek.
 3. Greek moral tradition embodied the ideals of Stoicism, a philosophy that taught that there is only one all-beneficent God. That God had planned everything to happen in accordance with his will and had willed the Roman Empire and everyone's place in it. The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–180 A.D.) reveal his belief that a common set of moral values should unite the empire.
- II. Given that it fell, how can the Roman Empire be a model for us? Pericles told us that all things human will pass away. Who doubts that we, too, will pass away? Five hundred years from now, archaeologists may probe the ruins of American cities.
 - A. For more than 200 years, the Roman Empire was a superpower that brought peace and prosperity to the world. That accomplishment alone makes it an important model.
 - B. Some people assume that we are immune to any lessons from the Roman Empire because of our science, technology, and global economy. That theory is nonsense, as we saw in the lessons of World War I.
 1. The Romans did not possess atomic weapons, but the Roman army itself was a formidable weapon of mass destruction. The wrath of the Romans often meant ethnic cleansing.
 2. We have a global economy and an information superhighway, but the Roman economy was also global. Traders traveled across the empire, and there was economic unity all the way to China.
 3. In modern times, our advanced technology does not prevent human suffering.
- III. A fundamental lesson of history is that human nature never changes. Since the Roman Empire collapsed in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., thinkers have tried to understand its decline and fall.
 - A. St. Augustine noted a collapse in morality of the Roman people, which he said brought on the wrath of God and the fall of the empire.
 - B. Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* blamed the extinction of political liberty. Having given up their political freedom—the patriotism and civic virtue that sparked their imperial greatness—the Romans were an empty shell.

- C. William Hooper, who signed the Declaration of Independence, wrote that Rome at its height was like the British Empire. The British were trying to extinguish political liberty in America as they had done at home—and as the Roman Caesars had done in their time.
 - D. The moral dimension of the fall of the Roman Empire is a valid argument, especially considering the empire’s culture of violence.
 - 1. The defeated Judeans were brought back to amphitheaters, such as the Colosseum in Rome, where people fought to the death. Gladiators were the heroes of the day.
 - 2. Even after buying their way out of slavery, many gladiators stayed in the arena because they loved the accolades of the crowd. The Romans enjoyed this vicarious violence.
 - 3. The Roman poet and satirist Juvenal spoke of “bread and circuses,” meaning that the Romans had given up their freedom for the enjoyment of food and entertainment.
- IV.** The Roman Empire held together numerous ethnic groups, not by patriotism—as the old republic had done—but by prosperity. These various ethnic groups enjoyed the benefits of Roman rule, but many of them never fully embraced Rome. Rome was emulated and praised at the same time that it was hated.
- V.** Rome is testimony to our lesson that empires rise and fall because of specific decisions by individual leaders. Given that human nature never changes, the same mistakes are made again and again throughout history. The Roman Empire ultimately fell because its leaders failed to solve critical foreign-policy issues in central Europe and the Middle East.
- A. For the Romans, central Europe was the vast land across the Rhine and Danube Rivers, which today includes Germany, Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus. This area was inhabited by fiercely independent German tribes.
 - B. Rome first intervened in the Middle East in the 2nd century B.C. The Caesars tried military intervention, nation building—reconstruction on the basis of Roman political values—and occupation, but nothing brought true peace.
 - 1. In Judea, under the emperor Hadrian, a new Jewish revolt broke out. It was put down with much brutality, amidst ethnic violence and civil war. The Romans destroyed the Jewish temple and turned Jerusalem into a Roman colony.
 - 2. The Iranian Empire was another major issue. This empire stretched through today’s Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan.
 - a. The Iranians, whom the Romans called Parthians, were Persian but influenced by Greek culture. They believed in a free-market economy. They had a formidable army that had defeated the Romans repeatedly.
 - b. Augustus made peace with Iran and brought it into his sphere of influence. In contrast, Julius Caesar, before his assassination, had planned to lead an expedition to conquer and annex Iran.
 - C. Like Julius Caesar, Trajan (r. 98–117 A.D.) solved Rome’s foreign-policy problems by military conquest. He was a warrior by nature and a shrewd administrator.
 - 1. Trajan made conquests along the Danube and exterminated the Dacians of central Europe
 - 2. He then led his army east and began the conquest of Parthia, starting in Iraq. City after city fell to him, but insurgencies broke out in his wake. Trajan died in the midst of this fighting.
 - D. Looking back to Augustus, Trajan’s successor, Hadrian, rejected total conquest and sought to limit the empire’s expansion.
 - 1. Trajan had planned to conquer Germany and Scotland, but Roman rule extended only to the northern limits of England. Hadrian built that massive Roman wall in England, still the supreme symbol of Rome north of the Alps.
 - 2. In Germany, he erected a similar ring of forts and a wall along the Danube. In the Middle East, he put up fortifications along the frontier with Parthia. He literally walled the Roman Empire in and tried to wall out its foreign-policy problems.
- VI.** In the 2nd century A.D., the empire still held together, although the problem of the Middle East remained. Marcus Aurelius sought to conquer Iran one more time, but his troops brought back a plague that devastated the empire, weakening its manpower for generations to come.

- A. In the 3rd century A.D., the Parthians were overthrown, and a new native Persian dynasty, the Sassanids, took power. They ravaged the Roman Empire in the east, while new coalitions of Germanic tribes swept into the empire in the north.
- B. Rome beat back these attacks on two fronts, but the empire that emerged was fundamentally changed. The army became bloated and inefficient. Taxes on the middle class were onerous. The bureaucracy became a huge, swollen force. Above all, the sense of loyalty to Rome disappeared. Many citizens stopped supporting the empire.
- C. In the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., German princes dwelled in the ruined palaces of the Caesars in Italy. In the east, under the banners of Islam in the 7th century, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa were swept away. The Roman Empire became a relic.

Essential Reading:

Fears, *The Lessons of the Roman Empire for America Today*.

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter 38.

Supplementary Reading:

Ermatinger, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What lessons do you think the Roman Empire can teach us today about how a superpower might bring peace, prosperity, and stability to our world?
2. Why did the Roman emperors fail to follow the example of Alexander and conquer Iran?

Lecture Seventeen

Christianity

Scope: The rise and spread of Christianity occurred fully within the historical framework of the Roman Empire. The triumph of Christianity came with its adoption as the official religion of the empire by the emperor Constantine and his successors in the 4th century A.D. In an important fashion, the triumph of Christianity was a triumph of the religious values of the Middle East over the tradition of Greece and Rome. Emperors before Constantine believed Christianity to be a grave threat to the Roman order and persecuted the faith. Christianity, like Islam, is a universal religion, seeing itself as the only way to salvation. Under the aegis of the Christian emperors, the Church itself began to persecute in the name of orthodoxy. The rise of Christianity and Islam, within the context of the Roman Empire, illustrates the power of religion as a motivating force in history.

Outline

- I.** As we saw in the last lectures, the Roman Empire fell from superpower status in the 3rd century A.D. because of its involvement in the Middle East. Although the empire continued, it was only one of a number of competing powers.
 - A.** The Middle East distracted the Romans from solving pressing economic issues. The Roman Empire of Trajan had enjoyed an economic boom, but 60 years later, Marcus Aurelius had to auction the imperial jewels to pay for a war in the Middle East.
 - B.** The Roman Empire fell, but its legacy shaped the history of Europe and the Middle East into the Middle Ages. It continues to shape history in Europe, Latin America, and the United States today.
- II.** The empire's legacy includes Christianity and Islam, two world religions that arose within its historical, cultural, and political framework. Both religions make universal claims and offer only one way to salvation.
 - A.** Not coincidentally, Christianity and Islam arose in an empire that was also universal in its claims and absolutist in its demands. Christianity could spread because of the intellectual, economic, and cultural unity of the Roman Empire.
 - B.** Christianity began with the death of the teacher Jesus of Nazareth and the belief that he had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven. It was a belief that his apostles gave their lives for.
 - C.** Our next four lectures will illustrate the lesson that religion is one of the most important motivating forces in human history.
- III.** Christianity entails a set of beliefs in a single God, that Jesus is the son of God, and that he can bring salvation to individuals. Its ethics are simple: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
 - A.** The old Roman (and Greek) religion was a communal religion. To be a Roman citizen was to worship the gods of Rome. In contrast, Christianity was a religion of personal salvation.
 - B.** The emperorship of Augustus (31 B.C.–14 A.D.) saw a notable religious revival. Indeed, from Augustus through the 17th century, it was religion—not money, not political power—that was the chief motivator of most individuals. Even emperors feared for their souls. These centuries were dominated by two religions, Christianity and Islam.
 - C.** Christianity grew from the idea in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd centuries A.D. that there was only one god. Mars, Apollo, and other divinities were just emanations from a single, all-powerful god. This philosophy was fundamental to the Stoics, who believed in one all-powerful, beneficent god [Jupiter, also known as Zeus, Providence, or Nature] who willed all things to happen.
 - D.** But many Romans also believed in a god who could bring salvation. This idea went back to the 6th century B.C. in Greece, with Dionysus, literally meaning the “son of Zeus.” Variations of these savior gods existed throughout the Roman Empire in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D.

- IV.** The Roman mind was prepared for Christianity, but the Roman government was not. The government persecuted Christians, beginning in 64 A.D. in Rome, when the apostles Paul and Peter met their deaths after an investigation ordered by the emperor Nero.
- A.** The Roman government used Christianity as a scapegoat. In the case of Nero, it was rumored that he had sung an opera while fire burned a good portion of the city. Because he needed to divert public attention from himself, he pointed the finger of blame at the Christians.
 - B.** The savior cults believed that people could worship multiple divinities, but Christianity insisted on one God. The Christians would not worship the gods of Rome, a requirement of all citizens. As the Roman Empire became more absolutist, emperors demanded more loyalty from their citizens.
 - C.** Christians displayed freedom of conscience. They put God’s law over the state’s law and were a danger to society; thus, they were persecuted.
 - D.** As the Roman Empire began to collapse in the 3rd century A.D., it faced war on two fronts, economic chaos, and leadership changes. Many Romans blamed the Christians for their troubles. In their view, people who refused to worship the old gods of Rome incurred those gods’ wrath. Across the empire, persecutions of Christians increased.
 - E.** Instead of breaking Christianity, these persecutions seemed to strengthen it. Non-Christians watched Christians stand up to the Roman bureaucracy and risk death.
- V.** Seeking religious uniformity in the name of stability, the emperor Diocletian sought to rid the empire of Christians once and for all. Yet within a decade, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire as a result of Constantine’s decree.
- A.** Constantine, like other leaders we have seen, was driven by the desire for power. In 312 A.D., he marched on Rome, then controlled by Maxentius. With a smaller army, Constantine seemed unlikely to prevail.
 - B.** As Constantine marched, he had a vision of a cross in the sky with the words, “In this sign, you will conquer.” He later said that he had seen Christ, who told him that he had been chosen to make the world Christian. Constantine won a tremendous victory at the Milvian Bridge and rode into Rome.
 - C.** Constantine still had an opponent in the eastern part of the empire, but the west belonged to him, and that’s where he began to transform Christianity from an oppressed sect into the empire’s official religion.
 - 1.** State funds paid the salaries of bishops and priests and for the construction of new churches, including St. Peter’s.
 - 2.** In 324 A.D., Constantine united the Roman Empire by defeating his opponents in battle and bringing east and the west together. He became not only emperor but head of the Church.
 - D.** Constantine saw himself an apostle, meant to spread Christianity throughout the world. He began to persecute non-Christians. By the end of the 4th century, worshipping the old gods of Rome was a treasonable offense.
 - E.** Christianity in this era meant orthodoxy, with beliefs dictated by the state. Those who didn’t accept the proper theology were persecuted.
- VI.** So taken was Constantine with his mission as the first Christian emperor that he overthrew a millennium of Roman history and built a new capital at Constantinople. For him, Rome was too tied to the old gods. He founded a completely Christian city, which he named after himself.
- A.** There were no pagan temples in Constantinople, only elaborate Christian churches. Dedicated by Constantine in 330 A.D., Constantinople became one of the most magnificent, influential cities in history.
 - B.** Still, Constantine could not escape the problems of the Middle East. A revitalized Iran—itsself motivated by a universal, monotheistic religion—remained the greatest organized enemy of the Roman Empire.
 - C.** Constantine also had to fight the Germans, but he moved the capital to Constantinople to focus on the Middle East. The empire took up the mantle against Iran and the spread of Islam.
 - D.** Spiritual reasons aside, one man’s decision to convert to Christianity, backed by the power of the Roman Empire, made Christianity a major world religion.

Essential Reading:

Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*.

Fears, *Cult of Jupiter*.

Supplementary Reading:

Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do we live in an age of spiritual longing comparable to that of the Roman Empire?
2. Is the intolerance of the Christian Church in the Middle Ages an example that all power corrupts?

Lecture Eighteen

Islam

Scope: Christianity and Islam have much in common. They are monotheistic religions. They are revealed religions, resting on a book—the Bible and the Koran. Both Christianity and Islam arose in the Middle East within the historical context of the Roman Empire. Both teach an ethical belief based on justice, mercy, and peace in the name of an all-powerful God. Yet from the beginning of Islam in the 7th century, these two universal religions have been locked in conflict. The growth of the Byzantine Empire and the Crusades were epoch-making events in this struggle, illustrating the lessons that power and religion are the great motivating forces of history and that—again—the Middle East is the graveyard of empires.

Outline

- I.** Religion is one of the most powerful motivating forces in human history, a lesson that we, as a secular society, find difficult to understand. Most Americans believe strongly in the separation of church and state, but much of the world has taken a different view. Even today in the Middle East, the separation of church and state is not a favored idea.
- II.** Constantine, a devout Christian who held absolute power as Roman emperor, transformed Christianity from a persecuted sect into the official religion of the Roman Empire. He founded Constantinople, a Christian city between Europe and Asia.
 - A.** The Christian Roman Empire—also called the Byzantine Empire, from the older name of Constantinople, Byzantium—continued the struggle between the values of Europe and the values of the Middle East.
 - B.** The most immediate threat to the empire in the 4th century came from Iran, a formidable military foe from about 226 A.D. to the early 7th century. Iran has always been one of the most important strategic locations in the world.
- III.** The Iranians are an ancient tribal people whose language and its offshoots are spoken today in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other areas. In the 3rd through the 7th centuries, Iraq was the buffer zone between Rome and Iran as both empires dueled to dominate the Middle East.
 - A.** Under Xerxes, the Iranians were a union of the Persians and the Medes. After Alexander the Great defeated them, they were dominated by Greek successors.
 - B.** By the mid-3rd century, Iran was ruled by the Parthians, a nomadic people from the north. While Augustus had made peace with them, Trajan had marched against them, as did Septimius Severus, whose assault led to the Parthians' fall from power.
 - C.** A new dynasty, the Sassanids, revitalized Iran, including the ancient religion of the prophet Zarathustra, who had taught the doctrine of one God, Ahura Mazda, Lord of Truth.
 - 1.** Under this doctrine, the world is divided into good and evil. Every individual must decide whether to accept the truth of Ahura Mazda and lead a righteous life or to follow the evil one's way of the lie.
 - 2.** On the day of judgment, those who follow Ahura Mazda will cross a bridge into heaven and eternal bliss. Others will fall into a deep pit and burn forever.
 - D.** The Persian emperors in the 3rd century A.D. saw themselves as chosen by the Lord of Truth to exterminate those who taught any other religion. They persecuted Christians and waged war on Rome into the 7th century.
 - E.** Ultimately, the Persians made their capital at Ctesiphon, near modern Baghdad, claiming Iraq as their own. In 615, the last of the Persian kings, Chosroes, carried back from Jerusalem the Relic of the Holy Cross as a sign of victory over the Christians.
- IV.** By 645, the Persian Empire was swept away by a new force, the force of Islam, taught by the prophet Muhammad.
 - A.** Muhammad was born around 570 in the city of Mecca, which was formally outside the Roman Empire but part of its economy. Mecca was a caravan city through which many foreigners passed. In this environment, Jews and Christians openly discussed their faiths.

- B. Muhammad's father died before he was born, and he was raised by his grandfather. From the beginning, he was solitary and meditative. He married an older widow and helped run her caravan service.
 - C. When he was about 40, Muhammad began to have revealed to him the Koran. For Muslims, the Koran is not the equivalent of the Christian Bible; it is literally the word of God as dictated to Muhammad. Its main message: There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his prophet.
 - D. Muhammad's teaching competed with established interests in Mecca, and he was forced to flee. In 622, Muhammad found refuge in the city of Medina, where he proved to be not only a prophet but also a diplomat and a general.
- V. By the time he died in 632, Muhammad had united the quarreling tribes of the Arabian Peninsula into a community of believers that overrode national and ethnic boundaries. There was no separation between church and state.
- A. Muhammad taught that there is no God but God, all-powerful and all-merciful, who has preordained all things. The powers that be are put in their place by God, and believers must submit to their will as they submit to God's will.
 - B. To a non-Muslim, it seems that Islam leaves no room for free will. But Muslims believe that each of us has a free choice to accept or reject the word of God.
 - C. A good Muslim performs other acts, such as giving alms to the poor, fasting during Ramadan, praying five times a day, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca.
- VI. The power of Islam united the Arab tribes and led them to undertake an expansion with few precedents in history. They swept out of the Arabian Peninsula, bearing the word of God against both the Iranian and Roman Empires.
- A. The split between Sunnis and Shiites can be traced back to the generation after Muhammad, with the question of his true successor. Was it his son-in-law and cousin Ali, who became the martyr of the Shiite faith, or was it a successor to Muhammad chosen by the community, which is what the Sunnis came to believe?
 - B. For the Muslims, there was no reason Christians could not accept Muhammad. Muhammad had respected Moses and Jesus, but he was also the last of the prophets and the fulfillment of their message. Why wouldn't Christians understand that his was the ultimate revelation of God?
 - C. Christians and Muslims found themselves locked in an ongoing struggle. By the 8th century, the Muslims attacked Constantinople, swept through Egypt, and entered northern Africa. By 711, Islamic armies entered Spain and asserted control.
 - D. These competing religions, both based on values of peace and justice, found themselves engaged in a titanic struggle.
 1. *Jihad* (holy war) was fundamental to the Islamic view. It was the duty of every Muslim to spread the faith by the sword. Those who died in conquering unbelievers went immediately into paradise.
 2. Christianity was also spread by the sword. Medieval Christian rulers, such as Charlemagne, killed, conquered, and even burned pagans in the name of Christ.
- VII. The Byzantine Empire, based in Constantinople and extending into Greece and most of Asia Minor, was the Christian bulwark against the Islamic tide. Christians continued to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem, though the city had fallen to Islamic armies.
- A. At first, the Muslims tolerated these pilgrimages. But in the 11th century, Turkish dynasties, converts to Islam, rose to power. They were more intolerant than the Arabs had been. The pilgrimages ceased, and heavy taxes were imposed on Christians in the Islamic world.
 - B. The Crusades began in 1096, when Christians began to march from France into the Holy Land. They continued until the 15th century. Motivated by territorial gain, love of warfare, and religious belief, men left home to wage war to the death against those who believed differently. Muslims did the same. When the first crusaders captured Jerusalem, the Muslims were massacred en masse.

- C. In the most famous of the Crusades, Richard the Lionheart; Frederick, the Holy Roman Emperor; and Philip of France came to the Holy Land in 1189. They met Saladin, a Turk who was willing to establish peace and toleration in the Middle East so that both Christians and Muslims could visit Jerusalem.
- D. After Saladin's death, the Crusades began again, dragging for centuries and exhausting the Byzantine Empire, the Middle East, and even Europe.

VIII. During the Crusades, Constantinople—then called Byzantium, today called Istanbul—remained the great magnet of Christianity in the east. Its emperors looked to the legacy of ancient Greece and Rome.

- A. Augustus's law codes formed part of the foundation of Byzantium's legal system. The city's scholars and monks spoke Greek, and the heritage of Greek literature and history was handed down.
- B. As with its Islamic competitors, there was no separation of church and state in this Christian Roman Empire. The emperor followed in the path of Constantine as both high priest and ruler, with absolute authority in all matters of doctrine.
 - 1. This form of religion, *caesaropapism*, in which the Caesar is pope, is fundamentally different from Latin Christianity, in which the pope as spiritual leader stands above the secular king or emperor.
 - 2. Constantinople would pass Eastern Orthodox Christianity and its ideals of government to Russia.
- C. Ultimately, Constantinople fell. The Turks rose to power in the Middle East, first defeating the Byzantines in 1071. Piece by piece, the Ottomans, descendants of the Turkish warlord Osman, began to conquer what was left of the Byzantine Empire.
- D. In 1453, the Ottoman armies broke through the gate of Constantinople. The last Roman emperor, Constantine XI, died with his sword in hand, and Constantinople became an Islamic city. The Ottoman Empire became a superpower and a dominant force in European history until the 18th century.

Essential Reading:

Carrithers, et al., *Founders of Faith*.

Koran.

Supplementary Reading:

Esposito, *Oxford History of Islam*.

Norwich, *Byzantium*.

Runciman, *History of the Crusades*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Muhammad was warrior and a statesman as well as a prophet of peace. Do you believe that this has had lasting consequences for Islam?
2. Why does the word "crusade" today have a somewhat negative implication?

Lecture Nineteen

The Ottoman Empire and Turkey

Scope: The Crusades were the first of many failed attempts to impose European values on the lands of Islam. The Ottoman Empire represented the farthest extension of Islam into Europe and the fulfillment of the Muslim ideal of holy war. The Ottoman Empire is also a lesson that ethnic autonomy under a centralized autocracy could be the best way to peace in the Middle East. The transformation of Turkey in the 20th century by Kemal Ataturk is a most instructive example of how to create a secular nation-state in the Middle East, based on European political and cultural values.

Outline

- I. Despite their similarities, Islam and Christianity have battled since Islam arose in the early 7th century. Starting with the Crusades in the 11th century, holy warriors fought in the Middle East until 1453, when Turkish Muslims captured the Christian city of Constantinople.
 - A. The fall of the Roman Empire is often dated to 476 A.D., when the empire in the west fell. The Roman Empire in the east did not fall until 1453, when the Ottomans became the successors to the Christian-Islamic struggle in the Middle East.
 - B. The Ottoman Empire illustrates two lessons of history. One is that empires rise and fall because of individual leader's decisions. The other is that religion is a powerful motivating force.
 - C. The Ottoman Empire was the most successful of the Islamic empires devoted to *jihad*. From the capture of Constantinople in 1453 to the Ottoman armies' retreat from Vienna in 1683, it dominated much of the political history of Europe.
 - D. The Middle East was shaped by the long centuries of Ottoman rule. Indeed, the nation of Turkey in the 20th century is a remarkable illustration of successful nation-building.
- II. The Ottomans were a Turkic people from central Asia with a nomadic heritage and close linguistic ties to the Mongols. They appeared in Europe early on; the Huns, who swept into the Roman Empire in the 5th century, were a Turkic people.
 - A. In the 11th century, the Turks became a major factor in Asia Minor. One group that fought the Roman Empire were followers of the war chief Osman, which gives us the name Ottomans.
 - B. Under the early sultans, the Ottomans became a significant power in Asia Minor, then the Balkans, where in 1389, they defeated Christian armies at Kosovo.
 - C. In 1453, the last remnant of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople, fell. The Ottomans began an expansion that spread from North Africa to Hungary. They got as far as Vienna, which they repeatedly sought to conquer.
 - D. The Ottomans saw themselves as the embodiment of the Islamic ideal of the *ghazi*, the warrior for the faith. One of their duties was to rid the world of infidels through wars of conquest.
- III. The Ottomans were much like the Romans in their approach to governing their vast empire.
 - A. The Ottomans were not an exclusive group. Anyone could become a member of the ruling elite by learning the Turkish language and Ottoman customs. In fact, the Ottomans ensured a constant infusion of new life by *devshirme*, the practice of kidnapping Christian boys from the Balkans and raising them to be Turkish Muslims.
 - B. These boys became the core of the Janissaries, the ferocious wing of the Ottoman army, whose soldiers swore an oath to spread the faith. In the 15th and 16th centuries, this army was technologically superior to those in Europe.
 - C. The Ottomans, from the founder of their dynasty, Osman, to the sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566), produced generations of outstanding leaders, who were capable administrators and warriors. Under Suleiman, the empire reached its greatest extent.

- IV.** As had previous empires, the Ottomans fought on many fronts, from Europe to the Middle East. Iran, which the Ottomans never ruled, was a major threat and drain on resources. The Ottomans also campaigned every year in the Balkans to conquer and put down insurgencies.
- A.** The Ottomans believed that the best way to rule ethnic groups was not by assimilating their subjects or imposing Turkish values. In fact, the later sultans lost some enthusiasm for proselytization because Christians paid taxes, which many sultans preferred to converts.
 - B.** The Ottoman rulers did not impose the Turkish language but encouraged local languages to be spoken and ethnic groups to govern themselves. The only requirement under Turkish rule was to accept the foreign policy and lead of the Ottomans.
 - C.** Christians and other minority groups could practice their own religion, but they were heavily oppressed. The Turks were arrogant and cruel, and any insurgency was met with ruthless destruction. Such treatment stirred up feelings of nationalism in the Balkans.
- V.** The Ottoman Empire declined by the 18th century to become “the sick man of Europe,” but it was still a formidable force. Among its rivals were Russia on the Black Sea, Austria in the Balkans, and Venice.
- A.** During a series of wars, the Ottoman Empire shrank, and by 1914, it seemed to be on the verge of destruction. The Balkan states had broken away. The once-great empire in Europe was a tiny area near the Greek border.
 - B.** The Ottomans still reigned in Asia Minor, including Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq. (Egypt was a British protectorate.)
 - C.** In 1914, the nationalist Young Turks began to revitalize the Ottoman Empire with a vision of a true Turkish nation-state. They made a secret alliance with Germany, which brought them into World War I in the fall of 1914.
- VI.** By late 1915, Britain was searching for a new strategy to justify its earlier losses in the war and to prompt capitulation of the central powers. Winston Churchill came up with the idea of attacking the Ottoman Empire.
- A.** The Turks were rivals to the British in the Middle East and sought to assault the Suez Canal, Britain’s lifeline to India. A defeat of Turkey would give Russia, an ally of Britain, a reason to stay in the war. Britain promised that if Constantinople were captured, Russia or Greece would get it.
 - B.** In February 1915, Britain launched a military campaign in the Dardanelles. About 250,000 British troops landed on the beaches of Gallipoli. The British had already begun to bombard the area, and the Turkish forts began to collapse.
 - C.** It looked as though the Ottoman Empire would fall. Communications were down, and the Turkish troops, under German officers, had no idea what was happening.
 - D.** A young officer named Mustafa Kemal—later known to history as Kemal Ataturk, the father of the Turks—took command. He saw his Turkish soldiers fleeing and ordered them to stop, fight, and wait for more troops.
 - E.** All summer long, the trench warfare continued at Gallipoli. Many soldiers on both sides died. By December, the British gave up. When the last British troops withdrew in January 1916, Turkey had a new hero, Mustafa Kemal.
- VII.** Gradually, the Ottoman Empire was shorn away. Jerusalem was captured, and Arabia revolted. By the time the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, the Allies were eager to carve up the Middle East.
- A.** Italy got southern Anatolia and southern Asia Minor. France got Syria. Britain got Palestine and Iraq, and Greece got Constantinople.
 - B.** The Allied armies began to march into the interior of the empire. The sultan offered no resistance, but Mustafa Kemal rallied the Turks to fight back. Instead of conquering Turkey, the Allies suffered one of the most disastrous retreats in modern history.
 - C.** The Turks forced the Allies to sign a new peace treaty, one that recognized them as a nation.
 - D.** As dictator and president, Mustafa Kemal began a program of Westernization. He himself took the western-style surname name of Ataturk and required all Turks to take surnames in the Western style. This

was part of a series of reforms, including substituting the Roman for the Arabic alphabet, a Western calendar, and giving women the right to vote.

- E. Kemal Ataturk began to build a secular, Westernized nation-state called Turkey. He made treaties with the Soviet Union and the Balkan states.

VIII. This nation-building continued until Ataturk's death in 1938.

- A. He left Turkey under strong but wise authoritarian rule. During World War II, Turkey was thought to be friendly by both Germany and the Allies, and it became a firm U.S. ally during the Korean War.
- B. Turkey became the most stable and prosperous nation in the Middle East because of one man, Kemal Ataturk, who built upon the legacy of history to transform his nation.

Essential Reading:

Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey*.

Supplementary Reading:

Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East*.

Inalcik, *Social and Economic History of the Ottoman Empire*.

Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Does Ataturk show the way to viable solutions for nations in the Middle East today?
2. Discuss the Ottoman concept of governing through autonomous ethnic groups as a model for nations in the Middle East today.

Lecture Twenty

The Spanish Empire and Latin America

Scope: Despite its proximity to the United States, its vast resources, and its industrious population, Latin America has never developed enduring institutions of democracy. As with China, Russia, and the Middle East, the answer lies in history. The Native American cultures were as creative as those of the ancient Middle East, but there was no concept of freedom. Quite the opposite, the Aztec Empire was one of the most despotic regimes in history. The Spanish conquest brought with it twin engines of despotism, the centralized autocracy of the Spanish kings and the Catholic Inquisition. The Inquisition is one of the most notable examples of Lord Acton's maxim that "all power tends to corrupt." Christianity began in the ideal of freedom of conscience. In the Inquisition, it became the great prototype for totalitarian repression. The wisdom of history teaches that the propinquity of freedom does not ensure its spread to alien soil.

Outline

- I. As we have noted, religion is one of the most powerful forces in human history. It is seen in the struggle between Islam and Christianity from 312, when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, to Muhammad's death in 632 and the subsequent expansion of the Islamic empire into the Middle East and Europe.
 - A. The Ottoman Empire arose to spread Islam by *jihad* all the way to Vienna in 1683. There was no national or individual freedom in this empire. The various national groups were conquered and ruled as subjects.
 - B. Kemal Ataturk led the reforms that created post-World War I Turkey after the British, French, Italians, and Greeks intervened in its affairs. But the study of the Middle East raises the question: Is freedom a universal value? In fact, freedom has never existed in the Middle East. Islam is not a religion of freedom; it is a religion of submission.
 - C. At the end of World War I, the League of Nations required France to establish a protectorate over Syria. The British received a mandate to establish protectorates in Palestine and Iraq. None of these areas, which had been part of the Ottoman Empire, had a national heritage or a tradition of unity.
 1. The French and the British both failed to establish democratic governments.
 2. France set up a constitutional government in Syria in the early 1920s, but elected politicians were assassinated, and insurgencies broke out. The French military could not force democracy on Syria.
 3. Britain had no more success in Iraq or Palestine, due in part to the Ottoman Empire's lack of nationalism and ethnic hatred between groups.
- II. Latin America is another part of the world where freedom has been difficult to plant. The prime influence here was that of Spain, which undertook to bring Catholicism to the New World.
 - A. Catholics and Muslims battled in the Crusades in Europe and the Middle East. One crusading nation was Spain, whose monarchy dominated the 16th and 17th centuries as one of the world's superpowers.
 - B. Islamic armies swept across northern Africa and, by 711, crossed into Spain, defeating the Germanic Visigoths there and conquering almost all of the Iberian Peninsula. The Catholic kingdoms, including Castile and Aragon, hung on in the far north.
 - C. Moorish civilization in Spain, admired by later generations, was tolerant, but it was not Christian. The small Catholic kingdoms began to push south against the Moorish kingdoms.
 - D. By 1492, the last of the Moorish kingdoms in Spain fell to Ferdinand, whose marriage to Isabella joined the kingdoms of Aragon and Castile and united Spain. According to Machiavelli, Ferdinand wrapped himself in a pious cloak as "the most Catholic king," yet he was a master at double-dealing, lying, and every form of statecraft that Machiavelli admired.
 - E. Ferdinand was a fervent Catholic who believed that God had placed him in the position of king to spread the true faith around the world.

- III.** Ferdinand's Spain was the first centralized monarchy in Europe, a forerunner, in a way, of 20th-century totalitarian states. Ferdinand sought to control the economy of Spain and, later, the New World. He also wanted absolute homogeneity and orthodoxy.
- A.** Christopher Columbus's voyage to the New World sought wealth, power, and the spread of Christianity. Along with the great conquistadors went the priests to convert the native populations, by persuasion if possible and by force if necessary.
 - B.** Ferdinand used two tools, the Inquisition and centralized monarchy, to obtain and hold power and to impose Catholicism in the Spanish Empire.
 - 1.** As we mentioned, the Catholic Church at the time was concerned with orthodoxy. Being Christian was not enough; one had to adhere to the doctrine taught by the Church.
 - 2.** The Church fought not only Muslims but heretics, such as the Albigensians in southern Spain. To combat them, the Church created a bureaucratic instrument, the Inquisition, that sent priests to towns and villages to listen to complaints, question suspects, and bring people to trial.
- IV.** Ferdinand's control of the Spanish Inquisition, formally established in 1478, gave him an instrument to impose absolute religious conformity.
- A.** The Inquisition questioned the loyalty to the faith of Islamic and Jewish converts. Were they true Christians?
 - B.** The Inquisition operated by arriving in small towns in Spain and offering those who were suspect a 30-day grace period to admit heresy and promise to become Christians. After 30 days, a suspect might still be called to face a tribunal.
 - 1.** The rules for the Inquisition were carefully laid out. The accused was allowed to identify possible accusers who were his enemies, but he might have been denounced by a friend.
 - 2.** The basic means of interrogation was torture. The Inquisition worked under Roman law, which considered evidence extracted by torture more valid than evidence voluntarily given. A confession resulted in a sentence to be burned alive in the public square.
 - 3.** Citizens were required to attend these so-called acts of faith. Even those who professed Christian beliefs as they were tied to the stake were still burned.
 - C.** That is how the Inquisition flourished in Spain and served as a vehicle for despotism in the New World. It was a force of control, a force to shape the will of humans. The Inquisition and Ferdinand's despotism were the Spanish Empire's legacy to Latin America.
- V.** The Spanish Empire was a superpower. The heir of Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles, was king of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor from 1520 to 1556.
- A.** Next came Philip II, another fervent Catholic determined to continue spreading the word of God in the New World and to conquer Protestantism. In 1588, he unsuccessfully launched an armada against Britain.
 - B.** Spain continued to decline through the 17th century, but it retained its colonial empire.
- VI.** Latin America's legacy includes not only the Inquisition and Spanish totalitarianism, but the brutality of its own Native American empires. The Aztec Empire that Cortes conquered in 1518–1519 rested on centralized power, a belief in a god-king, a priesthood, and human sacrifice. It ruled by terror in Mexico, much as Ferdinand and Isabella had ruled by terror in Spain.
- A.** Freedom has been hard to plant in Latin America. For a long time, this group of nations has had proximity to the model of the United States, yet freedom there has never flourished.
 - B.** Inspired by the American Revolution, Latin American nations had their own revolutions, overthrowing the Spanish in the early 19th century. New republican governments were founded with liberal principles and constitutions.
 - C.** Yet the history of Latin America has too often been the story of one dictator followed by another. Mexico, for example, had nine governments within the first 10 years of independence from Spain. The legacy of Spain to Latin America may be comparable to the legacy of the Ottomans to the Middle East.

Essential Reading:

Bakewell, *History of Latin America*.

Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*.

Supplementary Reading:

Burns and Charlip, *Latin America*.

Homza, *Spanish Inquisition*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that the social and economic problems of Latin America are the causes or the consequences of the failure of freedom to take root in that area?
2. Discuss the idea that the Inquisition was one of the prototypes for the totalitarianism of 20th-century despotisms, such as Stalin's Soviet Union.

Lecture Twenty-One

Napoleon's Liberal Empire

Scope: Napoleon saw himself as a combination of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Napoleon arose out of the democratic excesses of the French Revolution. His career illustrated for contemporaries the classical view that tyranny is the end result of radical democracy. These same contemporaries regarded Napoleon as a multifaceted genius. He sought to transform Europe into his vision of a liberal, enlightened successor of the Roman Empire under himself as the new Caesar and benevolent despot. He failed. His career attests to the enduring lesson of *hybris*, that outrageous arrogance that leads tyrants to cause their own downfall. But Napoleon also illustrates the danger of preemptive wars in the name of liberal and democratic ideals.

Outline

- I. The wisdom of history includes the lessons of empire. We have examined empires of faith, that is, empires motivated by strong religious views. Now we turn to four empires—France, Britain, Russia, and China—focused on religion in a larger sense, a comprehensive worldview. We start with the Napoleonic Empire of France.
- II. In June of 1812, a Grand Army of 600,000 men, the largest army ever mustered on European soil, crossed the frontier into Russia. It was led by the military genius and emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, age 43.
 - A. Napoleon's army was a wonder to behold, with massive artillery, cavalry, and infantry. Riding alongside him were troops from Poland, Prussia, and Austria. What had brought Napoleon to attempt the conquest of Russia? He would say destiny; others would say opportunism.
 - B. Born in 1769 in Corsica, then part of France, Napoleon was educated at French military academies. He had some trouble with authority as a schoolboy but performed well, particularly in mathematics.
 - C. After graduation, he was commissioned as an officer in the artillery. He was just 20 years old when the French Revolution began in May 1789. France overthrew its feudal past and proclaimed a universal declaration of the rights of man.
 1. In this new democracy, man is born free and must remain free. All are equal under the law. Citizens can live as they choose as long as they don't harm others, and the majority decides the law.
 2. Liberty, equality, and fraternity were the messages of the French Revolution.
- III. In seeking to export their ideas, the French revolutionaries became embroiled in wars with their neighbors and in their own internal struggles. Civil war in France led to the Reign of Terror and the deaths of some 40,000 aristocrats and other "enemies of the state." By 1799, the French wanted order, and that was Napoleon's duty.
 - A. Napoleon dreamed of being a new Alexander the Great. He left his army in Egypt and returned to France in 1799 to become the first consul of the French republic. Within five years, he had transformed France into an empire and was crowned by the pope himself; like Charlemagne, Napoleon reached out to take the crown and put it on his own head.
 - B. Napoleon embodied the values of the French Revolution, casting away the constraints of the past. Everything that was old and feudal, including Christianity, had to go.
 - C. John Adams correctly predicted that the French Revolution would end in tyranny. Napoleon was a tyrant by ancient definitions—he rose to power by nonconstitutional means, but like the dictators of the 20th century, he was fond of plebiscites.
 1. The title he assumed could be traced back to Julius Caesar. When his soldiers marched into battle, they carried standards bearing eagles, as the Romans had.
 2. Like Julius Caesar, Napoleon saw Europe as one great empire, all equal under his rule. He codified the law of France, just as the Roman emperor Justinian had codified the law of Rome.
- IV. Napoleon's goal of bringing liberal ideas to Europe led him to march into Russia in 1812, but he was distracted by his failure to control Britain, with which he was almost constantly at war.

- A. To bring Britain to its knees, Napoleon created the Continental System, an economic union in which the nations of his empire were forbidden to trade with Britain and, instead, were to develop their own industries.
 - B. Napoleon's empire stretched from Spain and Portugal to France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and Italy. Much of Germany was either part of his confederation directly or, like Austria and Prussia, allied with him. The only place in Europe where his power did not reach in 1809 was the Balkans.
 - C. In 1810, the Russian czar declared that he would no longer refuse to trade with Britain. As Napoleon's economic sanctions against Britain began to fail, he decided to invade Russia.
- V. Another problem for Napoleon was Spain, whose Bourbon monarchy was one of the most corrupt in Europe. Intrigue was rife, Spain's economy and empire were in shambles. The tentacles of the Catholic Church stretched everywhere.
- A. Napoleon came to Spain to liberate its peasants from the shackles of despotism and religion. In 1808, he tricked the Spanish king and his heir to abdicate and put his brother on the throne.
 - B. Napoleon thought the Spaniards would welcome his takeover, but they fought him determinedly. The Spanish army proved surprisingly resilient. The British saw their chance and sent an army under a general, the future duke of Wellington.
 - C. From 1808 to 1812, Napoleon fought down multiple insurgencies in Spain, with growing atrocities on both sides, captured in the paintings of Goya. In 1812, Napoleon put this war aside to invade Russia.
- VI. Napoleon was a student of history, especially military history. He learned a great deal from Julius Caesar about battlefield command, but he was an innovator, as well.
- A. Napoleon did not encumber his marches with large wagon trains carrying food; his army lived off the land.
 - B. Napoleon was an innovator in the use of artillery. His preferred strategy was to bunch artillery in massive quantities, bombard the enemy, and have his infantry rush the enemy line. Then his cavalry would sweep through the hole and roll up the enemy's lines.
 - C. So dynamic was Napoleon as a military innovator that his books were among the standard textbooks at West Point. U.S. Civil War generals, such as Robert E. Lee, admired Napoleon and tried to follow his tactics.
- VII. Diplomat, strategist, and bearer of liberal ideas of the French Revolution, Napoleon marched into Russia. He should have learned from the lessons of history.
- A. About a century earlier, King Charles XII of Sweden had led a Swedish army into Russia and met a devastating defeat. His army froze in Russia, and Charles fled to the Turks.
 - B. In ancient Greece, Herodotus told the story of Darius marching into Russia to conquer the Scythians, who withdrew and led him farther and farther into Russia until his army perished in the cold steppes.
 - C. But Napoleon saw himself as a man of destiny, a "world historical figure" who would propel history to a new level.
 - D. One of Napoleon's masterstrokes of warfare was to always bring the enemy to battle. But the Russians continually withdrew, leading Napoleon's enormous army farther and farther into Russia.
 - 1. The Russians burned their crops as they retreated, leaving little food. They set aflame whole villages. A bloody battle fought near Moscow didn't go the way Napoleon had planned. He won, but the cost in manpower and casualties was terrible.
 - 2. The Russian army withdrew beyond Moscow, and Napoleon entered the city in triumph. Almost immediately, a fire set by the Russians broke out and burned for four days. When it ended, little food remained for the French troops.
 - E. Czar Alexander had no intention of negotiating with Napoleon, for he knew of his unbounded ambition. This autocrat was also fearful of liberal ideas spreading into Russia.
 - F. Napoleon began to retreat. The bitter weather had begun, and his soldiers began to freeze and starve. As they made their way back, they were attacked by Cossacks on horseback, the very people Napoleon had thought would welcome him.

1. The Cossacks preferred the czar's authoritarian rule. Napoleon's men tried to fight, but the Cossacks attacked and galloped away.
2. The only survivors were scroungers of stolen food. In the midst of this horror, as the weather got worse, Napoleon deserted his army and returned to Paris, drawn in a carriage, wrapped in furs, and drinking Burgundy wine.
3. Of the 600,000 men Napoleon led into Russia, perhaps 100,000 made their way back to France.

VIII. With this preemptive war against Russia—a war that did not need to be fought—Napoleon had aroused an alliance that included Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria against him. He also began to lose something of his military genius. By the time he fought the Battle of the Nations in 1813 near Leipzig, the whole of Europe was arrayed against him.

- A. Defeated in battle, Napoleon quit and accepted exile on the island of Elba, close to his native Corsica. The old line of French kings was restored to the throne. The revolution seemed officially at an end.
- B. On March 1, 1815, Napoleon escaped Elba and landed in France. The troops sent by the king to suppress him instead embraced him, for he was their emperor. The French loved him.
- C. He lasted only 100 days, defeated by the British and the Prussians at the Battle of Waterloo on June 28, 1815. Once again, he abdicated and, this time, was exiled to St. Helena, a dismal island in the South Atlantic from which escape was impossible. He died there in 1821.
- D. Why did Napoleon fail? An ancient Greek would blame his outrageous arrogance (*hybris*)—above all, his decision to invade Russia. Instead of arousing a universal love of liberty in Europe, Napoleon aroused a universal loathing of France and spurred the fires of nationalism.

Essential Reading:

England, *Napoleon*.

Palmer, *Age of Democratic Revolutions*.

Supplementary Reading:

Segue, *Napoleon's Russian Campaign*.

Rose, *Life of Napoleon I*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you think the Russians, with bad governments, nonetheless fought so savagely against both Napoleon and Hitler?
2. Napoleon saw himself as the embodiment of all that is best in benevolent autocracy. Do you agree?

Lecture Twenty-Two

The British Empire in India

Scope: European history from Louis XIV (1638–1715) until Napoleon was dominated by the struggle for empire between France and England. The triumph of Britain and the British Empire of the 19th century left behind a legacy that still shapes our world. The British of the great age of empire believed that they were combining liberty and empire, bringing the benefits of law and civilization to a large part of the world, from Canada to India and Australia. But for many of the subjects of this great empire, Britain simply illustrated the lesson that the lust for power—not the love of freedom—is the motivating force of history. The British experience in India illustrated the lesson of the “imponderables” of history and the power of ideas and religion. Who could have imagined that a frail Indian barrister could—without violence—bring the greatest empire in the world to its knees?

Outline

- I.** Britain was the heir to France’s failure to sustain its empire. The two countries had fought since the 17th century.
 - A.** The duke of Marlborough, Churchill’s ancestor, helped block France’s King Louis XIV from becoming the absolute master of Europe.
 - B.** From 1756 to 1763, France and Britain fought in Europe, India, and North America. In the end, France lost out entirely in India and North America. As a result, we Americans are heirs of the British Empire, not the French.
- II.** The British, along with the Romans, were the most successful imperialists in history. Their empire reached its height after World War I, stretching over lands so vast that the Sun literally never set on them. Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the Persian Gulf—all were under the flag and law of the British Empire.
 - A.** Britain believed that its empire would bring freedom to the world. During World War II, Winston Churchill rallied the British by telling them that the British Empire would not survive unless Germany was conquered.
 - B.** India was the jewel in the crown of the British Empire, lauded by the writer Rudyard Kipling. The young Churchill went to India as a lieutenant in 1894 and remained, to the end of his days, a firm believer in the linkage of empire and democracy.
 - C.** Oxford scholar Alfred Zimmern was another strong believer in the destiny of empire and democracy. His 1906 book *The Greek Commonwealth* compared the ancient Athenian democracy to the British Empire, with both laboring to bring freedom to the world.
 - D.** A sense of racial superiority pervaded British rule. The British claimed that they could rule a vast land such as India because of their “moral fiber,” enhanced by their study of classics. For all their education, though, the colonizers did not understand Indian civilization well. In South Africa, which was also under British control, ruthless racial divisions existed.
- III.** The man who would be known as Mahatma Gandhi (Mohandas Gandhi) would stare down the greatest empire of its day through the sheer force of his moral authority.
 - A.** Gandhi studied law in London, where he tried to dress and eat like an Englishman. He came to understand that he was different, that India was different. India was his nation, his culture. The seed of independence was planted.
 - B.** Gandhi practiced law in South Africa, where he experienced firsthand the racist side of British society. He was thrown off a train because he insisted on riding in the first-class compartment. From that point on, Gandhi began to fight for the right of Indian workers in South Africa to enjoy what the queen had proclaimed, equal rights for all of her subjects.
- IV.** By 1911, Gandhi returned to India, at first traveling throughout the country to learn more about it.
 - A.** When World War I started, Gandhi urged Indians to support Britain, believing that Britain would return the favor with self-government. During the war, he realized that this outcome this would never occur. In the

- 1920s, he began his nonviolent resistance to British rule. He called on Indians to unite as a culture and as a nation.
- B. This resistance seemed strange to the British, who were used to political agitators who were more “British.” Gandhi dressed in the Indian fashion. He urged Indians to discard British-made cloth and make their own.
 - C. Gandhi told his followers that they would meet injustice every day, but that they must stand up to it.
 - D. Gandhi was jailed repeatedly for leading protests against British control. In response, he fasted, in accordance with Hindu tradition. He received enormous attention from the world press.
 - E. For all the injustice of the British Empire, it did believe in law, and Gandhi was treated with all the equity provided by English law.
- V. By the 1930s, the British Empire was dying. The economic and human costs of World War I had left Britain almost bankrupt and strained its ability to run an expanded empire. In addition, many Britons, including politicians, no longer wanted an empire.
- A. This feeling was not universal. Among conservatives, the most outspoken opponent of freedom for India or even dominion status—a self-governing unit under the British sovereign—was Churchill. He believed that if Britain left India, civil war would result.
 - B. During World War II, Britain began to dismantle its empire, aided by the United States. By the end of the war, Britain, in severe financial straits, decided to cut India loose.
 - C. But India was badly divided between Muslims and Hindus. Part of Gandhi’s mission was to make these two groups understand that they both worshiped the same God. He encouraged Muslims to become familiar with the Hindu religion and Hindus to read the Koran. He wanted a united India.
 - D. India was ultimately split into a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan. As Churchill had foreseen, savage sectarian riots broke out. Gandhi traveled from town to town, trying to make peace. When the riots continued, he began to fast.
 - E. A Hindu fanatic assassinated Gandhi in January 1948. Gandhi’s last word was “Ram!” (“God!”), for he believed that the souls of those who die with the word of God on their lips will go straight to heaven.
 - F. Gandhi taught national freedom based on the enduring moral values of India—courage, justice, moderation, and wisdom—values he believed could be found in every society in the world.
- VI. The British Empire continued to divest itself of colonies, leaving its legacy around the world.
- A. Its greatest success story is the United States. We have carried the English language throughout the world and have shouldered the burden of the empire in many areas.
 - B. India is another success story. The British Empire’s legacy is evident in the prevalence of English, the education system, a free-market economy, and a working democracy.
 - C. Other areas have been less successful. Many former British colonies in Africa have failed to find liberty under law and have seen terrible suffering. Nor is the Middle East a bastion of democracy.
 - D. During World War I, Britain proclaimed that it would support the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. But during the 1930s, as Jews tried to leave Germany and other parts of Europe to escape the Nazis, the British turned back their ships. In 1948, the United States, not Britain, was the first country to recognize the new state of Israel.
 - E. Though the British Empire was flawed in serious ways, it left behind the greatest legacy for good among all the empires of the 19th and early 20th centuries. But it is an instructive example that a democracy cannot, over the long run, rule an empire.
 - F. It was only after World War I, when Britain’s electoral base began to expand beyond the aristocracy, that the empire began to fade. The more democratic Britain grew, the less imperial it became.

Essential Reading:

Ferguson, *Empire*.

Huxtable, *Empires of the Atlantic World*.

Supplementary Reading:

Brown, *Gandhi*.

Gandhi, *Autobiography*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Taken in the balance, was the British Empire a force for good?
2. Did the rapid dismantling of the British and French colonial empires after World War II reflect the wisdom of history?

Lecture Twenty-Three

Russia and Empire

Scope: In the 20th century in both Russia and China, democratic revolutions would end in savage tyrannies. The wisdom of history teaches us that this is not an accident. It was the predictable result of the historical development of both countries. From its misty origins as a Viking nation until Vladimir Putin, Russia has never known freedom and democracy in the American sense. Russia was shaped by the heritage of Byzantium, Orthodox Christianity, and the Mongol conquest. Political and individual freedom were utterly subordinate to the ideal of a God-chosen absolute ruler, with total power over state and church. Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and Stalin and his Gulag were all testaments to the propensity of mankind to choose despotism over freedom.

Outline

- I. In the past two lectures, we've studied empires of faith that provided a comprehensive worldview. For the British and French, the view was that all people want liberty, equality, and democracy. In the next two lectures, we'll explore two more empires of faith: the Russian empire (the Soviet Union) and the Chinese empire of Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong). Both were based on Communism as a worldview.
- II. The father of Communism is Karl Marx, a German. His *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 called on workers of the world to unite. By the end of his life, he saw completion of *Das Kapital* as his great task.
 - A. Marx would not have been surprised if a visitor from the future had told him that millions of people would view his ideas as a revelation of truth, his *Das Kapital* their Bible.
 - B. Marx regarded *Das Kapital* as a volume of scientific truth, based on what he saw as indisputable laws of history and economics. Its doctrine is that workers will destroy the capitalism that oppresses them.
 1. To Marx, every society reflects its economic system, especially its mode of production. Greece and Rome had slaves and were, thus, slave societies. The Middle Ages had serfs and was a feudal society. The 18th-century mode of production was based on laborers exploited by capitalists.
 2. Moved by the world's suffering, Marx sought salvation in the end of capitalism. In his view, the capitalist profits by exploiting workers, paying them the lowest possible wages. With plenty of available workers, the capitalist can cut wages while increasing his profit.
 3. But Marx believed that, according to the laws of economics, capitalism is self-destructing. He shows how the growing disparity between a worker's wages and a capitalist's profits would force workers to revolt and destroy capitalism.
- III. *Das Kapital* shaped the history of the 20th century, of Russia in particular. In 1917, Russia was in a state of near collapse. The czar's government had fallen, and the Russian Parliament had proclaimed a constitutional government based on liberal ideas.
 - A. The government felt obligated to stay in World War I, but the Russian army and the Russian people had had enough. The Russians wanted peace, bread, and a redistribution of land.
 - B. On November 7, the Bolsheviks (Communists) were determined to take power. Their leader, Vladimir Lenin, was a devoted follower of Marx. Lenin believed that Marx was the thinker, but that men of action must create revolution. Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin urged Lenin on.
 - C. The Bolsheviks struck. The leader of the constitutional government, Aleksandr Kerensky, tried but failed to put down the coup.
 - D. From 1918 to 1922, the Bolsheviks under Lenin waged a relentless war of terror against all who opposed the establishment of Communism. By 1929, Russia was the Soviet Union, ruled by the totalitarian dictator Stalin.
 - E. Russia is a sobering example that freedom is not universally valued. Russia has never wanted freedom, from its beginnings as a Viking state to today's Vladimir Putin.

- IV.** Russia shares some of the same historical currents as Britain. Both began with the arrival of Vikings. In 1066, the Norseman (those Vikings called the Normans by the French and English) conquered England. Already in 9th-century Russia, the Vikings exploited the political disunity of the Slavic tribes, but they also incorporated Russia into their trade network and established the city of Kiev.
- A.** Another influence was Christianity from Constantinople, which became Russian Orthodox Christianity. In Latin (Roman Catholic) Christianity, the pope is above the king or the emperor, who rules only the secular world. This idea does not exist in Russian Orthodox Christianity, which unites the roles of chief priest and emperor. From the beginning, the kings and, later, the czars of Russia were popes, as well.
 - B.** Russia has also been shaped by struggle. Almost from the outset, Russia faced two threats, expansion from Germany and the Mongols, and was forced to choose which threat to address. The constant need to keep alien forces at bay has shaped the Russian character.
- V.** Tyranny has been another dominant force in Russia, homeland of some of the most ferocious tyrants of all time. This legacy came from Rome. When Constantinople fell in 1453, the prince of Moscow, Ivan the Great, married the niece of the last emperor of Byzantium. In the theology of the Russian Orthodox Church, Russia became the heir of Rome.
- A.** Ivan took the title *czar*, a word that, like *kaiser*, comes from *Caesar*. The double-headed eagle, the symbol of the Roman emperor's power, decorated the *czar's* coat of arms.
 - B.** In 1547, 14-year-old Ivan, known as "the Terrible" in the West, though a better translation might be "Stern and Just," became *czar*, one of a series of despots who reformed Russia in the most brutal possible fashion.
 - 1.** Ivan largely wiped out the landed class and created his own army and bureaucracy. His brand of terror, characterized by men in black riding black horses, rooted out anyone suspected of disloyalty to the *czar*.
 - 2.** Ivan understood that the Russians did not want freedom but a stern master who would protect them. Ivan's reign saw the beginning of Russia's enormous expansion into Asia.
 - C.** Peter the Great, an 18th-century *czar*, was a benevolent despot who based his idea of government on an all-powerful ruler. Peter traveled to the West and set out to reform Russian institutions.
 - 1.** He reformed the Russian Church. Those who refused to adapt were burned alive. The Russian alphabet was reorganized to make it clearer. The Russian army was transformed into a modern European army.
 - 2.** The cost was enormous, but Peter Westernized Russia to compete with the great powers of Europe. Russia grew throughout the 18th century and into the 19th.
- VI.** In 1917, Russia had an opportunity for freedom, but it chose instead to follow Communism. It broke with its own religious tradition, accepting the new religion of tyranny with the fervor of the convert.
- A.** Stalin had the support of millions as he arrested, imprisoned, and killed millions more of his own people. In theaters, people saw historical plays that depicted cruel but just rulers saving Russia from invaders, providing leadership in times of crisis.
 - B.** Adolf Hitler believed that when he invaded Russia, the Soviet people would rise up and drive out the Bolsheviks and that Russia would collapse. Instead, the Soviets rallied to Stalin as the only man strong enough to defeat the Germans.
 - 1.** As the German armies approached Moscow, Stalin refused all advice to flee. Instead, he called the Russians to follow in the path of their ancestors who had prevailed against the Swedes, the Mongols, and the French.
 - 2.** The Germans were beaten back from Moscow. Stalin turned Hitler's preemptive war into the greatest victory in Russian history. He would not negotiate; he fought the war to the end on the steppes of Russia.
 - C.** When Stalin died in 1953, he had transformed the backward nation of Russia into the greatest empire in the world. When the Soviet Empire collapsed in 1990, instead of entering a new age of freedom, it drifted to a new tyrant.

Essential Reading:

Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*.

Supplementary Reading:

Conquest, *Stalin*.

Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, vol. I.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can the Vikings—who arrived in both Britain and Russia—be called one of the most seminal forces in history?
2. Do you think the United States should have gone into Russia with a contemporary equivalent of the Marshall Plan after the fall of Communism?

Lecture Twenty-Four

China and Empire

Scope: Civilization arose in China independently from the birth of civilization in the Middle East. But like the Middle East, China, throughout its history, has chosen despotism over freedom. Classical Chinese civilization was defined by Confucius. Order, not freedom, was his ideal, and he believed that order must flow down from above. The ruler is a benevolent despot, whose character and virtue make him worthy of obedience. This ideal still pervades China. Thus, in 1912, China could have a revolution aimed at establishing democracy, but the result would be Mao Tse-tung and despotism more total than anything imaginable to an emperor of the Han or Ming Dynasty.

Outline

- I. We turn now to a second Communist empire, China, still a major power in the 21st century. To understand the Chinese empire, we begin in November 1950, during the Korean War, as the U.S. army pushes deep into North Korea.
 - A. At headquarters, General Douglas MacArthur rejects any suggestion that Chinese troops are about to attack. But they do attack, dealing American forces a stunning defeat.
 - B. It took more than two long, bloody years to reach a stalemate in this struggle on the Korean peninsula. The legacy of that struggle between China and the United States is still with us.
 - C. China emerged as a world power. The United States—which had triumphed five years earlier in World War II—found itself on the brink of nuclear disaster with the Soviet Union and facing danger from China.
- II. What does China tell us about the law of history that freedom is not a universal value? It's a mistake to base foreign policy on the belief that all people in all times want freedom. China, like Russia, has never chosen freedom during its long history.
 - A. China's long, glorious civilization began around 1700 B.C. As in Mesopotamia and Egypt, the growth of civilization seemed to stem from climatic change and the need for a central power to control the flooding of the Yangtze River.
 - B. From the beginning, China was ruled by despots. Initially, a king headed an elaborate bureaucracy. The Chinese were willing to accept the absolute rule of this king, whom they believed the gods had chosen and through whom the gods would channel all necessary knowledge.
 - C. The Chinese king and his court lived well under the mandate of heaven, supported by commoners' taxes.
 - D. But the mandate of heaven was a challenge. If the king did not rule with justice, if he was not humane, then the gods would revoke their mandate from the son of heaven, and he would fall.
 - E. Early China was ruled by a series of dynasties, each coming to power in a time of turmoil, ruling for two or three generations, then falling into stagnation and corruption, so that they oppressed the people rather than governing with justice.
- III. Confucius (552–479 B.C.) has long influenced the Chinese attitude toward government (see *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life* from The Teaching Company). Along with Socrates, Jesus, and Buddha, he was one of the greatest teachers who ever lived. Unsuccessful in a bureaucratic career, he took as his mission educating students, who could bring his precepts into Chinese government.
 - A. Confucius developed his ideas, collected in the *Analects*. Confucius was an older contemporary of the great poet Aeschylus and only slightly older than Socrates. But the freedom that was so central to Greece played no role in the thought of Confucius.
 - B. His concern was order, not freedom. A ruler justified his absolute power by the exercise of moral virtue. For Confucius, the universal values were wisdom, moderation, justice, and courage. The ruler who saw only to his own pleasures and had no concern for the people would fail.
 - C. The ideas of Confucius set the mark for Chinese civilization until 1949. In the dynasties that rose and fell in China, the bureaucracy was staffed by those trained in Confucian thought.

- D. Confucius did not deny the existence of the gods but thought that humans could not understand them. He believed, however, that religion and proper tribute to the gods played a fundamental role in holding society together.
 - E. The family was the essential element in Chinese society. Sons respected their fathers, who treated them with justice and kindness.
- IV.** The first emperor to unite China, Ch'in Shih Huang-ti (Qin Shi Huangdi), and his son ruled from 221 to 206 B.C. This emperor broke with the tradition of Confucius and instituted a new bureaucracy. He buried alive 700 Confucian scholars and confiscated and burned ancient books.
- A. Ch'in Shih Huang-ti's ambitions led him to multiple conquests and expansion. Thousands died in the construction of his great monuments.
 - B. The emperor sent servants across the empire for various herbs to make him immortal. He believed that black was the color of immortality, and that the number six was a key to immortality. He forced all of China to carry out his wishes, no matter how irrational.
 - C. Ch'in Shih Huang-ti began to build his tomb, surrounded by 7,000 life-sized terracotta soldiers to guard him in death. After he died, the Chinese said that his dynasty fell because it was not humane. His arrogance and power had corrupted him.
- V.** Like the Russians, the Chinese faced potential conquerors in the Huns and the Mongols. Genghis Khan invaded China, and his grandson, Kubla Khan, became the emperor.
- A. The Chinese have had a remarkable ability to assimilate conquerors. The foreign barbarians who took over China became more Chinese than the Chinese themselves. Kubla Khan took a Chinese imperial name, and his descendants ruled as full Chinese.
 - B. China's long, continuous civilization and its ability to assimilate foreigners have enabled the country to rise from disunity and chaos to power repeatedly. The Chinese know nothing of political or individual freedom, but national freedom has always been key.
- VI.** In 1911, the last Manchu emperor fell from power, and China was thought to be entering a new age of democracy and freedom. The most important figure of this revolution was Sun Yat-sen, a doctor who tried to adapt Western ideas to China.
- A. Sun's ideal of the new China embraced the principles of democracy, nationalism, and prosperity but from a Chinese perspective.
 - B. Nationalism was the key to the new China. The Chinese must understand that they were one nation with a great civilization. Their brand of democracy was not based on America's individual freedom. It was a communal democracy guided by the general will of the Chinese people, to which individuals were subordinate.
 - C. As for prosperity, Sun did not want capitalism. An admirer of Lenin, he believed that Chinese society as a whole should control the mechanisms of productivity—a socialistic economy.
 - D. The West looked on with terror as China endured civil war in the late 1920s and 1930s. Warlords ruled entire areas of China. No continuous government could establish itself. China seemed hopelessly old-fashioned and weak.
- VII.** Torn apart by civil war, China was ripe for another invasion. Japan seized Manchuria and attempted to conquer all of China.
- A. The threat of Japanese conquest brought together the two main factions fighting for control in China: the Nationalists, led by Chiang Kai-shek, and the Communists, led by a former assistant librarian, Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong).
 - B. Though Mao's father had been a poor peasant, Mao was educated. As a librarian, he began to learn about Karl Marx and became one of the first members of China's Communist Party. Mao's genius was to understand that Communism would flourish with rural peasants, not Marx's urban factory workers.

- C. The Nationalists and Communists united to defeat Japan but fought each other during World War II. The United States at first believed that democracy would prevail, but it later realized that the Nationalist forces had no support and the Communists would win.
- D. In 1949, Chiang Kai-shek and his battered army withdrew to Taiwan. In Beijing, Mao Tse-tung and the Communists took power. Mao set out to create Soviet-style despotism and stamp out all that had come before him.

VIII. The Chinese Communist Party became the sole source of truth, and Mao would add his legacy to those of Marx, Engels, Stalin, and Lenin. He put his wisdom about human nature and politics into a little red book of quotations.

- A. Mao first led China to fight the United States to a standstill in North Korea.
- B. He then carried out a massive collectivization of farms. He proposed five-year plans, just as Stalin had, by which China would be industrialized and food production would increase. But thousands, perhaps millions, of Chinese starved to death in famines.
- C. Mao began to fear in the early 1960s that the people were losing their revolutionary fervor. He felt that a new generation had to be educated in the ways of Communism.
 - 1. He began a campaign to root out nonbelievers, unleashing the Cultural Revolution.
 - 2. Throughout China, young people locked up and beat their teachers. Intellectuals were sent into the fields to learn with their hands what Communism was about. Opponents were jailed and killed.

IX. Some Westerners think that China's free-market economy will one day bring freedom, but history teaches us that capitalism is compatible with despotism.

Essential Reading:

Confucius, *Analects*.

Wright, *The History of China*.

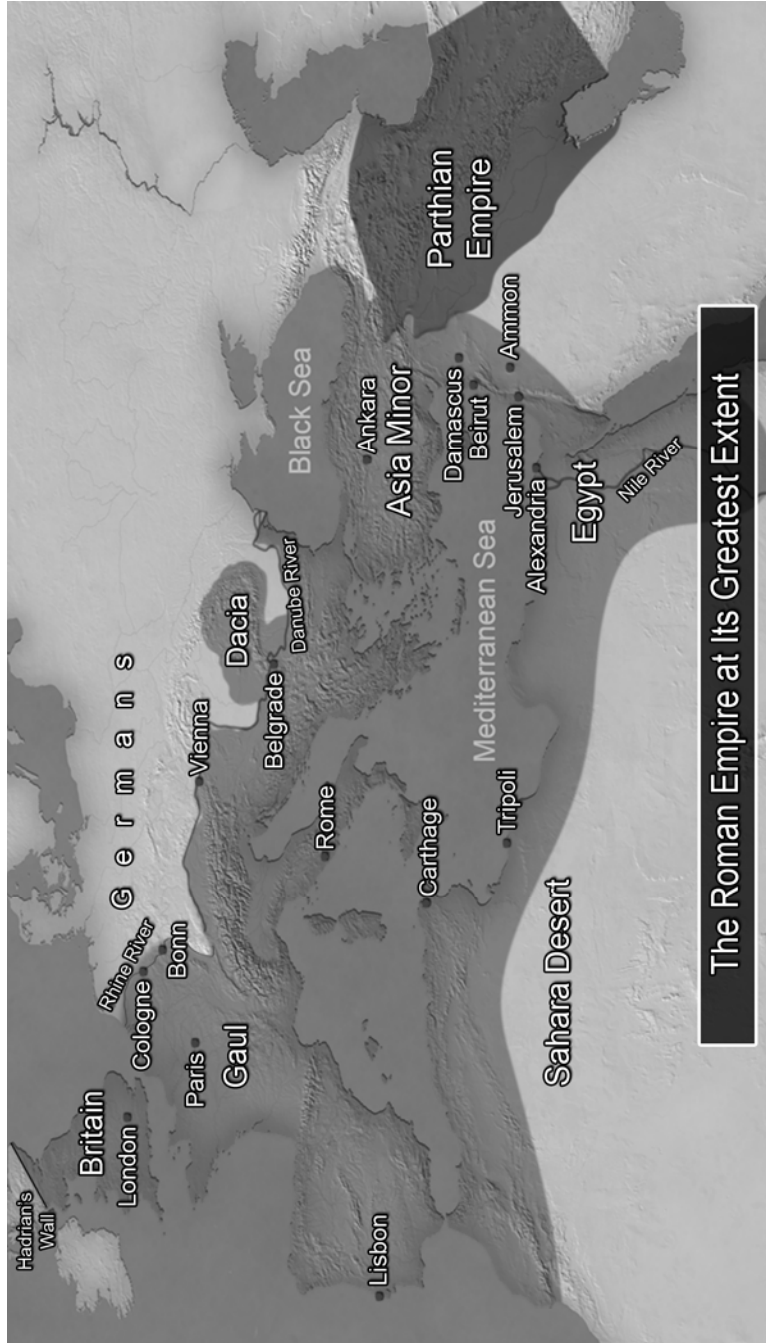
Supplementary Reading:

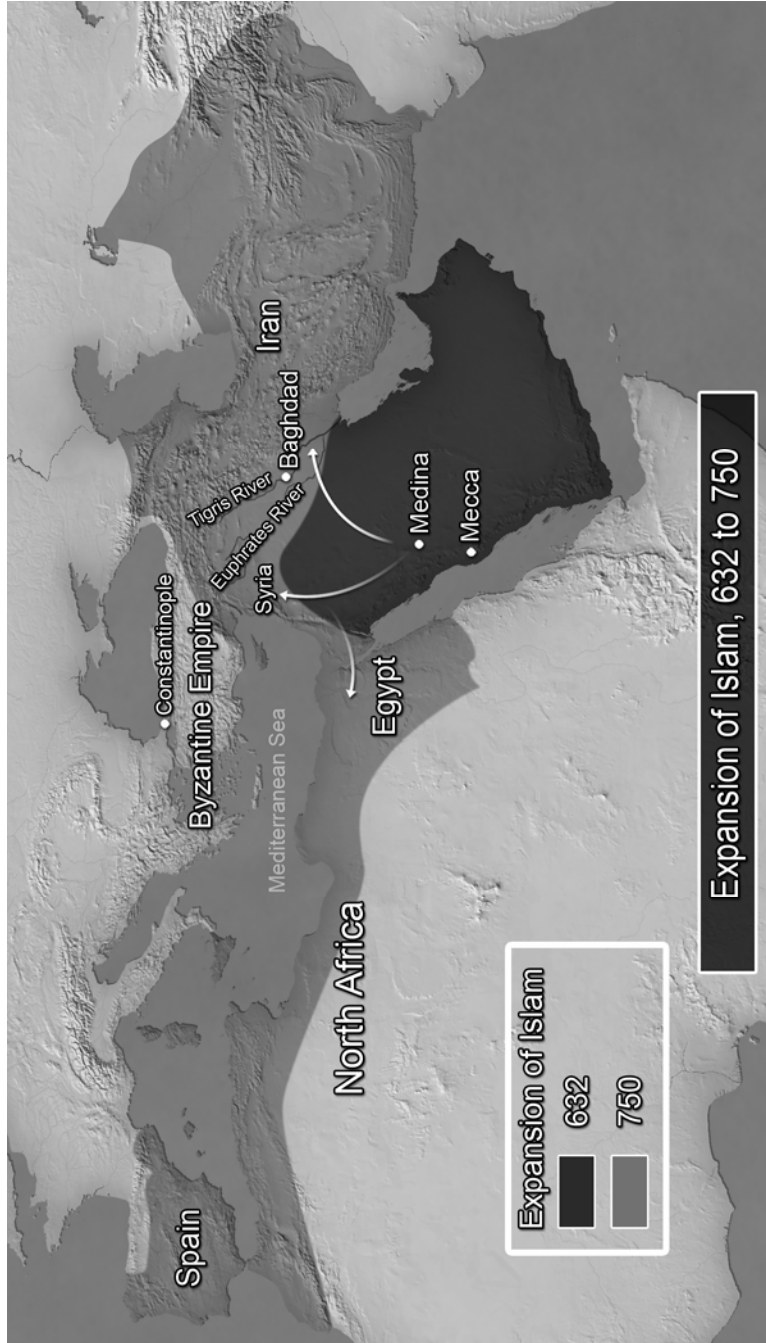
Fears, *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*, Lecture Twenty-Three.

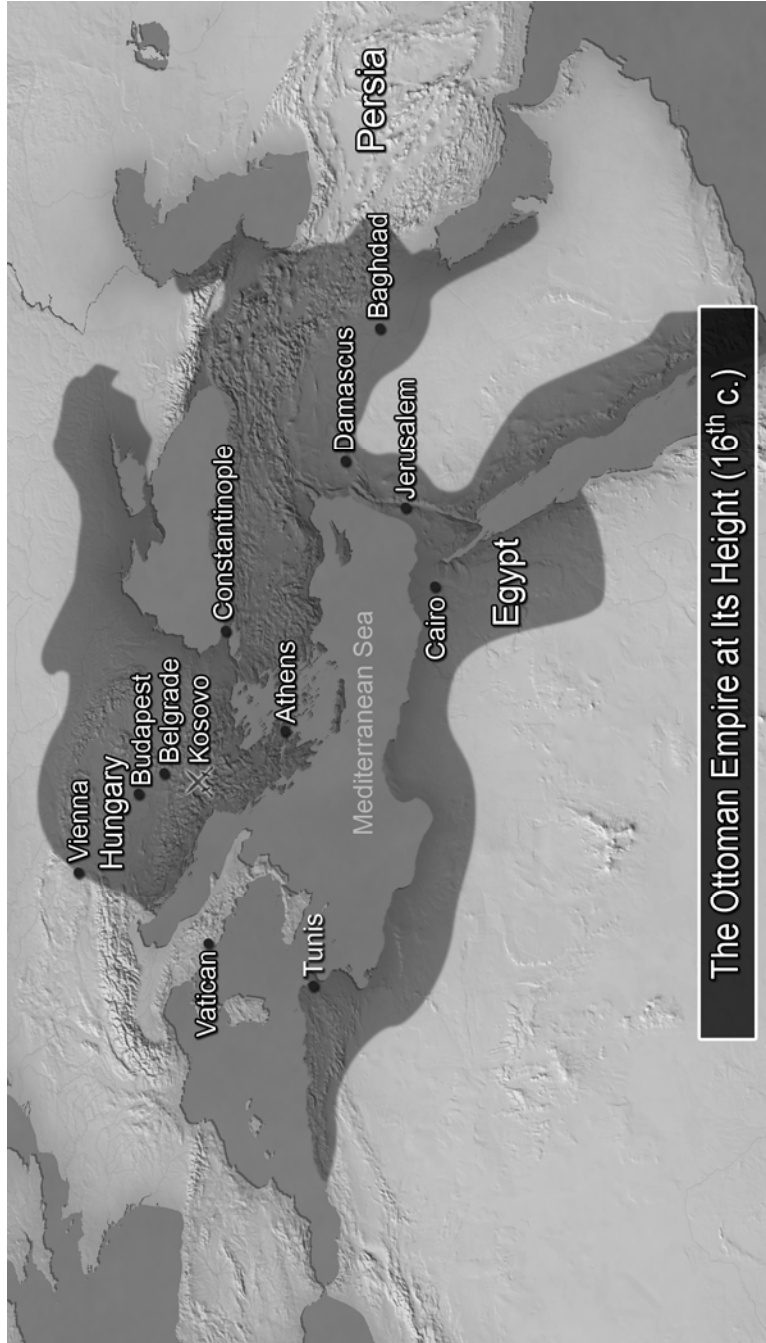
Roberts, *A Concise History of China*.

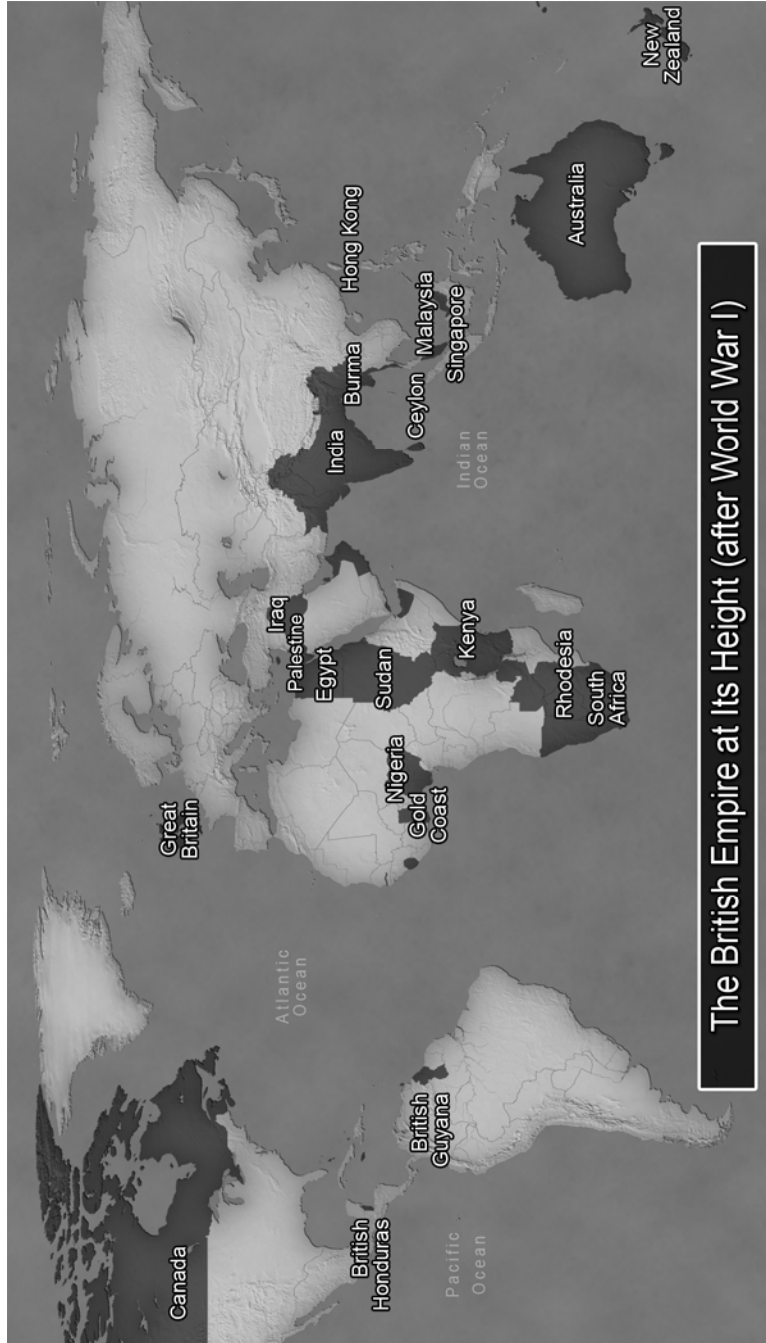
Questions to Consider:

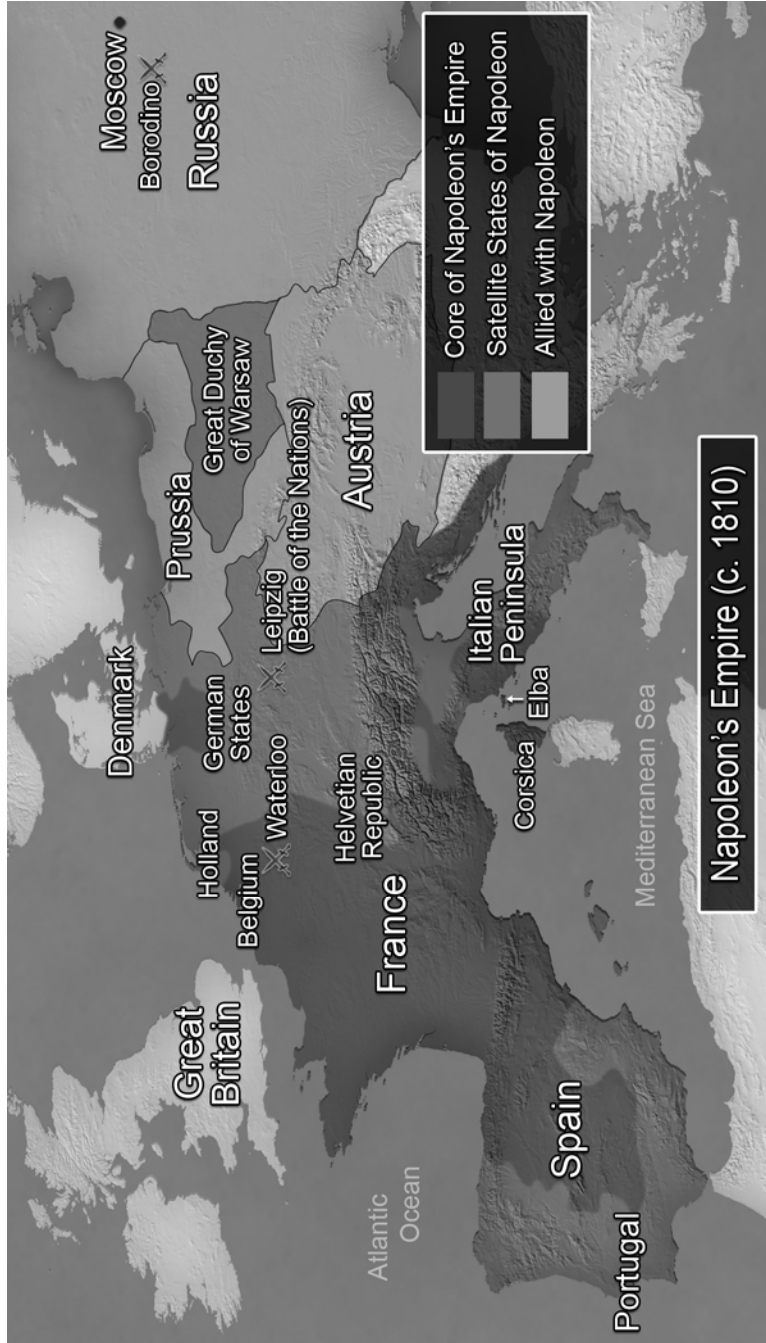
- 1. Do you see a conflict between the absence of political freedom in China and the fact that the free-market economy has flourished in many epochs of China's past?
- 2. Confucius used the family model for order and good government in the highest political sphere. Discuss.











Glossary

Bactria: Ancient name for the modern country of Afghanistan.

balanced constitution: The ideal form of government in the view of Classical thinkers, such as Aristotle, Cicero, and Polybius. The balanced constitution was achieved by a proper mixture of the main elements of government: the need for strong leadership (monarchy), the need for advice by a small group of experts (aristocracy), and a broad base of popular support (democracy). The balanced constitution also brought about a proper set of checks and balances among the executive, judicial, and legislative functions.

birth of civilization: Rise of complex governmental structures, writing, monumental architecture, and the use of metal. These developments occurred simultaneously in Egypt and Mesopotamia around 3000 B.C.

Communism: A system of ideas and government which maintains that society should be organized so that the means of production and subsistence should be held in common and labor organized for the benefit of all. As a political system, Communism has resulted in the creation of a totalitarian state and party apparatus to subordinate all facets of the individual, society, and economy to the control of the state.

consul: The chief magistrate of the Roman Republic. Two consuls were elected annually. The consul was commander-in-chief of the Roman army once war had been declared by the assembly of all Roman citizens.

democracy: Etymologically, *democracy* and *republic* both mean the same thing: the power of the people. *Democracy* is derived from the Greek *demos* (“people”) and *kratia* (“power”). *Republic* is derived from the Latin *res publica*, the “people’s thing” or “commonwealth.” Today, the terms are used almost synonymously by many who speak of the United States as a democracy and a republic or a democratic republic. Some of the Founders, such as James Madison, made a distinction. Madison defined a democracy as “a society consisting of a small number of citizens who assemble and administer the government in person.” A republic, according to Madison, differs in two ways: Power is delegated to representatives, and a republic can expand and govern far more people and geographical area.

empire: Derived from the Latin word *imperium*, which originally meant “legally granted power.” The term came to mean a political area of domination, such as *Imperium Romanum* as the collective description of the Roman Empire. Thence, *imperium* passed into the political language of Europe and, ultimately, the world. In current usage, the term has a connotation of a large number of formerly independent states united under the rule of a single governing power, especially a monarch. Thus, many Americans are unhappy to speak of the “American empire.” But the word can be used in quite neutral terms to describe the area under the hegemony or leadership of a superpower.

freedom: The ideal of freedom is in fact composed of three ideals, which do not necessarily include one another. *Individual freedom* is freedom to live as you choose as long as you harm no one else. *National freedom* is freedom from foreign control. *Political freedom* is freedom to vote, to hold public office, to serve on juries, and in general the freedom to be involved in the political process.

Founders: Collective term to describe the leading statesmen of the American Revolution; Founding Fathers and Framers are alternative terms. The Founders include George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe, as well as Benjamin Franklin and other signers of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

Greek (or Eastern) Orthodox Christianity: The doctrine and rituals of the Christian Church dominant in many parts of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, including Russia, Serbia, and Greece. *Orthodox* simply means “right teaching.” Formally, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church separated permanently in 1054. However, differences in doctrine, rituals, and philosophical and theological outlook had separated Latin Christianity from Greek Christianity almost since the beginning of Christianity in the 1st century A.D.

historical thought: The use of the lessons of history to make decisions in the present and to plan for the future.

House of Burgesses: Founded at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, this is the oldest continually functioning representative legislative body in what is now the United States.

hybris (hubris): *Hybris* is the correct transliteration of the Greek term that is best translated as outrageous arrogance that leads to the abuse of power.

information superhighway: A popular and appropriately trendy shorthand for describing the rapid retrieval and transmission and voluminous storage of information made possible by modern technology.

Magna Charta: The Great Charter of English and, hence, American freedom, signed by King John in 1215 and granting to every freeborn subject of his realm certain fundamental rights, such as trial by jury.

Mayflower Compact: A brief agreement signed before the Pilgrims left ship in 1620. By this compact, they agreed to establish just laws for the good government of their new community. It has been called the first written constitution in what is now the United States.

Mesopotamia: “Land between the rivers.” A Greek geographical term used to describe an area, now largely in Iraq, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The area was the site of the early historical civilization of the Sumerians and Babylonians.

Middle East: In this course, we have used the term *Middle East* as a very broad geopolitical designation for the area reaching from Pakistan to the Balkans and the Danube River and to the Atlantic shores of Morocco. The Persian Empire of the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. and Alexander the Great understood this area as a geopolitical whole. It is roughly (excluding Spain) the area in which Islam made its farthest and most permanent advance.

Mongols: One of the most important ethnic groups of the steppes of central Asia. The Mongolian language is part of the broader language family sometimes known as Ural-Altai, which includes Turkish. The Mongols whom Genghis Khan led to greatness were a mixed confederation of Mongol and Turkic tribes speaking a variety of Turkish and Mongolian languages and sharing a common nomadic lifestyle.

Ottoman Empire: Derives its name from the founder Osman (in earlier European transliteration, Othman; 1288–1326).

republic: See **democracy**.

senate: The term *senate* was a conscious borrowing by the Founders from the Roman *Senatus*. The word literally means “council of old men.” The Roman Senate contained roughly 300 members, who were indirectly elected by the Roman people and served for life. The Senate was responsible for finances and foreign policy.

superpower: A political entity that dominates its world or, at least, competes for domination with equal powers. Thus, Rome was the superpower in the Mediterranean world and Western Europe of the first two centuries A.D. Britain, Russia, Italy, France, Germany, and Austria-Hungary were the superpowers (or Great Powers) of Europe on the eve of World War I.

Turks: The Turkic people are one of the most widely spread and historically important nations. Turkic languages are spoken from Siberia to the Balkans. Turks were a major component of the armies of Genghis Khan. Turks are major ethnic components not only of the modern republic of Turkey but also of the central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan. See also **Mongols**.

tyrant: According to Winston Churchill, an individual who believes that his own ideas and gratification are worth the suffering of millions.

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union, USSR): The name for the political entity that in 1922 replaced the Russian Empire. In 1992, the Soviet Union was dissolved, splintering into a number of independent nations, one of which is the Russian Federation.

Biographical Notes

Acton, John Emerich Edward Dalberg (1843–1902). British historian. Lord Acton was educated in Germany, where he received historical training far superior to anything available at that time in England. A devout Roman Catholic his entire life, Acton returned to England, where, from 1857–1870, he was involved in a number of journalistic enterprises aimed at bringing the wisdom of history to bear on the liberal reform of the Catholic Church. The proclamation of papal infallibility as Church doctrine at the Vatican Council of 1869–1870 was a profound blow to Acton. He began to plan but never completed a major work on the history of freedom. He became known as the most learned man in England, but he wrote very little for publication. In 1895, Acton was appointed Regius Professor of History at Cambridge, where he performed important service for the academic study of history, including conceiving the idea of the *Cambridge Modern History*. A close friend of Prime Minister Gladstone, Acton was a liberal in the classic sense and believed, as did Winston Churchill, in much of what we associate with modern welfare reforms. Acton called conservatism “the reign of sin.” It is ironic and false that contemporary conservatives and libertarians claim him as one of their own.

Augustus (63 B.C.–14 A.D.). Roman emperor and statesman. Born Gaius Octavius, he was the great nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. Modern historians generally refer to him as Octavian, from his adopted name of Gaius Julius Cesar Octavianus, in describing his early career and rise to power (44–27 B.C.). With extraordinary political skills, Octavian raised an army at the age of 19 and, by the age of 32, had achieved complete mastery over the Roman world with his decisive victory over the forces of Marc Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C. He then carried out a series of political, military, social, religious, and economic reforms that transformed Rome from a republic into the military dictatorship that we call the Roman Empire of the Caesars. In genuine appreciation of his achievement, the Roman people voted that his name be changed to Augustus, which is best rendered in English as “the messiah.” The new order of Augustus inaugurated two centuries of unprecedented peace and prosperity for the Roman world, and he is rightly regarded as the greatest Roman statesman of all time.

Bismarck, Otto, Prince von (1815–1898). German statesman. One of the most successful statesmen of the 19th century. Bismarck was born into a Prussian military family. He studied law and entered the Prussian civil and diplomatic service. By 1848, he had become a prominent politician and staunch defender of absolutism and monarchy against the liberal forces then sweeping Germany and Europe. Shrewd, opportunistic, and patriotic, he led the unification of Germany under the leadership of Prussia and its King William I. By careful steps, he defeated Austria, then France. In 1870, after a crushing victory over Napoleon III in 1870, William was proclaimed ruler of the German Empire. Bismarck shaped the new order as chancellor, bringing the benefits of social welfare programs to German workers and making the new Germany into a world power. His personality clashed with the young Emperor William II, and Bismarck was dismissed as chancellor in 1890.

Caesar, Gaius Julius (100–44 B.C.): Roman statesman. Born to an ancient but impoverished family, Caesar was a late bloomer in his political career. However, with military genius and political adroitness, by 48 B.C., Caesar rose to be the leading political figure in the decaying Roman Republic. He was a literary genius, and his *Commentaries* on his war in Gaul and the civil war against Pompey rank as masterpieces of style and narrative. After his military victory over his chief rival, Pompey, in 48 B.C., Caesar set about to transform Rome into a monarchy. By 44 B.C., he had collected all real power in his hands and had been voted dictator for life. The Roman people adored him and viewed him as the only possible salvation for their empire. They did not care about political liberty, and Caesar offered them individual freedom and prosperity. Caesar sought to co-opt his opponents, such as Brutus, by a policy of clemency and conciliation. He understood the need to solve the problem of the Middle East by conquest and annexation of Iran. His plans to carry out that policy and the conquest of the Germans came to naught when he was assassinated by a conspiracy of senators, led by Brutus and Cassius, on March 15, 44 B.C. Such was the impact of Caesar on the idea of empire that his name lived in the title of *kaiser* for the German emperor and *czar* for the Russian emperor.

Churchill, Winston (1874–1965). British statesman and author. Churchill has been called the greatest man of the 20th century. Churchill was half American, the son of an English aristocrat, Lord Randolph Churchill, younger son of the duke of Marlborough, and Jennie Jerome, a wealthy New York socialite. By the age of 26, Churchill was a war hero, a bestselling author, and a member of Parliament. In World War I, his bold strategy as First Lord of the Admiralty led to the fiasco at Gallipoli and his dismissal from the government. All through the 1930s, Churchill was politically discredited but sought to awaken the British people to the danger of Germany. As prime minister, he led

Britain through “its finest hour.” He returned as prime minister in 1951–1955, working for close ties with America. His 53 books, including his *History of the Second World War*, won him the Nobel Prize for literature in 1953.

Confucius (551–479). Chinese teacher. One of the most influential figures in history, Confucius never wrote a book. He was a failure in his own attempts at being an administrator. But his teaching shaped centuries of Chinese history and government. He wandered through China during a period of war and oppression. He taught a group of students to take up their responsibility as administrators. His message was one of order and ethical behavior: Let the leaders cultivate the virtues of wisdom, courage, justice, and moderation and the people would follow.

Madison, James (1751–1836). American statesman. Madison studied at Princeton University and served in the Continental Congress during the final stages of the American Revolution. Along with Alexander Hamilton, Madison was a prime mover in bringing about the Constitutional Convention and played a major role in Washington’s decision to attend and preside. Madison is known as the “Father of the Constitution.” He was one of the most learned of the delegates, drawing on a profound knowledge of Greece and Rome. At the time of the ratification debates, Madison played again a key role with Hamilton and John Jay in authoring the articles now known as *The Federalist* to persuade his fellow citizens of the wisdom of the new constitution. He then served in the first Congress, where he was responsible for drafting the Bill of Rights. He served as secretary of state under President Jefferson. As president himself, Madison led the United States in the War of 1812 with Britain and was the subject of considerable political opposition and hostility.

Muhammad (570–632 A.D.). Prophet and founder of Islam. Muhammad was born in Arabia to a respected family. At age 40, he received his first revelation from God. These revelations are the contents of the Koran. Muhammad began to proclaim his faith to his family and to the citizens of Mecca. He proclaimed the revelation: “There is no God but God and Muhammad is the prophet of God.” This was doctrine of uncompromising monotheism to a polytheistic society. For Muhammad, the faith he proclaimed was one of absolute submission to God, who is all-powerful and all-compassionate. Forced to flee from Mecca in 622, Muhammad made his Hegira (his “flight”) to the city of Medina. By 630, Muhammad and the new faith were established throughout Arabia. At the time of his death in 632, Muhammad had built a political and military force that would carry Islam into the Middle East, across North Africa, and into Spain and southern France. As a statesman, Muhammad ranks with the great founders of empire. As a religious leader, he ranks with Jesus as the founder of a faith that has transformed history and the lives of countless individuals.

Napoleon III (1803–1873). Emperor of the French. The nephew of the great Napoleon, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte used his name and political adroitness to gain control of French politics in the revolutionary atmosphere of 1848. To a nation that despaired of regaining the glory of the first Napoleon, this counterfeit Napoleon had a fatal attraction. He became a dictator and, in 1852, was proclaimed emperor of the French. Far from being an anachronism, the state of Napoleon III foreshadowed the dictators of the 20th century. France seemed to reclaim its ancient glory. The French began to expand their colonial empire in competition with Britain. But it was a sham. The aim of Napoleon III to recreate a French Empire in Mexico through his puppet, Maximilian von Hapsburg, failed. Outwitted by Bismarck into war, Napoleon led France to a disastrous defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Deposed, he died in exile in England. Like his uncle, Napoleon III was fascinated by the legacy of Julius Caesar and wrote an excellent biography of the great Roman.

The Wisdom of History

Part III

J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.



THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.

David Ross Boyd Professor of Classics, University of Oklahoma

J. Rufus Fears is David Ross Boyd Professor of Classics at the University of Oklahoma, where he holds the G.T. and Libby Blankenship Chair in the History of Liberty. He also serves as the David and Ann Brown Distinguished Fellow of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs. He rose from Assistant Professor to Professor of History at Indiana University and was chosen as Indiana University's first Distinguished Faculty Research Lecturer. From 1986 to 1990, he was Professor of Classical Studies and Chairman of the Department of Classical Studies at Boston University. He is currently the David and Ann Brown Distinguished Fellow of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs.

Professor Fears received his Ph.D. from Harvard University and is an internationally distinguished scholar and author of numerous studies in Greek and Roman history, the history of freedom, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*; *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*; *The Theology of Victory at Rome*; and *The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology*. He has edited a three-volume edition of *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*.

Professor Fears has been a Danforth Fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a Harvard Prize Fellow. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellow, and twice a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Germany. His research has been supported by grants from the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Philosophical Society, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Zarrow Foundation, and the Kerr Foundation. He is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*.

On 24 occasions, Professor Fears has been recognized for outstanding teaching excellence. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, students chose him as University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year. In 2003, he received the University Continuing Education Association (UCEA) Great Plains Region Award for Excellence in Teaching. UCEA is the national association for colleges and universities with continuing education programs. In 2005, Professor Fears received the National Award for Teaching Excellence from UCEA, which cited his "outstanding teaching and contribution to continuing higher education."

In 2005, Professor Fears was the recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. In 2005, students at the University of Oklahoma named him "Most Inspiring Professor." In 2006, the state-wide Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence awarded him its medal for Excellence in College and University Teaching.

Professor Fears is very active in speaking to broader audiences. His comments on the lessons of history for today have appeared on television and in newspapers across the United States. He is a regular guest on national talk radio programs. Each year, he leads study trips to historical sites in Europe and the United States.

The *Wisdom of History* is the sixth course Professor Fears has produced with The Teaching Company. His other courses include *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, *Churchill*, and *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*.

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The Wisdom of History

Scope:

The Wisdom of History is defined as the ability to use the lessons of history to make decisions in the present and to plan for the future. The Founders of the United States used the lessons of history to do just that. The success of our Constitution is enduring testimony to their ability to think historically and, thus, to apply the wisdom of history to the great task of building a new republic in a new world. This course examines the lessons that history might hold for the contemporary United States, particularly in a post-9/11 world. To apply the wisdom of history, we focus on six questions of profound importance for America today:

13. Is there meaning to history? Do we learn from history? And are there consequences to our failure to learn from history?
14. Is freedom a universal value? If so, then why is world history largely a story of tyranny, misery, and war?
15. Why has the history of the seen the rise and fall of superpowers and empires? Why has the Middle East been, throughout history, the crucible of conflict and the graveyard of empires?
16. What do the lessons of history teach America about the destiny of a nation that is both a democracy and a superpower?
17. How do we distinguish between a politician and a statesman, and what makes a great leader in a time of crisis?
18. What will the wisdom of history teach later generations about America and its place in history?

The Wisdom of History builds upon five earlier courses from The Teaching Company: *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, *Winston Churchill*, and *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*. Produced in the fall of 2000, *A History of Freedom* traced the idea of freedom in Europe and the United States. *Famous Greeks* and *Famous Romans* were courses in Classical history emphasizing the outstanding individuals who made that history. *Winston Churchill* was a detailed examination of an individual statesman who changed the history of the world. *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life* was a search for universal moral and religious values through a study of seminal works of literature that still speak to each of us.

The Wisdom of History distills the narrative of these courses into broad thematic lessons. Far more, however, *The Wisdom of History* reflects my own intellectual growth and the transformation of our country in the wake of September 11, 2001. This terrorist attack upon our country is a watershed in American history and presents the United States with a challenge as profound as the American Revolution, the Civil War, and World War II. *The Wisdom of History* was conceived in my conviction that if America and its leaders are to meet that challenge, then we must learn and apply the lessons of history.

September 11 and the ensuing American involvement in the Middle East forces Americans to consider anew their naïve belief that we are immune to the laws of history that have marked the destiny of every empire and democracy before us. The Middle East barely appeared in our consideration of *A History of Freedom* and only tangentially in *Famous Greeks* and *Famous Romans*. Our foreign policy since 9/11 places the Middle East at center stage in our reflections on the lessons of history.

Current foreign policy is a continuation of our belief at least since World War I that America must make the world safe for democracy. However, the simple empirical lesson of history is that freedom is not a universal value. Throughout history, nations, like many individuals, have chosen the perceived security of autocratic rule over the awesome responsibilities of self-government. This has been the historic choice of the ancient and modern Middle East, China, Russia, and Latin America. Having chosen autocracy over freedom, these areas of the world received little attention in *A History of Freedom*. They now play a major role as we ask why world history is primarily a story of tyranny, oppression, and war.

The repetition of such a tale of woe suggests that the ancient Greeks and Romans and the Founders of the United States were correct in their assessment that history is cyclical. Because human nature never changes, similar circumstances will always produce similar events. Because human nature prevents our learning from history, we are doomed to repeat it. Thus we consider, as did the Founders, the portentous lessons to be learned from the rise and fall of the democracies and empires of the past. However, the Founders also believed that these cycles of rise and fall could be delayed, even broken, by leaders and citizens wise enough to guide themselves by the lessons of history.

In the American Revolution, the Civil War, and World War II and the Cold War, democracy proved its superiority to dictatorships in producing leaders worthy of the challenge. However, such leaders were but a reflection of the robust love of freedom held by their fellow citizens. We conclude our course by asking if we can find in the lessons of history the wisdom to choose such leaders today and what the lessons of history teach us as private individuals, as well as citizens.

To find these answers, we begin our course in Lecture One by defining what we mean by the *wisdom of history* and by stating in bold terms the 10 primary lessons of history that we shall learn in this course.

Lectures Two through Four ponder the history of the 20th century and our own brief new millennium as evidence of the first lesson of history, that is, that we do not learn from history.

Throughout the 20th century and still today, we Americans continue to believe that freedom is a universal value. All men and women in all places and times want freedom. However, this belief flies in the face of the lessons of history. In Lecture Five, we define what we mean by *freedom* and explore the unique character of freedom in the United States.

The lessons of history teach us that freedom is not a universal value. Power and empire are, in fact, the universal values of human history. The core of our course, Lectures Six through Twenty-Six, discusses the lessons of the superpowers of the past for America today.

In Lectures Seven through Nine, we ask why the Middle East has been the crucible of conflict and the graveyard of empires throughout history.

The United States is both a democracy and a superpower. In Lectures Ten through Twelve, we follow the Founders of our country in reflecting on the lessons of the ancient Athenian democracy for a modern nation intent on bringing the values of democracy to the entire world. To these same Founders, Rome, as well as Athens, was a model for our new republic. Lectures Thirteen through Sixteen consider the lessons that the rise and fall of the Roman Empire hold for the contemporary United States.

The fall of the Roman Empire took place amidst the rise of Christianity and Islam. Lectures Seventeen and Eighteen examine religion as a primary force for historical transformation and the rise and fall of empires.

The United States has inherited the consequences of the imperial powers of the last five centuries in Europe, the Middle East, the Far East, and Latin America. Lectures Nineteen through Twenty-Five discuss the lessons of these great empires and their enduring impact on contemporary politics throughout the world.

The lessons of history might make us pessimists. Our Founders knew the lessons of history but remained optimists. For them, as for us, history should be a guide, not a straight jacket. In Lectures Twenty-Six through Thirty-Four, we have as our theme America and the unique course the United States has charted in world history. Here, we find our models for what distinguishes a true statesman and leader from the politicians, tyrants, and tin-pot dictators who strut across the stage of history. We ask whether by combining the legacy of the past with the power of modern technology, the United States can chart a new course in history.

The Founders believed that history has profound lessons for the individual as well as the nation. We conclude our course in Lectures Thirty-Five and Thirty-Six by addressing the lessons of history for you and me as citizens and as private individuals.

Lecture Twenty-Five

The Empire of Genghis Khan

Scope: Temuchin, “Ruler of All Men,” is one of the bloodiest conquerors in history. However, modern historians see him as a great statesman, who brought a new era of cultural and economic achievement to the Middle and Far East. In this view, the Mongols show that authoritarian rule is highly compatible with free-market economics and a multicultural, diverse, and tolerant society. Genghis Khan was also the first statesman to see the Middle East, China and Japan, and Russia as a strategic whole. As did those of Alexander, the career and achievement of Genghis Khan teach the historical lessons that authoritarian rule, not democracy, is the destiny of the Middle East.

Outline

- I. Our lessons about the wisdom of history have come from the rise and fall of great empires, from ancient to modern times. To understand why empires rise and fall, let’s shift to the year 1155 on the steppes of Mongolia, in Inner Asia.
 - A. In a tiny *yurt*, a round hut made of felt, a child has been born. His father, a local warlord, has returned from conquest, bringing with him a notable prisoner named Temuchin. Following Mongol custom, the father names his child after the man he has conquered and enslaved.
 - B. Temuchin would become Genghis Khan, one of the most terrifying and successful conquerors in history. He was born sometime between 1155 and 1167, but 1155 is the traditional date given because the Mongols were convinced that he died at 72 while leading his last expedition.
 - C. When Temuchin was about eight years old, his father was poisoned. He spent his adolescence hunting down and killing those who had taken his father away. He also killed his older brother, who had stolen a fish that Temuchin had caught.
- II. Mongolia was a harsh land of nomads, where a man’s wealth was measured by his herds and his horses. It was a land where loyalty was all-consuming and treachery was punished.
 - A. Mongolia was a land of tribes, of which the Mongols were one. The later European name for the Mongols, Tatars, means the “devil’s horsemen.”
 - B. The steppe is called the “land of nine languages.” The people spoke many Turkish languages and dialects, as well as Mongolian, which is related to Turkish.
 - C. Tribe, not language, separated inhabitants. People were fiercely loyal to their tribe and the warlord who led it. This warlord, or *khan*, could be the son of the previous khan, but frequently, he was chosen for his ability to lead in battle.
- III. Genghis Khan grew up in this violent society. Captured in adolescence, he escaped and began his path of conquest. First, he united the local tribes. By 1206, he had joined all of the Mongolian tribes. He was given the title Genghis Khan, “emperor of all men.”
 - A. Genghis Khan once said that it was the sweetest of all things to conquer one’s enemy. Nothing, he said, can surpass hunting down an enemy, killing him, and taking his herds and wives.
 - B. As soon as he became the great khan, he launched an invasion of China. For 10 years, he battered China into submission, finally capturing the great city of Beijing.
 - C. Genghis Khan’s army was a masterful instrument. Though he was a man of great energy, size, and courage, Genghis Khan himself seldom fought in battle. Instead, he planned strategy and trusted his generals to carry out his mission.
 - D. The army was a mounted force. The Mongols never used infantry in their early days. The cavalry consisted of two main units, light cavalry and heavy cavalry. The composite bow was their striking instrument.
 1. The light cavalry’s purpose was to surround the enemy, fire a flood of arrows, strike down the enemy’s horses, and terrify the enemy army.

2. Then, the heavy cavalry struck. Both warriors and their horses wore armor and helmets. The cavalrymen carried swords and lances, but their real weapons were their arrows.
 3. Each cavalryman was accompanied by 16 horses led by slaves, available so that he could cross great distances. The Mongol army ate yogurt, meat, and the fermented milk of mares. In time of need, soldiers could drink the blood of their horses—or eat them.
 4. The army was organized into units of 10, 100, and 1,000, and into divisions of 10,000 under a general. Any general who proved his worth and loyalty had the trust of Genghis Khan.
- IV.** Having conquered China, Genghis Khan turned westward. He believed that his conquests were justified, but they were, in fact, always preemptive wars. By 1221, he ruled central Asia and part of Persia.
- A.** He wanted to rule all the Turkish people. He knew that there were Turkish-speaking people, such as the Cumans, on the steppes of Russia and, farther off, the Ungars (Hungarians). By 1223, Mongol forces had invaded Russia.
 - B.** The Mongol army was extremely adaptable. Making use of captives, Genghis Khan learned siege warfare, so that in later conquests of China and other areas, his armies carried with them catapults, crossbows, and gunpowder.
 - C.** Adaptable, mobile, and utterly without fear, Genghis Khan was planning his next set of campaigns when part of China revolted. He led his army on one more campaign to put down this insurgency.
 - D.** When a city was captured, if it did not surrender immediately, then everyone inside it was killed or enslaved.
 1. Part of the aftermath of Beijing's resistance was a highway leading to the city that was littered with dead bodies.
 2. A visitor could see on the horizon a white mountain and, as he approached, would realize that it was a mountain of skulls.
 3. The Mongols were reluctant to shed royal blood, however; thus, Russian princes, for example, were crushed under large boards or rolled up into rugs and kicked to death.
- V.** Genghis Khan was on a campaign to put down a revolt in China when the stars foretold his death. Like a true Mongol, he wanted to die on the steppes and had begun making his way there when he died; the Mongol army took his body, encased in a magnificent coffin, to the steppes.
- A.** Everyone who met this funeral procession was killed, lest word get out too soon that Genghis Khan had died.
 - B.** His burial place was a prohibited zone, and his son Ogodei, whom he had made the new Khan, put to death dozens of young virgins and beautiful white horses as a final tribute to his father.
 - C.** Genghis Khan's conquests continued under his son and grandson. Ogodei Khan marched to Russia, Poland, Hungary, and the Balkans. His grandson, Kubla Khan, conquered China and Korea.
 - D.** Genghis Khan left a legacy other than conquest. He set up a superb administrative system; issued a code of laws, the Yasa; and was tolerant in religion. But some say that parts of the Middle East never recovered from the Mongol devastation.
- VI.** Why do empires rise and fall? We return to one of the central themes of this course, that history is made not by anonymous social and economic forces but by great individuals.
- A.** The first empires, including those in Egypt and Mesopotamia, arose because of such individuals as King Narmer and King Sargon of Akkad. Often these leaders possessed military talent.
 - B.** Empire builders are also charismatic. They are strategists, cool and resolute, devoted above all to the love of power. A desire to rule others and to see in their nation a superhuman power that resides in themselves links all the great empire builders.
 - C.** Empire builders have almost always used some form of religion to justify conquest and mobilize support.
 - D.** There must be an ideology, a set of ideas and values, to join people together, but there is also the sheer love of conquest. In every empire, we see a lust to dominate others, to inflict pain and humiliation. Mass slaughter was a hallmark of both Genghis Khan and Hitler.

VII. Of course, we can point to both good and evil empires. The Roman and British Empires at their height had much that was good, including a mission of bringing liberty to the world. Conversely, the empires of Germany and Japan were built on an evil ideology of racial superiority. Modern scholars like to see good in the Mongol Empire.

VIII. What are the key characteristics of successful empires and their rulers?

- A.** According to the Greek historian Thucydides, the most important element in a statesman is foresight, the ability to discern problems and to solve them in ways that are effective in both the short and long term. Foresight has marked each of the great conquerors of history.
- B.** Successful rulers are also able to adapt from a military state to an imperial, administrative, and economic structure that unifies their empires. Many empires ruled by despots have had free-market economies. Merchants seem not to mind that it's a despot who makes them rich.
- C.** Despite their successes, most empires fell because of mistakes made by their leaders—not the founders but their successors. The ancients believed that it was hard for an empire to last more than three generations. The greatest mistake has been the delusion that if an empire does not continue to expand, it will collapse.

Essential Reading:

Lane, *Genghis Khan and Mongol Rule*.

Supplementary Reading:

Turnbull, *Genghis Khan and the Mongol Conquests*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can a tyrant as savage as Genghis Khan offer any worthwhile lessons to a politician or to you as a private citizen?
2. Genghis Khan and the Mongols provide an excellent example of the imponderables of history. Explain.

Lecture Twenty-Six

Britain's Legacy of Freedom

Scope: The three components of freedom—national freedom, political freedom, and individual freedom—have achieved a unique balance in the United States as a result of historical evolution. The American ideal of freedom is the product of a confluence of five historical currents: Israel and the Old Testament, Classical antiquity, Christianity, England, and the American frontier. In this lecture, we consider the heritage of freedom that developed in England and was passed on to America.

Outline

- I. Several times in our course, we've seen the influence of "imponderables" in history; the success of Genghis Khan and his armies was one such imponderable for China and Russia.
 - A. By the same token, who would have thought that Jamestown, a small settlement established in 1607 in Virginia, would evolve into a superpower that dominates the world? How will later superpowers draw lessons from the United States?
 - B. Our country illustrates the rise of empire and the issue of freedom as a universal value. As we've seen, freedom is not a universal value, but Americans' unique history of liberty has convinced us of our destiny to spread freedom to the world.
 - C. Five currents have shaped the unique ideal of American freedom: the Old Testament, ancient Greece and Rome, Christianity, Britain, and the American frontier. Together, they have created a balance of national freedom (freedom from foreign control), political freedom (freedom to vote and govern under self-made laws), and individual freedom (freedom to live as one chooses as long as others are not harmed).
- II. England's legacy of political liberty is the most important current that shaped American freedom. To understand this fact, let's return to June 15, 1215, on a great plain called Runnymede, where King John is to meet with the barons of his realm.
 - A. One of the most inept leaders in history, John alienated almost every element of society. His barons revolted against him; the pope excommunicated him; the city of London literally shut him out. To save his kingdom, he agreed to accept a charter of liberty, later called the Magna Charta.
 - B. The Magna Charta begins with the separation of church and state. It declares that the Roman Catholic Church in England is separate from the king, who is not to impose his will on the Church. In contrast, Spain had no such separation; the Church was part of the king's power.
 - C. The Magna Charta contains the fundamental precept that the government, including the king, is subject to the law. This concept is different from Roman law, in which the will of the emperor had the force of law. Spain drew on the latter legacy to put its king above the law.
 - D. The Magna Charta goes on to proclaim that every freeborn Englishman has fundamental rights that the king cannot abrogate. These rights include a trial by a jury of one's peers and knowledge of the charges brought. Recall that during the Inquisition, the accused could not face his accusers and did not know the specific charges brought against him.
 - E. Moreover, the king and his judges cannot simply jail someone at will. A person who is jailed has the right of *habeas corpus* and can go free unless charged with a crime.
 - F. Under the Magna Charta, the king's agents must issue warrants to search citizens' homes. The government cannot, as it did during the Inquisition, enter a house at will.
 - G. Most strikingly of all, the king cannot raise or collect taxes without the consent of Parliament, which at the time included churchmen, nobility, and ordinary citizens. It represented the people of England as a whole.
 - H. The king cannot, without the consent of Parliament, have a standing army. To Parliament, a professional army maintained by the government had no other purpose than to oppress a free people.

- I. Finally, the Magna Charta put in place a committee of barons to supervise the king's compliance with these laws. If the king violated these provisions, the barons had the right to revolt and seize his properties. The charter created a set of laws and a mechanism to force the government to obey them.
- III.** From John onward, the English kings attempted to subvert the Magna Charta. They sought to emulate other European monarchs and their centralized bureaucratic states.
- A. Ferdinand, for example, looked to Roman law, the great vehicle of despotism, for the law of Spain. France, too, became a strongly centralized monarchy. British monarchs wanted to follow suit.
 - B. Repeatedly, British monarchs tried to regain powers—to maintain a standing army, raise taxes without Parliament's consent, and institute Roman-style law in place of common law. Such attempts usually failed.
 - C. Parliament had allowed Queen Elizabeth, in her old age, a number of prerogatives. But after she died in 1603, Parliament began to fear the rise of despotism and reasserted itself. The real issue between Parliament and Kings James and Charles was religion.
- IV.** The 17th century was an age of religion. In the wake of the Protestant Reformation, England was swept by a wave of religious fervor that demanded a break between the close ritual connections of the Church of England and Catholicism.
- A. In the Protestant view, there was no place for saints and hierarchies of priests. Every individual had the right to interpret the Bible for himself and choose a way to salvation.
 - B. Catholics were regarded as dangerous enemies. The English Puritans believed that no Catholic could be a patriot and that any king who was Catholic was subordinate to the pope.
 - C. King James I drew from the Roman Empire the idea that God gave power to the king, who was the law of the land. Moreover, he was suspected of wanting to convert to Catholicism. Parliament refused to grant him funds for his wars and extravagant expenses.
 - D. His successor, Charles I, wanted to tax all Englishmen to pay for a modern navy. Parliament refused. By English tradition, only five towns paid for the navy.
 - E. The tension between Catholic-leaning Charles and the Protestant Parliament resulted in civil war. The king's army was defeated, and in 1649, Charles was brought before Parliament, found guilty of treason, and beheaded.
- V.** Britain became a republic under Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the Protestant revolt. Another man with a destiny, Cromwell believed that God had chosen him to reform England and to save the church.
- A. Cromwell found Parliament as difficult to deal with as King Charles had; thus, he dissolved it. Finally, he made himself a dictator. For the British, the Protectorate was one long nightmare of standing armies and enforced religious code.
 - B. Cromwell died, leaving his less capable son Richard in charge. By 1660, the British wanted the return of their king and relief from the restrictions of the Puritans.
 - C. The restoration of the British monarchy renewed the conflict between Parliament and the king. Monarchs tried to raise money without consent, while Parliament insisted that the king was not above the law.
 - D. In 1688, Parliament ousted King James II, who fled the country, having lost all support. Even his daughter Mary, a Protestant, turned against him and agreed to accept the throne of England.
- VI.** Mary's husband was William of Holland, who saw in the kingdom of England a mechanism for fueling his ongoing war with King Louis XIV of France.
- A. Before William and Mary were offered the crown, Parliament forced them to sign a declaration of rights. They agreed to accept the laws of England and the traditional rights of Englishmen under the Magna Charta.
 - B. They also agreed that taxes could be raised only with the consent of Parliament and that wars could be funded only by Parliament.
 - C. Parliament had demonstrated that if a government proved injurious to its people, they had not only the right but the duty to overthrow it and to establish a new government that ensured their liberties.

- D.** The philosopher John Locke elevated this revolt to a universal principle in his treatises on government. He wrote that natural law, the law that comes to us from God, is based on absolute and enduring truths.
1. By this natural law, all men are created equal and endowed with rights to life, liberty, and property. Governments are instituted among men to ensure these rights.
 2. When a government breaks its contract with its people to preserve these rights, the people should revolt. The ultimate judge of whether a king breaks the law and revolution is justified is the individual citizen in his own conscience.

Essential Reading:

Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*.

Morgan, *Inventing the People*.

Urofsky, *March of Liberty*.

Supplementary Reading:

Kirk, *Roots of American Order*.

McClellan, *Liberty, Order, and Justice*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Congressional control of revenues is one of the most concrete legacies of England to the United States Constitution. Can you think of others?
2. Do you agree with John Locke that governments are instituted to ensure natural law?

Lecture Twenty-Seven

George Washington as Statesman

Scope: At each of our times of supreme crisis, the American democracy has brought forth leaders of unique ability and character. In 1789, the year George Washington took office under the new Constitution, the French Revolution began in France. The course of the American and French Revolutions displays the uniqueness of American freedom and the superiority of leadership resting in democracy. The French Revolution ended in terror and tyranny, but the American Revolution ended in a Constitution that still ensures peace, prosperity, and freedom more than two centuries later. Why? The character of the leaders of the two revolutions differed: Napoleon lacked the moral compass that is crucial to elevating a popular political and military leader into a true statesman. George Washington is a testament to the moral dimension of statesmanship.

Outline

- I.** The colonists who fought at Lexington in 1775 were convinced that they must defend their rights as Englishmen, even at the cost of revolution. Their conviction came from the values, talent, and patriotism of a unique generation of leaders, including George Washington.
 - A.** On Christmas night in 1776, on the Delaware River between Pennsylvania and New Jersey, General Washington made camp. It had been a momentous year. The Declaration of Independence had declared a nation, but now that nation must win independence on the field of battle.
 - B.** The British considered the Americans traitors. With the best army and navy in the world, England had launched the largest amphibious operation in its history to put down this rebellion. Washington had suffered a series of stinging defeats.
 - C.** Up and down the roads of New Jersey, British troops and German mercenaries, Hessians, had gone to every farmhouse, demanding that the heads of household declare loyalty to England.
 - D.** Washington's army had begun to dwindle. The men were good sharpshooters but had not been able to stand up to a British frontal charge. About 3,000 men—the core of the army—were militiamen who were due to leave on December 31.
 - E.** In this time of crisis, Washington hit upon one of the most brilliant tactics in the history of warfare and fought one of the most decisive battles in history.
- II.** Born in 1732 in Virginia, George Washington came from a family with strong ties to England. His father was a successful, self-made man, a farmer who ran a ferry service across the Rappahannock River.
 - A.** At age 14, Washington had had enough of formal learning. He went to Winchester, Virginia, where he began to survey for large landowners.
 - B.** In his early 20s, Washington distinguished himself as a soldier in the French and Indian War. He was a colonel in the Virginia militia, where his coolness under fire, bravery, and endurance were noted. After the war, he turned down the rare honor of a commission in the British army. He married, farmed, and watched with concern as Parliament insisted on its right to crush Americans' liberties.
 - C.** Washington knew the arrogance of the British from his days in the army. He would later say that nothing did more to strain relations between the Americans and the British than the Britons' superior attitude. But he also believed that Parliament had no right to legislate for the American people.
 - 1.** Parliament had reasserted its right to legislate for the entire empire, but Washington believed this move was one step in the growth of tyranny. He decided to become a traitor—to break an oath to England in the name of the higher cause of liberty.
 - 2.** The Virginia House of Burgesses chose Washington to command the continental armies. This Virginian, the most distinguished American soldier of the day, could unite the colonies.
- III.** But on December 25, 1776, it seemed as if the cause would fail. Washington decided to cross the Delaware River with his militiamen.

- A. He knew that Germans celebrated two days of Christmas, December 25 and 26. About 1,000 Hessian soldiers in Trenton chose to celebrate by getting drunk.
 - B. The weather was cold and sleety on December 25, and the roads seemed impassable. Washington rowed across the Delaware, landing in New Jersey in a swirling snowstorm. His soldiers went into Trenton and began to bombard the headquarters of the unsuspecting Hessians.
 - C. When the battle was over, 918 Hessians surrendered, and the revolutionary cause had new life.
- IV.** Then came the long winter of 1777–1778 at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Washington’s army trained with General von Steuben, a Prussian general who taught them to use bayonets and fight like a European army.
- A. The troops were ill-supplied, and many days, only 30 percent of them were well enough to stand for the drilling, but Washington stayed with them.
 - B. After British General Cornwallis lost a series of battles in the south, he retreated to Yorktown to reprovision his army. There, the Americans alliance with France paid off. The British were beaten, and Yorktown fell. The Revolutionary War was over.
 - C. After the war, Washington wanted to return to Mount Vernon, but the peace negotiations dragged on from 1781 to 1783. The army had to stand, but Congress would not pay the soldiers.
 - 1. The troops began to circulate a note promoting the idea of a kingship for Washington, who would then surely pay them.
 - 2. When Washington learned of this note, he told his men that nothing had so wounded him as the thought that anyone would want him to be king. He promised to get them paid, and he did.
- V.** Washington finally returned to Mount Vernon amid difficulties in the new republic. The Articles of Confederation did not allow the United States to become the commercial or political power people had hoped for.
- A. In early 1787, Washington received a letter from James Madison, suggesting a convention in Philadelphia that summer to revise the Articles of Confederation and create a more suitable instrument of government. Washington wrote back to decline participation. The 13 colonies, he believed, would not resign their individual interests to the good of the whole.
 - B. Madison ultimately persuaded Washington to go to the convention. As the general reached the outskirts of Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania militia arrived to accompany him to the city. When his carriage arrived in Philadelphia, bells began to peal.
 - C. Washington was the unanimous choice to preside over the convention. He did not speak out to present his views until the last day, when it seemed that the proceedings would halt over the question of apportioning representatives.
 - D. Washington understood that the key to the compromise underlying the new Constitution was over the issue of executive power.
 - 1. There were few models in the states for a strong executive, and the convention attendants feared that a strong commander-in-chief would be a vehicle to tyranny
 - 2. However, with everyone at the convention assuming and accepting that Washington would be the first president, the attendees knew that there was no chance of the usurpation or corruption of power.
- VI.** Washington became the first president of the United States in 1789. His salary was \$25,000, the equivalent of \$2.5 million today.
- A. Washington understood that everything he did—relations with Congress, foreign policy, economic programs—set a precedent.
 - B. The period of the French Revolution was marked by bitter partisan politics in America. People vied to support the British, the French, or neither. It would have been easy for Washington to assert that the situation was so dangerous that he must serve a third term. He almost certainly would have been elected. Instead, he set a precedent that the president does not usurp power.
- VII.** Washington finally retired to his beloved Mount Vernon. When he died of illness in 1799, France and Britain were at war, their navies on the verge of battle. Suddenly, the French navy lowered its flag. The British inquired whether the French were withdrawing from the engagement. The French signaled that General

Washington had died and asked to suspend battle for an hour in his memory. The British, former enemies of Washington, lowered their flag to pay tribute to this great man.

Essential Reading:

Palmer, *Age of Democratic Revolutions*.

Ellis, *George Washington*.

Supplementary Reading:

McCullough, *1776*.

Middlekauf, *The Glorious Cause*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you agree that leaders are but the reflection of the people they lead? Does that idea have applications today?
2. Why do you think the French Revolution produced Robespierre and Napoleon rather than Jefferson and Washington?

Lecture Twenty-Eight

Thomas Jefferson as Statesman

Scope: George Washington was a statesman. The same is true of Thomas Jefferson. The different course of the revolution in America and the revolution in France lay in the moral character of the individual leaders, personified by Washington and Jefferson on the American side and Napoleon on the French. As a revolutionary statement, Jefferson's Declaration of Independence founded American national freedom on the eternal truths of natural law. As president, Jefferson built an enduring "empire of liberty." His decision to make the Louisiana Purchase endowed the United States with an empire far larger, more enduring, and nobler than anything Napoleon imagined. Jefferson died in old age, honored throughout the world. Napoleon found his end in lonely exile.

Outline

- I.** The American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, and the U.S. Constitution were the products of a unique generation of statesmen, unsurpassed in human history.
 - A.** As we saw in the last lecture, George Washington embodied the principles by which we distinguish a statesman from a politician: He had a bedrock of principles and a moral compass. He also had a vision and the ability to build a consensus among his countrymen to achieve that vision.
 - B.** The moral authority of Washington explains why Americans were willing to give the Constitution a chance, despite the beliefs of many that it was flawed.
 - C.** Washington left his vision for America in his farewell address. He advised the young nation to avoid partisan politics, sectional conflict, and foreign entanglements.

- II.** The second of the generation of great statesmen who embodied the same qualities as Washington was Thomas Jefferson.
 - A.** Throughout the winter of 1775, statesmen, politicians, and ordinary Americans debated the merits of declaring independence from England. Many believed that a negotiated peace would grant the colonies some liberties.
 - B.** Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* argued that declaring independence from England was nothing more than a reasonable act. Washington was moved by the book, as was the Continental Congress that met in Philadelphia in 1776.
 - C.** After Richard Henry Lee of Virginia proposed that the colonies sever their ties with England, the attendants decided to produce a formal declaration to explain the break.
 - D.** A small committee was chosen to write this declaration, including Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson. Adams suggested that young Jefferson, then 33, write the declaration. Jefferson protested, but Adams and Franklin insisted.
 - E.** It would have been easy to draw up a boring, legalistic document, but Jefferson seized the moment. He wasn't a gifted writer, but his Declaration of Independence will still be read 2,000 years from now.

- III.** Jefferson's first statement is a universal declaration to the world of the principles on which the country was founded. He also writes that America will be judged in the course of human events.
 - A.** Jefferson expresses the ideal of national freedom through self-determination. The colonists started out as Englishmen but are now a separate people with the right to declare independence.
 - B.** As the basis for the fundamental values of the United States, the right to be free and to form a free nation, Jefferson appeals to the laws of nature and God.
 - 1.** The concept of natural law stems from Athens in the 5th century B.C., when Socrates spoke of a law of God respected by all.
 - 2.** The Roman statesman Cicero defined natural law in his works, which were fundamental in the schooling of the Founding Fathers. Cicero defined natural law as the law of God revealed in the reason of his universe. It is one law that rests with God, valid in all places and times.

3. The Declaration of Independence proclaims God as central to the mission of the new nation.
- IV.** The Declaration continues: “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal, and they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; and that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”
- A.** The ideal of natural law began in the Athenian democracy and spread throughout the Greek world in the wake of Alexander the Great’s conquests.
 - 1. Alexander believed that all men are equal and should be judged on their virtue and character. He sought an empire that united mankind.
 - 2. Greek philosophers, especially the Stoics, taught that all men are created equal under the goodness of one God, who is revealed in nature, and that all have life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as unalienable rights.
 - B.** This concept of natural law passed into Christianity. Paul referred to the law of God. John Locke wrote that government is instituted to ensure life, liberty, and, property and that when a government became injurious to these things, revolution is not only justified but a duty.
 - C.** By *liberty*, the Founders meant the right to live as one chooses as long as others are not harmed. To the Founders, harm meant physical beating or theft of property. Beyond that, the government had a limited right to interfere in one’s personal life.
 - D.** Jefferson could have substituted *property* for “the pursuit of happiness.” Again, he turned to Greek Stoic thought, according to which happiness lies in realizing one’s potential. The *pursuit of happiness* implies making the world a better place through one’s life.
 - E.** These God-given rights are unalienable; they cannot be taken away. Government exists to secure these rights. Its power comes from the consent of the governed—not God, as the British kings believed.
- V.** The Declaration of Independence sent a message to Parliament that the people no longer consented to its government: “Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government...”
- A.** Based on this Declaration, the United States became the only nation in history founded on principles. In other countries, people become citizens by birth or language. In the United States, people become citizens by accepting our basic principles.
 - B.** With the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson became a true statesman. He was well educated. He studied at the College of William and Mary and knew Greek and Latin well. He found Tacitus, the Roman historian, far more instructive than newspapers.
- VI.** Jefferson became the third U.S. president in 1801, following John Adams, who served only one term. Jefferson’s contemporary Alexander Hamilton is often portrayed as his conservative foil, but this comparison does not hold up.
- A.** Jefferson held to the conservative creed that the government is best that governs least. In contrast, Hamilton was one of the first big-government men. He wanted a strong national government to play a major role in economics, while Jefferson believed firmly in a free-market economy.
 - B.** Jefferson also believed in a strict construction of the Constitution. Unless the Constitution clearly spelled out a presidential power, the president shouldn’t assume it. In contrast, Hamilton favored an expansive interpretation of the Constitution.
 - C.** Jefferson was the first American president to commit troops in his power as commander-in-chief. He exercised this power when faced with a terrorist problem in the Middle East.
 - 1. Pirates sponsored by rogue governments in Libya demanded hostages from ships and tribute from the powers of Europe. European powers bowed to them, but Jefferson believed it was not right to pay homage to tyranny and terror.
 - 2. He sent the navy of the new nation to Tripoli. It was not an easy war, but Jefferson stayed the course until the government of Tripoli negotiated a peace agreement.
 - D.** Jefferson also oversaw the Louisiana Purchase. Though nothing in the Constitution seemed to justify this purchase of land, Jefferson found constitutional authority in the right of the president to make treaties if they were confirmed by the Senate.

VII. A brief comparison reveals the differences between Napoleon and Jefferson.

- A.** Napoleon squandered his treasure and many French lives on futile wars of conquest, keeping Europe in constant turmoil to build an empire. Because he needed money to fight these wars in Europe, he agreed to the short-term solution that became known as the Louisiana Purchase.
- B.** For \$15 million, Jefferson bought from Napoleon an empire larger than anything in Europe. Jefferson didn't want a vigorous France on U.S. borders. So began his empire of liberty.
- C.** Jefferson retired to his Virginia estate, Monticello. Late in life, he and John Adams, who had quarreled, began again to correspond. Both died on July 4, 1826, on the anniversary of the proclamation of our principles to the world.

Essential Reading:

Malone, *Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty* and *Jefferson the President: First Term*.

Supplementary Reading:

Ellis, *American Sphinx*.

Fears, "Natural Law."

Questions to Consider:

1. How do you reconcile Jefferson's words in the Declaration of Independence with the fact that he owned slaves?
2. Why do you think that American conservatives tend to prefer Hamilton to Jefferson?

Lecture Twenty-Nine

America's Empire of Liberty—Lewis and Clark

Scope: The unique course of American history is exemplified by our expansion across the continent. No nation has ever gained so large an empire by purchase and negotiation. Jefferson moved to make his vision of an empire of liberty into a reality by commissioning the exploration of the Louisiana Territory in 1803. The expedition of Lewis and Clark remains a striking example of what government does best. It was a triumph of geographical and scientific exploration and diplomacy. Meriwether Lewis is a preeminent example of a man of destiny, an individual who seems uniquely chosen to achieve one grand purpose. In achieving this destiny, it is irrelevant that all before in the individual's life and all afterwards may be insignificant. So it was with Lewis.

Outline

- I.** In 1803, the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France for \$15 million. Not everyone knew the location or exact boundaries of this territory. Critics in Congress complained about wasting money to buy a wilderness. In fact, it was the most significant real estate deal in U.S. history.
 - A.** New Orleans, at the mouth of the Mississippi River and a chief port, was crucial to the early republic's economy. The roads were bad, and shipping goods overland was expensive. Farmers and others used the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to float their goods down to New Orleans.
 - B.** Americans had rights to land in New Orleans, but the Spanish government that controlled the territory was difficult to deal with and concerned about Americans' seemingly insatiable desire to spread westward.
 - C.** The peace treaty that ended the Revolutionary War left the United States with an empire that stretched to the Mississippi River. By 1803, the Northwest Territory and the Southwest Territory were filling up with settlers.

- II.** In the course of French expansion, Napoleon's brother had been made king of Spain; he, in turn, gave the Louisiana Territory to France. Thus, the United States faced on its borders not the fairly decrepit Spanish government but Napoleon's vigorous France.
 - A.** Jefferson let it be known that the United States would not accept French command of Louisiana and, above all, New Orleans. If the French sent troops to New Orleans—which they had every right to do—it would be considered an act of war.
 - B.** Jefferson also proposed that the United States would rather purchase New Orleans than to fight a war.
 - C.** Napoleon was involved in a war with Britain, and the last thing he needed was to create an ally for the British. He offered all of the Louisiana Territory.
 - D.** Jefferson decided to buy the territory, finding approval for the action in the power of the president to make a treaty that is confirmed by the Senate. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives confirmed the purchase of the Louisiana Territory.

- III.** The purchase, announced July 4, 1803, was akin to a second founding of our country. This land would surely give Americans all they needed to become a viable agrarian democracy.
 - A.** The negotiations had not been revealed to the public, so the announcement came as something of a surprise. But Jefferson had already planned to have this territory explored. It was vaguely defined as the area drained by the Missouri River coming into the Mississippi River.
 - B.** Jefferson created the Corps of Discovery, manned by army officers, to explore the new territory. He chose his private secretary, Meriwether Lewis, to lead the expedition.
 - 1.** Lewis was a young man, not yet 30. He had limited military experience—serving only six months or so in the army—but he was a Virginian, and Jefferson knew his family.
 - 2.** Lewis had not had much formal education, and his journals of the expedition show an absolute disregard for spelling and grammar. Yet he had grown up on the frontier and was an experienced woodsman.

3. Jefferson gave Lewis crash courses in astronomy, map drawing, botany, and zoology. He sent Lewis to Philadelphia to study medicine with Dr. Benjamin Rush.
 - C. Lewis chose as his second-in-command William Clark, also a Virginian and a trained military officer. Though Lewis outranked Clark, the two men considered themselves equals and formed a lasting friendship.
 - D. Lewis and Clark began to pick members of the Corps of Discovery, stopping in frontier military posts and talking to soldiers.
 - E. Lewis also had to buy supplies with the \$2,500 he'd been allotted. He went well over budget in the end, but to begin with, he bought dried soup, fishhooks, rifles, an air gun, and a swivel canon. He also ordered the construction of an enormous iron skeleton of a boat.
- IV.** The Corps of Discovery arrived in St. Louis in the fall of 1803 and spent the winter camped nearby. The journal entries of Lewis ring true to anyone who has ever planned a trip—there always seems to be one more thing to do. It was May before the party started up the Missouri River.
- A. The Missouri is a swift, difficult river, filled with snags and a treacherous bottom. The men poled their boats upstream, sometimes traveling no more than three or four miles a day. Lewis often walked alongside the boats.
 - B. The explorers began to meet Native Americans, members of the Osage, Pawnee, and Oto tribes. Along the way, they marveled at a world that few had seen except for Native Americans and fur trappers.
 - C. Resources were seemingly unlimited. The frontier stood for equality of opportunity and a chance to begin again. Some of these men who had never been successful now had a chance to make a new life.
- V.** By the time winter began to set in, the expedition had reached about 30 miles beyond today's Bismarck, North Dakota. The Yankton Sioux of the Dakotas were fairly friendly, but the Teton Sioux, the warriors of the plains, were more hostile.
- A. One mission of this expedition was diplomacy, at which Lewis and Clark were skilled. But the Teton Sioux wanted guns and whiskey instead of the gifts they were offered. The face-off was resolved peacefully. During the 8,000-mile journey of the Corps, only two Native Americans were killed, and only one of the explorers died, of a ruptured appendix.
 - B. The expedition made its winter camp at Fort Mandan in North Dakota, near villages of the Mandan and Hidatsa peoples. During the long winter, Lewis caught up on his journal entries. It was bitterly cold, sometimes 40 degrees below zero.
 - C. A French fur trader, Charbonneau, arrived at the fort from the nearby Mandan village with his young, pregnant wife, Sacajawea. Charbonneau offered to accompany the group further west with the help of his wife, a Shoshone who had been kidnapped as a girl by the Hidatsa and who could speak their language.
 - D. Sacajawea—or Janie, as the expeditioners called her—gave birth to a boy, Jean Baptiste. In the spring, she and her family went with Lewis and Clark.
- VI.** The expedition entered what is today Montana and explored river after river. One of their tasks was to see if a river that drained into the Missouri extended all the way to Canada.
- A. Ultimately, the party headed up the Missouri and heard the roar of the falls near what is today Great Falls, Montana.
 - B. Portage around the falls took days, but the men finally arrived at the Bitter Root Mountains.
 - C. Charbonneau warned that they could not cross the mountains without horses. Otherwise, they risked a long, dangerous journey.
 - D. Sacajawea identified Native Americans who had been watching the party as her people, the Shoshone. She recognized in their chief her older brother, whom she had not seen since her capture as a girl. The Shoshone provided horses for the expedition.
 - E. Finally, the party reached the Columbia River. In November 1805, Clark wrote, "Ocean in view. Oh, great joy." The men had crossed the Continental Divide and found the source of the Missouri River.
 - F. The Corps was in the Northwest Empire—today's Washington, Oregon, and most of Idaho. They spent the winter in Fort Clatsop, anxious to return to St. Louis.

- VII.** On September 23, 1806, the bells of St. Louis rang to welcome back the expedition of Lewis and Clark. The explorers were celebrated in Washington. Lewis was made governor of the Louisiana Territory.
- A.** But the rest of his life was a failure. Back in St. Louis, Lewis was unable to find a bride, while his friend Clark, superintendent of Indian affairs, had married his childhood sweetheart and named his first son Meriwether Lewis Clark.
 - B.** The administration changed, and President James Madison would not pay the expedition's outstanding debts. Lewis's honor was destroyed.
 - C.** In late summer 1809, Lewis began a trip to Washington to clear his name. As he made his way almost alone, he came to a small inn near today's Nashville, Tennessee. There, in circumstances that were never fully explained, he shot himself to death, a sad end for this great American explorer, who with William Clark, gave us an empire.

Essential Reading:

DeVoto, ed., *Journals of Lewis and Clark*.

Supplementary Reading:

Alvis, *Lewis and Clark Through Indian Eyes*.

Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you think that contemporary American historians take a much more critical view of the Lewis and Clark expedition?
2. Would you agree with the historian Stephen Ambrose that the journals of Lewis and Clark are "a national literary treasure"?

Lecture Thirty

America and Slavery

Scope: The United States was founded on the self-evident truth that “all men are created equal.” However, slavery was recognized by the Constitution as the law of the land. The struggle in the name of liberty that brought Texas into the Union spread slavery. Many Americans before the Civil War shared with the ancient Athenians the conviction that empire and democracy are compatible and, even more appalling to us, the idea that slavery and democracy are compatible. With what seems to us hypocrisy and intellectual gymnastics, proponents of slavery justified this evil institution with references to Classical antiquity, the Bible, and the absolute right of property. Opponents of slavery condemned it as a mortal sin that would destroy our country. Only the Civil War would resolve this struggle over the fundamental values of freedom.

Outline

- I.** Each generation seems to rewrite history to reflect its own values and aspirations. The greater the event, the more each generation will reconsider it. For example, many modern historians have a complex view of the Lewis and Clark expedition.
 - A.** Native Americans, in many cases, did not celebrate the 2006 bicentennial of the expedition. Jefferson called the United States an empire of liberty, but the Louisiana Purchase is one of the best examples of the denial of self-determination.
 - B.** The Native American tribes that Lewis and Clark met—the Sioux, the Mandan, and others—were not given the right to decide whether they wanted to join the United States, be independent, or remain part of France or Spain. Their land was simply taken.
 - C.** In addition, William Clark traveled with a slave, whom he did not treat well. As we all know, Thomas Jefferson also owned slaves.
- II.** The birth of the United States was joined with slavery from the writing of the Constitution. To understand the issue of slavery in America, let’s return to March 6, 1836, to a former mission called the Alamo in the Mexican town of San Antonio.
 - A.** In the cold dawn, some 2,000 Mexican troops prepared to make the final assault on the 187 Americans who had defended this fortress for 13 days. Their dispute: The Mexican dictator, Santa Anna, wanted to abolish slavery, but the Americans in Texas had brought their slaves with them. Further, the Americans didn’t want to pay taxes to the Mexican government.
 - B.** The United States had encouraged Texas’s declaration of independence but stayed out of the struggle. Santa Anna had warned the Americans that those who revolted would be harshly suppressed.
 - C.** The commander of the Americans at the Alamo, William Travis, had led his men here to give General Sam Houston, the leader of the Texas army, a chance to build a force capable of withstanding Santa Anna. Among the men at the Alamo were former congressman Davy Crockett and slave trader Jim Bowie.
 - D.** The Americans believed that their right to freedom included the right to own slaves. No government could not enforce the morality of the question of slavery.
 - E.** Before the siege, Santa Anna asked the Texans to surrender. Travis answered with a rebel yell and fired a cannon. Santa Anna attacked, and the Texans suffered terrible losses, including Crockett and Travis.
- III.** The Alamo, however, bought time for Houston. On April 21, 1836, his army destroyed Santa Anna’s force at the Battle of San Jacinto and took the Mexican commander captive. Ten years later, the United States annexed Texas.
 - A.** Mexico sought to block the annexation, and the two countries battled from 1846 to 1848. The United States won and gained another empire that included today’s Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and California.
 - B.** A treaty with Britain gave us Washington, Oregon, and part of Idaho. Suddenly, the United States stretched across the continent.

- C. Abraham Lincoln, a first-term congressman from Illinois, spoke against the Mexican-American War, although his fellow Whigs favored it. He demanded that the president show Congress where Mexican troops had invaded U.S. territory, the supposed justification for the war.
 - D. Lincoln lost his bid for reelection and returned to the practice of law, but he could not leave the question of slavery alone. How can the United States be a democracy and have slavery? How can we be a Christian nation and have slavery? Throughout the South—which, in terms of slaveholding, encompassed Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri—people believed strongly in the right to own slaves.
- IV.** Slavery is a terrible moral wrong, but we must see the issue as it was in 1860. Slavery bitterly divided the United States along geographical lines. In Southerners' view, owning slaves was an individual choice, and the federal government had no right to interfere and take away this fundamental liberty.
- A. To support this view, Southerners drew on the Old Testament, which includes edicts for the treatment of slaves. The New Testament also condoned slavery. In fact, the apostle Paul wrote a letter urging slaves to serve their masters well.
 - B. Aristotle, too, wrote that, by nature, some men are free and some are slaves. Both Greece and Sparta, the noblest nations of antiquity, had slavery.
 - C. The U.S. Constitution proclaimed slavery as the law of the land. Federal law required that slaves who fled to free states be returned to their masters.
 - D. Finally, Thomas Jefferson, in the Declaration of Independence, invoked natural law as the foundation of our country. But what is the natural law that Jefferson relied on in writing this immortal document?
 1. Natural law (Cicero's *ius naturale*) is the law of God, who desires all men to be free. But the law of mankind (*ius gentium*) throughout history has recognized slavery. Slaves were the property of their owners, who could do with them what they wanted.
 2. Slavery was utterly wrong, but half of our country believed slavery was right and was willing to fight the greatest war in U.S. history over it.
- V.** Abraham Lincoln had less than one year of formal schooling throughout his life, but he knew the Old Testament well. He believed that every individual had the right to interpret the Bible for himself.
- A. By 1856, Lincoln was convinced that the South wanted to expand slavery across the nation. It had already been brought to Texas, and proponents sought to expand it to Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Arizona.
 - B. For Lincoln, a great blow came when the U.S. Supreme Court required escaped slaves to be returned to their masters. The court also ruled that black Americans were not citizens when the Constitution was enacted and, thus, did not receive any rights under it.
 - C. To Lincoln, this ruling clearly showed that the issue of slavery would not fade away. He joined the Republican Party, the one anti-slavery party. The Democrats were badly divided; some supported slavery, others opposed it, and most wanted to ignore the issue.
- VI.** Lincoln ran for senator of Illinois against incumbent Stephen Douglas, an able politician who saw himself as a potential president. These two master orators debated during their campaigns.
- A. In the course of these debates, Lincoln asked Douglas to explain his position on slavery. Douglas said that each state ought to be allowed to vote on whether or not it wanted slavery.
 - B. Lincoln pressed Douglas for a definitive statement on slavery, but the candidate would not commit. Ultimately, Lincoln made the point that the golden rule proved slavery wrong.
- VII.** Lincoln became president in 1861, and from the beginning of his term, he wanted to abolish slavery. "A house divided against itself cannot stand," he said. The United States could not be both slave and free. Our country is a model to the world that a democracy can be a force for moral good.

Essential Reading:

Fehrenbach, *Lone Star*, pp. 3–392.

Oates, *With Malice Toward None*, pp. 3–207

Supplementary Reading:

Wills, *Negro President: Jefferson and the Slave Power*.

Questions to Consider:

1. As a congressman, Lincoln denounced the Mexican War. Would you agree with him?
2. Could you have agreed with the Founders who opposed slavery but voted for the Constitution in the belief that the top priority was to establish an effective national government?

Lecture Thirty-One

Abraham Lincoln as Statesman

Scope: The American Civil War was a noble struggle, fought with honor and producing, on both sides, leaders of exemplary moral character. However, for Abraham Lincoln and many in the North, it was a war against an evil regime, born of the moral wrong of slavery. At the beginning of the war, many in Europe and America believed that the decay of democracy was embodied in the choice of a backwoods solicitor such as Lincoln to guide the destiny of his nation. In fact, Lincoln is the ultimate testimony to the ability of democracy to produce world-historical leaders in times of crisis.

Outline

- I.** As we continue our exploration of America's unique history of freedom, we return to March 4, 1865, a cold, wet day in Washington, D.C. Crowds have come to hear Abraham Lincoln deliver his second inaugural address. The Civil War has dragged on for four long, bloody years.
 - A.** A successful lawyer, Lincoln reentered politics because he believed that slavery was wrong. His win in the presidential election of 1860 came from the Electoral College, not the majority vote of the people.
 - B.** As soon as Lincoln was elected, South Carolina seceded. In his first inaugural address in March 1861, Lincoln said that he would not interfere with slavery but that the nation could not separate. He called for a constitutional convention to resolve the issue.
 - C.** But the South would have none of it. Seven states seceded and formed the Confederate States of America, led by Jefferson Davis.
 - D.** The British saw a sign of the Union's political immaturity in the election of a solicitor from a backwoods province. Meanwhile, they said, the Confederacy had chosen a true statesman.
- II.** Close in age, Lincoln and Davis were both Kentucky-born men of the frontier, but any similarities ended there.
 - A.** Davis grew up in Mississippi, the son of a wealthy planter, and attended West Point. Educated in the classics, he had distinguished himself in the Mexican War and had been decorated for bravery. He went into politics, becoming a senator and secretary of war.
 - B.** Davis believed that slavery was a matter of personal choice and that each state should determine whether or not to allow it. Like other Southerners, Davis believed that property was an inalienable right and that slaves were simply property.
 - C.** As the secession crisis deepened, Davis refused to compromise or negotiate. He believed that secession was the best response to the North's determination to interfere with the South's right to own slaves. His appointment as president of the Confederacy was acclaimed in the press.
 - D.** By contrast, Lincoln, already in danger of assassination, slunk into Washington for his first inauguration, dressed in disguise and accompanied by armed friends. The crisis was deepening rapidly.
 - E.** Lincoln's cabinet members believed that they could make this ungainly president their figurehead. They favored negotiations and advised Lincoln not to provoke the South. But Lincoln knew that the South was building an army by seizing federal arsenals, forts, and other instruments of war.
 - F.** Lincoln's advisors also warned him to be careful in dealing with Davis, known as a superb politician and statesman, but Lincoln marked him for a fool.
- III.** At the same time, Davis's vice president warned him not to attack Fort Sumter. In the North, about 70 percent of the population would have allowed the South to separate from the Union without war.
 - A.** When Davis ordered the Confederate army to fire on Fort Sumter, the North was immediately galvanized. Lincoln called up 75,000 volunteers and, against advice, decided to invade Virginia in the summer of 1861.
 - B.** The United States and the Confederacy first fought at Manassas. Lincoln suffered at the news of an overwhelming defeat. It was the first of many instances in which his cabinet and military leaders feared being led to disaster by a fool.

- C. The war dragged on, longer and bloodier than anyone could have imagined. Time and time again, the Union suffered defeats. Lincoln turned to superb generals, such as George McClellan, but continued to “interfere” in the conduct of the war.
 - D. After the Battle of Antietam, Lincoln fired McClellan and issued the Emancipation Proclamation. His advisors opposed the action as a halfway measure that freed slaves only in the areas in rebellion and would force the Confederacy to continue fighting.
 - E. But Lincoln understood that the proclamation gave the Union cause a moral authority. It made it almost impossible for Britain and France—allies the Confederacy hoped to win—to recognize the slaveholding nation.
- IV.** The armies of General Robert E. Lee clashed with Union troops at the Battle of Gettysburg from July 1 to 3, 1863. On July 4, the Confederate armies began to retreat.
- A. On that same day, the Union captured Vicksburg, Mississippi, and the Confederacy was cut in two. Atlanta was taken and burned.
 - B. General Ulysses Grant suffered serious losses, but he knew the Union outmanned the Confederacy. Still, the Confederates stayed in the field, such was their devotion to the cause of liberty based on slavery. Lincoln, too, held firm.
 - C. As the war went on, the Confederates tried to negotiate. Many Northerners favored negotiations, too, to end the war and bring the Union back together, but Lincoln refused.
 - D. In November 1864, Lincoln seemed likely to lose the presidential election. His opponent, his one-time general George McClellan, advocated compromise and negotiations, but Lincoln furloughed enough Union soldiers to carry the election.
- V.** By the time of Lincoln’s second inaugural address in March 1865, the Confederacy was dying. Both this speech and the Gettysburg Address restated the unique legacy of American freedom based on natural law and the Bible.
- A. Lincoln had grown in the course of the war. This backwoods solicitor had come to understand his mission and the reason that 623,026 men had to die in this war. He also knew why his own young son had died.
 - B. Lincoln explained these events by appealing to natural law, the law of God that is valid in all places and times. The law of God was that all men must be free, but the United States had broken that law.
 - 1. The Declaration of Independence had proclaimed that all men are created equal, but the Constitution had stepped back from that promise.
 - 2. Lincoln believed that the Founders had mistakenly left God out of the Constitution and inserted slavery. In fact, God is mentioned four times in the Declaration of Independence but not at all in the Constitution.
 - 3. In the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln said that this nation must have, under God, a new birth of freedom. His God was a God of forgiveness and justice but also, as in the Old Testament, a God of vengeance.
 - C. In his second inaugural address, Lincoln said that the Civil War had been God’s judgment for allowing slavery to exist. Lincoln was not a churchgoer, but he was the most religious of our presidents.
 - D. Lincoln promised to move forward to “bind up the nation’s wounds.” In opposition to many in Congress and his cabinet, he refused to carry out a merciless conquest of the South.
- VI.** Lee surrendered on Palm Sunday 1865, on terms more generous than any other nation has ever received. The Confederates were allowed to return home by stacking their arms and promising not to fight again against the United States.
- A. On the night before Good Friday 1865, Lincoln was reported to have dreamed of his own death. When he and Mrs. Lincoln went to Ford’s Theater the next evening, John Wilkes Booth stepped into their box and shot Lincoln, shouting, “*Sic semper tyrannis* [‘Thus always to tyrants’]; the South is avenged.”
 - B. Lincoln had been determined to fight what became the bloodiest war in American history to prevent the separation of the United States. Perhaps his dream represented his belief that he must die to atone for the suffering he had caused.

Essential Reading:

Oates, *With Malice Toward None*, pp 211–474.

Supplementary Reading:

Borit, *Lincoln: The War President*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Should Lincoln still be regarded today as a great statesman?
2. Do you agree that the Civil War was a war fought over conflicting ideals of freedom?

Lecture Thirty-Two

The United States and Empire

Scope: In the broad perspective of history, the American Civil War saw the triumph of a centralized national government, based on democratic freedom, over a confederation of sovereign states, based on a republican ideal of freedom and the belief that liberty and slavery are compatible. Abraham Lincoln was the statesman of union and of the expansion of democratic liberty across the continent. However, just as the South was denied the right of national self-determination, so, too, were the Native Americans. The brutality with which the South was conquered was far surpassed by the brutality that marked the treatment of Native Americans by the United States. In historical terms, the consolidation and expansion of the United States paralleled the contemporaneous unification of Italy and Germany and the imperial expansion of Britain and France.

Outline

- I.** With the Union victory in the Civil War, the United States entered the stage of world politics. The powers of Europe saw that this young republic, now nearly 100 years old, would not collapse. The Civil War illustrates several of our lessons of history.
 - A.** History is made by great individuals, not by social and economic forces. In times of crisis, a great leader must emerge, one who is a statesman and not a mere politician.
 - 1.** Abraham Lincoln's assassination on Good Friday and the stories surrounding it elevated him from a politician to a hero. To the ancient Greeks, heroes were humans who performed deeds of such greatness that they were worthy of being worshiped as divinities.
 - 2.** We don't worship Lincoln, but an ancient Greek would see no difference between the Lincoln Memorial and a temple raised to the emperor Augustus. In fact, the design of the Lincoln Memorial is based on a Greek temple.
 - B.** The Civil War proved that wars can settle difficult issues. In this case, the war produced prohibitions against slavery and secession from the Union.
 - C.** The wisdom of history shows that democracies do not necessarily make good neighbors. The Union and the Confederacy, two democracies, could not live in peace. When their war was over, the loser had to accept unconditional surrender, a hallmark of democratic wars.
 - D.** The Civil War was fought over conflicting ideals of freedom. The South believed that liberty encompassed the right to own property, including slaves. The North believed that liberty meant freedom for all.
- II.** Lincoln emerged from the Civil War as a true statesman, but Jefferson Davis, the Confederate president, never grew to his task, though he possessed some characteristics of a statesman.
 - A.** Lincoln's bedrock of principles was based on democratic freedom. Davis, too, had a bedrock of principles; he believed deeply in the Constitution and found in it the legal right of the South to secede from the Union. He also believed that slavery was a matter of moral choice.
 - B.** Lincoln's nickname, Honest Abe, attests to his moral compass. Davis certainly had a moral compass; he was utterly self-righteous.
 - C.** Lincoln had a vision of the United States as the last best hope for the human race. Davis had no vision except of a confederation of 13 states.
 - D.** Though he was hated in the South and many parts of the North, Lincoln built consensus in the North to carry it through four long years of war. In contrast, as the war went on, Davis alienated more and more people, including his own vice president.
- III.** At the end of the war, Davis was blamed as the man most responsible for the South's defeat. The North treated him brutally, keeping him shackled, denying visits from his wife while he was in prison, and keeping his cell lit night and day.

- A. Ultimately, Davis was released, by which time he was nearly bankrupt. Through the goodwill of an admirer, he came to live on a plantation in Biloxi, Mississippi, where he wrote a two-volume justification of the South's actions, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate States*.
 - B. Late in life, Davis was invited to speak at the statehouse in Jackson, Mississippi. At the end of his speech, he said that if he were returned to the year 1861, he would do everything exactly the same. The audience gasped, then stood and gave him a rousing cheer. They did not learn from history.
- IV. Lincoln was an empire builder as well as a war president. That we are a superpower today is the result of his policies not only to end secession but to spread democracy across the continent. Ironically, while Lincoln championed the rights of black slaves, he suppressed those of Native Americans.
- A. On June 25, 1876, on the grassy plains of Montana, General George Custer and his army rode into Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho villages along the Little Bighorn River, using the same tactics of total destruction used against the South in the Civil War.
 - B. An admirer of Napoleon, Custer frequently used the tactic of splitting his forces into two or three lines of command. He had used this tactic several years earlier at the Battle of the Washita, in which a Cheyenne village was massacred.
 - C. Gold had been discovered in the Black Hills, the sacred hunting ground of the Sioux, and because the white settlers wanted that gold, Custer had been sent to destroy the Native Americans. When the Battle of Little Bighorn ended, however, Custer and more than 200 of his troops were dead.
- V. President Ulysses Grant and his generals saw it as their mission to destroy the Native American civilization and to institute a policy of apartheid by relocating the Native Americans to reservations.
- A. Those who tried to leave the reservations were hunted down and returned or killed.
 - B. The systematic slaughter of bison on the plains was part of the attempt to destroy the Native Americans. The brave warriors of the plains were ultimately reduced to begging the army officers who fed them to let them hunt animals on horseback as they had in earlier days.
 - C. The centralized democracy that emerged after the Civil War rested on majority rule. But, as Aristotle noted, a majority can be as tyrannical as any despot. The Native Americans paid the price of this democratic tyranny.
 - D. The Homestead Act of 1862 gave anyone who settled on and developed a tract of land possession of it. Often, that land belonged to Native Americans, but they were not part of majority rule.
- VI. European observers were troubled by the callous treatment of Native Americans, yet both the United States and Europe were engaged in empire building. The period 1850–1876 was a time of great events on the world stage.
- A. This period saw the Crystal Palace exhibition in London (1851), the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), and the unification of Germany and Italy.
 1. The Crystal Palace exhibition showed off the marvels of modern science and technology.
 2. It was thought that these technological advancements, along with a world economy based on free-market principles, would ensure peace among the European powers.
 - B. Otto von Bismarck of Germany and Camillo Cavour of Italy practiced *Realpolitik*, in which decisions were made based on facts, not sentiment. Both nations had seen failed attempts at unification. Now, Bismarck turned to a policy of blood and iron, and Cavour began a policy of careful manipulation.
 - C. Both Italy and Germany loomed much larger than the United States in the 19th century. Their leaders were the true empire and nation builders. Bismarck united Germany with a series of short wars. Italy was united under the House of Savoy.
 - D. During the American Civil War, the Prussians observed and absorbed modern warfare. They saw both sides use railroads to rush men into battle, and they saw the damage that heavy artillery and Gatling guns could inflict. They used this knowledge to attack Denmark and Austria.
 - E. In 1870, Bismarck provoked Napoleon III, the French emperor and nephew of Napoleon I. This scheming politician had returned a chaotic France to the days of empire. Under his guidance, France continued its imperial expansion into Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Vietnam.

- F. Napoleon III could not tolerate the rise of a united Germany. France declared war but was defeated. Napoleon was taken prisoner at the Battle of Sedan and exiled to England.
- G. Germany emerged as the rising continental power. It had the best army in Europe. It began to acquire colonies and to build a navy. At the same time, Russia was enhancing its empire and carrying out ruthless campaigns in Central Asia.

VII. The United States, too, began to become a superpower. In 1890, the Census Bureau announced that the frontier had been conquered. In 1898, our country went to war with Spain, and the United States conquered and annexed Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

- A. Some observers warned that a true democracy cannot be a superpower. An empire would lead to corruption and tarnish all that made America special.
- B. Among the heroes of empire was Teddy Roosevelt, a vigorous and farsighted president who believed that it was “bully” for America to bring the blessings of civilization to those who didn’t know they wanted them. He built a fleet that sailed around the world, demonstrating the might of this new democracy. He was the last frontiersman to be president.
- C. The frontier extended our democracy. At the same time, it laid bare our ruthless disregard for others.

Essential Reading:

Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*.

Roosevelt, *Winning the West*.

Supplementary Reading:

Glaser, ed., *Bridging the Atlantic*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you reluctant to think of the United States as an empire?
2. Much of the expansion of the United States has been through purchase. Do you think this distinguishes us from other empires in history?

Lecture Thirty-Three

Franklin Roosevelt as Statesman

Scope: Lincoln and the Civil War charted the course of the United States toward true democratic freedom, based on majority rule, universal suffrage, and the definition of liberty as equality. World War I saw the United States assume the role of a superpower. Woodrow Wilson, one of our greatest presidents, believed, like Lincoln, that democratic freedom is a universal value and that the United States had been chosen to bring democracy to the world. He refused to learn the lessons of history, and the failure of his ideals led to World War II. The 1930s saw a collapse in the ordinary individual's faith in democracy, largely because of false expectations raised by politicians after World War I. The promise of economic prosperity associated with democracy and the free-market economy collapsed in worldwide depression. The world that was to be made safe for democracy splintered into bitter rivalries fostered by ancient ethnic hatreds. The constitutions of newly democratic states proved unable to bring stability. The result was the rise of dictators; Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, and the militarists who dominated Japan were only the most dominant figures of an age in which totalitarianism seemed to eclipse democracy. In the course of World War II, the rule of totalitarian governments extended from Spain to Vladivostok. But democracy would triumph. The democratic nations of Britain and the United States would produce in Churchill and Roosevelt wartime leaders with few equals in history.

Outline

- I. One law of history is that America shares the destiny of past democracies and republics. Aristotle believed that democracies have a common development and destiny and that they move toward ever-greater democracy.
 - A. Aristotle said that democracy begins by defining liberty as liberty under law. Next, it defines liberty as the freedom to do as one chooses. Finally, liberty comes to mean complete equality. These evolving definitions are the natural cycle of a democratic constitution.
 - B. The U.S. Constitution followed this cycle. The Founders created a balanced democracy that limited the power of the people. The president was elected not by the voters but through the Electoral College, with electors chosen by state legislatures.
 - C. Over the years, the Constitution has become more democratic. The 17th Amendment transferred the election of senators from state legislatures to the people. Other amendments extended the franchise and ensured greater equality. The 15th Amendment gave voting rights to African-American males. Since then, voting rights have been extended to women and 18-year-olds.
 - D. If he were alive today, Aristotle would say that the U.S. Constitution has followed the destiny of past democracies.
 1. After the Persian Wars, the Athenian confederation of independent states was superseded by the central power of Athens. In the same way, the American Civil War transformed the United States from a confederation of states to an imperial federal government.
 2. Aristotle would also compare the United States to the Roman Republic. Both nations started as small groups of states and expanded until they dominated large areas. The United States defended its liberty until it became a superpower.
- II. World Wars I and II provide proof that wars change things. After World War I, the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires disappeared; Germany's attempt to dominate the continent was stopped; and the British Empire reached its height.
 - A. This lecture will compare two wartime presidents, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt, as illustrations of the law of history that great statesmen emerge in times of crisis.
 - B. Wilson ranks as a great president but not a statesman. He had a bedrock of principles but, like Abraham Lincoln, wore blinkers on some issues. He was very segregation-minded and opposed African-Americans serving in the army.
 - C. Wilson had a moral compass, but he was utterly rigid. He had no sense of compromise.

- D. He had a vision of a world living in democracy, but he failed to understand that freedom is not a universal value and that, for many people, national freedom is more important than political or individual freedom.
 - E. Wilson could not build a consensus for the League of Nations because Congress almost always rebels against “imperial” presidents.
- III.** In part because of Wilson, the United States stepped back from the challenge of superpower status in the 1920s. Americans wanted nothing to do with Europe or any more wars to make the world safe for democracy. It was an age of cynicism.
- A. Then came the stock market crash of 1929 and the Depression. Those who did not live through it cannot imagine how the Depression shook American confidence.
 - B. The infrastructure we have now to help people during economic downturns did not exist. Men roamed the country looking for work. Trucks carried poor families looking for new opportunities to California. Those who had jobs feared losing them.
 - C. The Depression hit Germany as hard as it did the United States, but the Germans turned to Adolf Hitler, while we had Franklin Roosevelt.
 - D. Roosevelt is a world historical figure, a leader who moved the world to a new era. Roosevelt saved this country from social revolution and played a central role in defeating Nazism.
 - E. Harvard-educated and from a wealthy New York family, Roosevelt was just a politician, not a statesman, when the Great Depression struck. When first elected president in 1932, he understood that his role was to restore the country’s confidence.
 - F. Roosevelt gave the nation hope. He built a consensus with Congress. He had a vision of a true democracy and the practical means to bring it about. He was also a master orator. “We have nothing to fear but fear itself,” he told the nation.
- IV.** When Roosevelt was elected to his second term in 1936, war clouds had begun to gather over Europe. A believer in democracy, Roosevelt knew that the Axis powers were evil, and he was determined to play a role in stopping the spread of evil.
- A. But Americans were largely isolationist. People were more concerned with overcoming the Depression than with going to war in Europe.
 - B. By the time World War II began, Roosevelt saw no way to keep the United States out of it. When Winston Churchill became prime minister of Great Britain, one of the first things he did was to contact Roosevelt. Over the course of the war, the two men developed a close working relationship.
 - C. Roosevelt knew, as Churchill had said, that the British would never surrender. Although technically at peace, the United States began to supply Britain. But Roosevelt never satisfied the British, and he had to deal with a suspicious Congress and a public that wanted to stay out of the war.
- V.** The only president before Roosevelt who thought seriously about a third term was Ulysses S. Grant. A political scandal had wracked Grant’s second term, and he wanted one more term to justify himself. Roosevelt faced suspicion, too, but decided to run again in 1940.
- A. In December of 1941 came the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The nation finally understood that it had to go to war. In a speech broadcast on the radio, Roosevelt expressed the outrage of a nation that had been attacked while negotiating peace with Japan.
 - B. Pearl Harbor is an example of a regrettable preemptive strike.
 1. Japan had begun its climb to power in the early 20th century with a sneak attack on the Russian navy in the Russo-Japanese War, which ended in a negotiated peace. Perhaps the Japanese believed that they could achieve the same ends with the United States.
 2. One of the lessons of history, however, is that once aroused, a democracy will fight to the end.
 - C. Roosevelt mobilized American citizens. Rationing was put in place. Even children were enlisted in the war effort to collect tires and aluminum foil. Patriotism swept the nation, expanded by Roosevelt’s fireside chats over the radio and popular Hollywood films. There was the sense that democracy must triumph.

- D. Churchill had not given up the idea of a negotiated peace, but Roosevelt insisted on unconditional surrender. His advisers said this strategy would extend the war, but Roosevelt understood that true peace could be achieved only by destroying the enemy.
- VI. When elected to a fourth term in 1944, Roosevelt was ill and worn down by the war, but he wanted one more term to carry World War II to its conclusion.
- A. Roosevelt's struggles against the effects of polio symbolized strength to the American people.
 - B. The president did not live to see the war to its end. When he died in 1945, the outpouring of grief was unlike any the country had experienced since Lincoln's death.
 - C. Harry Truman carried on, marking the beginning of the end for another moral wrong, segregation. Roosevelt took his rightful place among true statesmen and world historical figures.

Essential Reading:

Ferrell, *Presidential Leadership*.

Winkler, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*.

Supplementary Reading:

MacMillan, *Paris 1919*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you agree that the amendments to the Constitution since the Civil War have had greater democracy as their aim?
2. Do you believe that Franklin Roosevelt should be ranked with Lincoln as a president and commander-in-chief?

Lecture Thirty-Four

A Superpower at the Crossroads

Scope: The end of World War II brought new dangers to democracy. Stalin and the Soviet Union threatened to bury American democracy. Though Harry Truman and his successors in the White House made mistakes, Truman himself grew in stature. Like Lincoln, he was a unique product of American democracy. We rank Truman along with Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Wilson, and Roosevelt as a statesman of democratic empire. Truman believed that America was chosen to bring freedom to the world and to achieve this, America must be a superpower. In the process, the United States joined the legacy of the empires of Europe and Asia in the Middle East, Indo-China, and Korea. The consequences of conflicts in these regions are still with us.

Outline

- I.** As we continue to chart the destiny of the United States as a superpower, let's consider the summer of 1945 in Potsdam at the palace of Frederick, king of Prussia. The conquerors of World War II were gathered: Joseph Stalin, chairman of the Communist Party and the Soviet Union; Clement Attlee, prime minister of Britain; and Harry Truman, U.S. president.
 - A.** As a member of Parliament, Attlee had been one of Churchill's strongest supporters. He did not have any foreign policy experience.
 - B.** He and his Labour Party had a strong social agenda that included the dismantling of the British Empire. It was one of the few empires that gave up its holdings willingly.
- II.** Truman is not a world historical figure, but he is instructive to modern politicians. A World War I veteran, he had enjoyed his military experience, but he never wanted another world war.
 - A.** Truman didn't accomplish much early in life. He attended a business school and ran a clothing store, which failed. He invested in an oil well, only to sell his interest and have the well come in the next day. Not much seemed to work in his favor.
 - B.** Truman's political career was launched when he caught the attention of Tom Pendergast, the machine politician who ran Kansas City, Missouri.
 - C.** When Truman ran for and won a U.S. Senate seat, Pendergast advised him to read his mail and keep his mouth shut. Other senators called Truman "the senator from Pendergast," and he had no clout whatsoever.
 - D.** Truman was put on a committee to investigate government overspending around the country. He earned a reputation for talking to workers standing up to government waste.
- III.** Franklin Roosevelt had a habit of changing vice presidents every time he ran, and Truman, a moderate Democrat, looked like a good choice. Roosevelt knew that he might not live to see the end of the war, but he did not share this information with Truman. After Roosevelt died, Truman was suddenly commander-in-chief of the greatest army in the world, with Europe in ruins and Japan collapsing.
 - A.** At Potsdam, Truman was told that the atomic-bomb test had worked. He announced this result to Stalin, who professed little surprise. Stalin already knew about the bomb.
 - B.** At first, Truman did not seem to learn from history. He thought that he could negotiate with Stalin, who sought only power. Truman came away from the first meeting at Potsdam knowing that he had a profound responsibility to prevent another world war.
 - C.** Truman faced significant problems: the realization that the United States could not step back from its role as a superpower, the availability of the atomic bomb, the state of Europe, and the rapid spread of Communism across Eastern Europe. In dealing with these problems, Truman grew into the presidency.
- IV.** Truman was aided by George Marshall, a remarkable general who became secretary of state.
 - A.** Noted for his administrative skills during World War I, Marshall advised Roosevelt during World War II but kept an appropriate distance from the commander-in-chief.

- B. As secretary of state, Marshall helped Truman create a plan to save Europe, the Marshall Plan. Under this statement of foreign policy, vast resources would be poured into Europe and Japan to rebuild war-torn nations as models of democracy and economic viability.
 - C. Japan had no tradition of democracy; now, it is a flourishing parliamentary democracy. Germany had a failed history of democracy; now, this economic power leads the European Union. Both countries have close political, military, and economic ties to the United States.
 - D. The Marshall Plan proved to be a remarkable success, but Truman had to get it through a Congress that didn't want to spend the money. He built consensus in this important area.
- V. As Israel formed and the British dismantled their empire in Palestine, Truman also faced the question of whether or not to recognize the Jewish state.
- A. Marshall advised Truman not to recognize Israel because doing so would embitter U.S. relations with Arab countries for generations to come.
 - B. But Truman's moral compass directed him to recognize Israel. The Jewish people had suffered, and for their own safety, they deserved a nation. Truman also took seriously the Old Testament legacy of freedom.
 - C. The United States had never been involved in the Middle East politically, but now it stepped into the legacy of the British failure in Palestine.
- VI. Another crucial decision involved Korea, a country once brutally ruled as part of the Japanese Empire.
- A. At the end of World War II, there weren't enough American troops in Korea to accept the surrender of Japanese forces. It was decided, as a matter of convenience, that Japanese troops in the northern part of the peninsula would surrender to the Soviet armies and those in the south would surrender to the United States.
 - B. The Soviets rapidly established a Communist dictatorship in the north. In June 1950, the North Koreans poured across the border to unify the south by war.
 - C. How should the United States respond to this distant invasion? Truman understood that Stalin was testing the U.S. response and knew that nothing would stop Stalin except force. He decided to send in American troops.
 - D. The Korean War was a bloody, unpopular conflict; millions of American draftees were sent to what they described as hell on Earth. As we saw earlier, the first defeat of North Korea led only to an invasion by China and its well-equipped army.
 - E. Truman had on his side General Douglas MacArthur, a decorated World War II hero who had been commander of U.S. forces in the Philippines. But MacArthur publicly criticized Truman's decision not to drop more atomic bombs and complained to the press that he was hamstrung by politicians who wouldn't let him win the war. Truman ultimately asserted his role as commander-in-chief and fired MacArthur.
 - F. Truman's wife hated Washington, and by this time, he had had enough as well. His popularity in the trough, Truman went home to Missouri.
- VII. Years later, another Democratic president, Lyndon Johnson, embroiled us again in an Asian conflict, in Vietnam. When the French left Vietnam at our urging, we expected democracy to flourish, but it didn't. Communism proved far more resilient.
- A. Step by step, Johnson was dragged into Vietnam. Our prestige in the world as well as the fate of democracy rested on the outcome of this war. But as the number of troops grew, so did the suspicions of Americans at home.
 - B. Then Johnson made a fatal mistake—he began to lose credibility. When the United States finally left Vietnam, it suffered not only its first real defeat but a blow to its confidence.
 - C. The consequences of the Vietnam War were serious. The domino theory was proved correct: South Vietnam fell to North Vietnam. Laos and Cambodia fell to Communism. In Cambodia, the government slaughtered 2 million people.
 - D. The failure of the United States in Vietnam again raises the question of whether a democracy can be a superpower over the long haul. Thucydides asked: Does a democratic people have the will to see a war to its conclusion if they don't understand that their immediate self-interest is involved?

VIII. The United States now stands at the same crossroads. Do we want to be the superpower of the world, with all that entails? Or should we stay out of foreign entanglements?

- A.** The realities of the Middle East are becoming apparent. After September 11, 2001, the United States entered Iraq with the highest aspiration, to bring democracy. The French and British failed in the Middle East, but we in the United States think we are immune to the laws of history. With our modern technology and military superiority, surely, we can succeed.
- B.** The same issues that plagued the United States in Vietnam and Korea—a skeptical media, presidential loss of credibility, and the inability to set clear goals—will continue to plague the United States no matter where we intervene.
- C.** Pericles said that once a nation starts down the path of superpower status, it cannot step back. The British and the French could dismantle their empires because they had the protection of American power, but who would shelter the United States?
- D.** The long-term consequences of foreign policy decisions lead us back to the lessons of history—why empires rise and fall and why so often they dig their own graves.

Essential Reading:

Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times*.

Truman, *Memoirs*.

Supplementary Reading:

Ferguson, *Colossus*.

Ferrell, *Harry S. Truman*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What reasons can be given for not comparing Vietnam with Iraq?
2. Do you consider Truman to be a great statesman?

Lecture Thirty-Five

The Wisdom of History and the Citizen

Scope: The Founders of our country believed that the lessons of history should be a guide, not a straightjacket, for citizens of a republic. In this course, as citizens, we have learned:

1. There are tragic consequences to the refusal to learn from history.
2. Science and technology do not make us immune to the laws of history.
3. Freedom is not a universal value.
4. The lust for power is the supreme motivating force of history.
5. The Middle East is the crucible of conflict and the graveyard of empires.
6. The United States shares the destinies of the empires, democracies, and republics of the past.
7. Religion and spirituality join the lust for power as supreme motivating forces in history.
8. Superpowers rise and fall because of decisions made by individual leaders.
9. A bedrock of principles, a moral compass, a vision, and the ability to build a consensus to achieve that vision are the qualities of a true statesman.
10. The history of the United States gives us reason to share the optimism of the Founders that America may yet chart a unique course of freedom.

Outline

- I. Our last two lectures will explore the wisdom of history for individuals today. The Founders of the United States believed that history was the most important subject for citizens of a free republic to study because it guides people as both individuals and citizens.
 - A. For the Founding Fathers, the study of Plutarch, Thucydides, and Tacitus conveyed moral values, and the Founders themselves believed in a universal set of moral values—true for all people in all times and places. As we have seen, history is about making moral judgments in the sense of setting priorities for oneself and one's country.
 - B. From the birth of civilization in the Middle East in 3000 B.C. to the 21st century, we have seen the same mistakes made repeatedly. Each generation seems to think that it can break the laws of history, but in a sense, this process is part of the search for meaning in history.
 - C. History is the story of forces greater than ourselves. In the book of Samuel, God chooses the people of Israel but calls them to live under his laws. Deviation from those laws brought about their fall, yet within that fall was the hope of rebirth. As the people of Israel came into contact with the nations of the Middle East, their idea of God began to spread.
 - D. The Greek historian Herodotus warned the Athenians not to make the same mistake as the Persians—committing *hybris*—but he saw history as a guideline, not a straightjacket. For Herodotus, the history of Greece was the glorious story of the spread of freedom.
- II. As we have learned, science and technology do not make us immune to the lessons of history. People in the 20th century believed that a new age of science, technology, and global markets would prevent another world war. Subsequent events proved them wrong.
 - A. Even today, we can see that more advanced weapons developed by science are used to kill more people more efficiently. Science and technology do not prevent terrible human suffering, but they do not have to be used for evil.
 - B. An optimistic view is that the ages of greatest creativity in history have been the ages of greatest freedom. The Athenian democracy that left great legacies in art, literature, and architecture was also an age of great freedom. The Roman Empire influenced the next 1,000 years of European culture because it was based on the ideal of individual freedom.
 - C. The world today has more creativity and freedom than ever. Science and technology are used for good: to feed the world; to give us longer, healthier lives; and to prevent plagues that killed millions in the past. The *information superhighway* raises awareness of such issues as environmental change.

- D. Science and technology are a source of enormous hope, but they alone will not help us avoid the mistakes of the past.
- III.** More nations today have achieved a balance of individual, political, and national freedom than ever before. The Europe that destroyed itself through war in the 20th century is now a Europe united. Growing freedom and prosperity have buried ancient hatreds to ensure a better life for people.
- A. Winston Churchill said that history can be an impediment as well as a guideline. In 1948, when Europe was still in ruins, he predicted a day when Europe would be united. Nothing in history justified that view except Churchill's optimism and his belief in appealing to the best in people. In contrast, Adolf Hitler appealed to all that was evil in people.
 - B. Freedom is not a universal value. History teaches us that conquerors of foreign countries are often not welcomed as liberators. Trying to plant democracy where it is not valued may arouse resentment and revolt. However, as we saw with the Roman Empire, an understanding of freedom can be created.
- IV.** The fourth lesson of history is that power is the supreme motivating force of history. Power means the desire to dominate others and the desire to create an empire.
- A. In ancient Israel, we saw that power could be a force for good or ill.
 - B. The Athenian democracy held that those who have the power to do good and fail to exercise it are just as guilty as those who do wrong. Similarly, the best American statesmen used power to make the world better. The United States has failed only when it declined to use its power for good.
 - C. Power will always exist, but the question for our age is: Will nations choose to use it responsibly?
- V.** The Middle East is the crucible of conflict and the graveyard of empires. The earliest empires in the Middle East—Assyria, Persia, and Egypt—show that nothing human lasts forever. All empires pass away, but why?
- A. Again, Herodotus blamed their decline on *hybris*, the outrageous abuse of power.
 - B. But for all its conflicts, the Middle East has also produced the hope of spirituality. Three world religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—began there. The Old Testament is an early statement of freedom of conscience—if a wrong is committed, then one must say it is wrong.
 - C. Freedom of conscience is the weapon every dictator fears most. As long as individuals have courage, then freedom will expand.
 - D. The Middle East is the graveyard of empires but also the source of hope. How much hope may still spring from that ancient land if we respect its values?
- VI.** The United States shares the destiny of past empires, democracies, and republics. The course of the Athenian democracy, the Roman Republic, and the British Empire show how lessons of history can be learned.
- A. One of those lessons is that religion is a powerful motivating force. In the Middle East, the human soul proved just as powerful as any tank. In India, Gandhi brought the British Empire to its knees with the power of his spirituality. Jesus stood before the Sanhedrin and the Roman governor. Martin Luther challenged the Catholic Church.
 - B. Empires rise and fall because of human decisions, not anonymous social, economic, and climactic forces. Whether it's Athens entrusting its expedition against Sicily to three commanders, Hadrian deciding to stop Roman expansion, or Napoleon invading Russia, decisions by leaders have spelled the end of their nations and their ideals.
 - C. But economic, social, and climactic forces shape history, too. They could even destroy the world if leaders do not exhibit the foresight to recognize and solve problems for the short and long term.
- VII.** Another lesson of history teaches the distinction between a politician and a statesman. A true statesman has a bedrock of principles, a moral compass, a vision, and the ability to build a consensus to achieve that vision.
- A. The ability to distinguish a statesman from a politician might have prevented World War II. Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler both had a bedrock of principles.
 - 1. Churchill's principles were based on the ideals of freedom and the betterment of everyday life.

2. Hitler's bedrock of principles was based on doctrines of racial superiority. He believed that he was destined to make Germany a long-lived empire, and to do that, he had to purify the German race; thus, he killed 6 million people.
 - B. Both Churchill and Hitler had visions. Churchill had a noble vision of the human race marching into the great uplands of freedom. Hitler had a nightmare vision of an enslaved Europe and of science and technology united to kill.
 - C. Most terrifying is that Hitler was able to build a consensus among 80 million industrious, intelligent people to carry out his vision. Even after he killed himself, SS troops still led Jews to their deaths.
 - D. Hitler did not have a moral compass. In fact, he believed that he was beyond moral judgment.
- VIII.** What is the U.S. role in history? Although our country is not immune to the laws of history, it has always taken a unique path. The United States was founded on universal moral values that we have quoted repeatedly: "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."
- A. Time and time again, we see those values in action and speech. To take just one example, Abraham Lincoln, in his Gettysburg Address, noted that our nation had been "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."
 - B. Spiritual forces have also played a role in U.S. history. The American parallel to India's Gandhi, Martin Luther King, was imbued with the fervor of the Bible as he called on Americans to be a force for good in the world.
 - C. America has united national, political, and individual freedoms in a unique way. It has been more magnanimous than any other nation. If science and technology can help solve the problems of global poverty and help create viable freedom around the world, Americans may be the leaders in achieving these goals.

Essential Reading:

Collingwood, *The Idea of History*.

Supplementary Reading:

Durant, *The Lessons of History*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is history a straightjacket or a guide?
2. Is America on a unique course or will we follow the cycles of history?

Lecture Thirty-Six

The Wisdom of History and You

Scope: It is no trivialization to say that history is one great self-help book, more valuable than all those guides to a successful life that fill the shelves in airport bookstores. However clichéd, it remains true: History repeats itself because we refuse to learn the wisdom of history and apply it. Nations, leaders, and private individuals all believe that they are immune to the lessons of history. This is a form of *hybris*, of thinking we are wise when we are ignorant. The contemporary belief in the power of technology to invalidate the lessons of history is as flawed as the Roman belief that their empire was eternal. Pericles knew better. All things human pass away. What matters is the legacy we leave behind.

Outline

- I.** In this final lecture, we explore the lessons of history for you as an individual. The Founding Fathers believed in studying history not to acquire facts or to understand historical forces but to become better individuals and better citizens.
 - A.** The Founders studied history for moral as well as political lessons. They were fond of the ancient historians, especially Plutarch's biographies of great Greeks and Romans.
 - B.** Plutarch wrote expressly to improve moral character. He gave examples of both success (Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great) and failure (Marc Antony) because people learn as much from failure as from success.
- II.** Are there fundamental lessons of history you can apply to your own life? One question we face often is whether we can separate private morality from public morality.
 - A.** George Washington believed that one cannot separate liberty from morality or morality from religion. He thought the Roman Empire fell because its citizens had become so corrupt that they were willing slaves of a despot. The old republicans, with their strong moral values, would never have accepted a Caesar's dictatorship.
 - B.** The attempt to answer this question of morality led to the first true historical writing—writing that interpreted the meaning of past events as a guide to decision-making in the present and future—in the book of Samuel around 950 B.C. The question was: Can an immoral ruler be a good king? Can we separate his actions as a private individual, which may be immoral, from his actions as a ruler?
 - C.** The standard view today is that these two spheres of morality can be separated. What someone does in private should not be considered in electing or keeping that person in office.
 - D.** But the book of Samuel took the opposite view. At the height of his power, King David seduced Bathsheba and had her husband murdered. As a result, the house of David and Israel were swept into chaos and civil war. The lesson is that we cannot separate private from public morality.
 - E.** The Greek historian Herodotus began and ended his history of Greece with the stories of immoral kings, Croesus and Xerxes.
 - 1.** In 479 B.C., the Persians fought the Greeks at Plataea, but Xerxes was not present to lead his men. He had gone home to Sardis, where he carried out a sordid love affair with his brother's daughter.
 - 2.** For Herodotus, this immoral despot's private affairs reflected Persia's immorality, corruptness, and unworthiness to rule.
- III.** History is also a quest for universal values. Our age does not accept an absolute standard of morality. We deal with situational ethics; the circumstances determine whether an act is right or wrong. Moreover, in a diverse country, everyone has his or her own values.
 - A.** A lesson of history is that nations around the world, in all places and times, have recognized common values. Wherever we look—the Bhagavad-Gita, Confucius, the Old Testament, the Koran—we find that such values as wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation are the basis of a moral, successful life.
 - B.** In most societies, these common values acknowledge God. Even Genghis Khan, the bloodthirsty tyrant, made recognition of God the first law of his empire.

- C. Other common values are to honor one’s parents and not to steal, kill, or commit adultery. Each society defines moral behaviors in its own way, but the general values are the same.
 - D. In the same way, each person decides fundamental moral issues in his or her life, and these choices are among the most profound that an individual makes.
- IV.** One type of immorality is *hybris*, or the abuse of power. History shows us that outrageous arrogance leads the powerful to abuse the weak. Even today, we see power exercised wrongly.
- A. One view in history is that a person who stands by while someone weak is harmed by the abuse of power is just as guilty as the abuser. Cicero called this passive injustice. In the modern corporate world, we might see employees fail to speak up when a co-worker is wronged because doing so might cost them their jobs.
 - B. Part of *hybris* is not knowing one’s limits. The god Apollo told Socrates that he was the wisest man in the world. He was puzzled until he realized that he was wise only because he knew that he did not know. Rulers, too, must know their limits; only then can they justify their power.
 - C. On the other hand, we should not sell ourselves short by stepping back from our destiny. America would not have achieved its greatness today if the Founders had doubted their ability to defeat the British Empire.
- V.** Another lesson of morality we can draw is to respect the values of others. Herodotus traveled all over his world, recording the customs of different people. Though some of these customs seemed strange to him, he didn’t think they should be changed.
- A. For example, the Lydians prostituted their daughters to earn dowries for marriage. Greeks were offended by this custom, but Herodotus thought it was arrogant to impose Greek values on other peoples.
 - B. Herodotus made it clear that had Persia not sought to impose its despotic values on free Greeks, Greece would not have invaded Persia.
 - C. Those who have strong moral values often believe that they should impart them to others, but values cannot be imposed on the unwilling. The Stoics stated that the only thing a person can control is his mind and the actions taken based on his thoughts.
 - D. Many rulers have been so preoccupied that they did not ponder the consequences of their actions. Individuals need solitude to think about the lessons of history and to examine their own values.
- VI.** Many great nations have fallen because they failed to set the right priorities.
- A. In concentrating on the Middle East, the Roman Empire went bankrupt and wore down its army when economic policies needed attention.
 - B. At the Constitutional Convention, the Founders could have had written a constitution or tried to abolish slavery in six states. They chose to write a constitution and keep slavery.
 - C. As Plutarch noted, Marc Antony could have been master of the world, but instead of consolidating his power, he concentrated on a love affair with Cleopatra.
 - D. Individuals can make a difference. Perhaps the best lesson from history is how one person, willing to sacrifice for a deeply held belief, can play a role in changing the world. Mother Teresa is a marvelous example. Such individuals know that we have only one life to make a difference.
- VII.** Knowing your priorities, knowing your gifts, knowing your limits, using power justly—those are the keys to making a difference. Perhaps the most important lesson is to know your mission.
- A. A man or woman of destiny—a Meriwether Lewis, a Mother Teresa—is an individual who understands the one thing he or she was meant to do in life. It’s a priceless recognition to know one’s calling.
 - B. Socrates, Jesus, and Mohammad all believed that God had chosen them for a unique mission. But you don’t have to believe in God to know your mission. It may be as simple as raising a child.
 - C. Ultimately, all things human pass away. What matters is the legacy they leave behind.
 - D. In this course, we have focused mostly on empires—Rome, Britain, and the United States—that left behind a legacy for good, albeit not unblemished. They left the world better than they found it.
 - E. The true wisdom of history is to understand each individual’s uniqueness and ability to make a contribution, great or small, that will leave the world a better place.

Essential Reading:

Lord Acton, "The Study of History," in *Selected Writings II*, pp. 504–552.

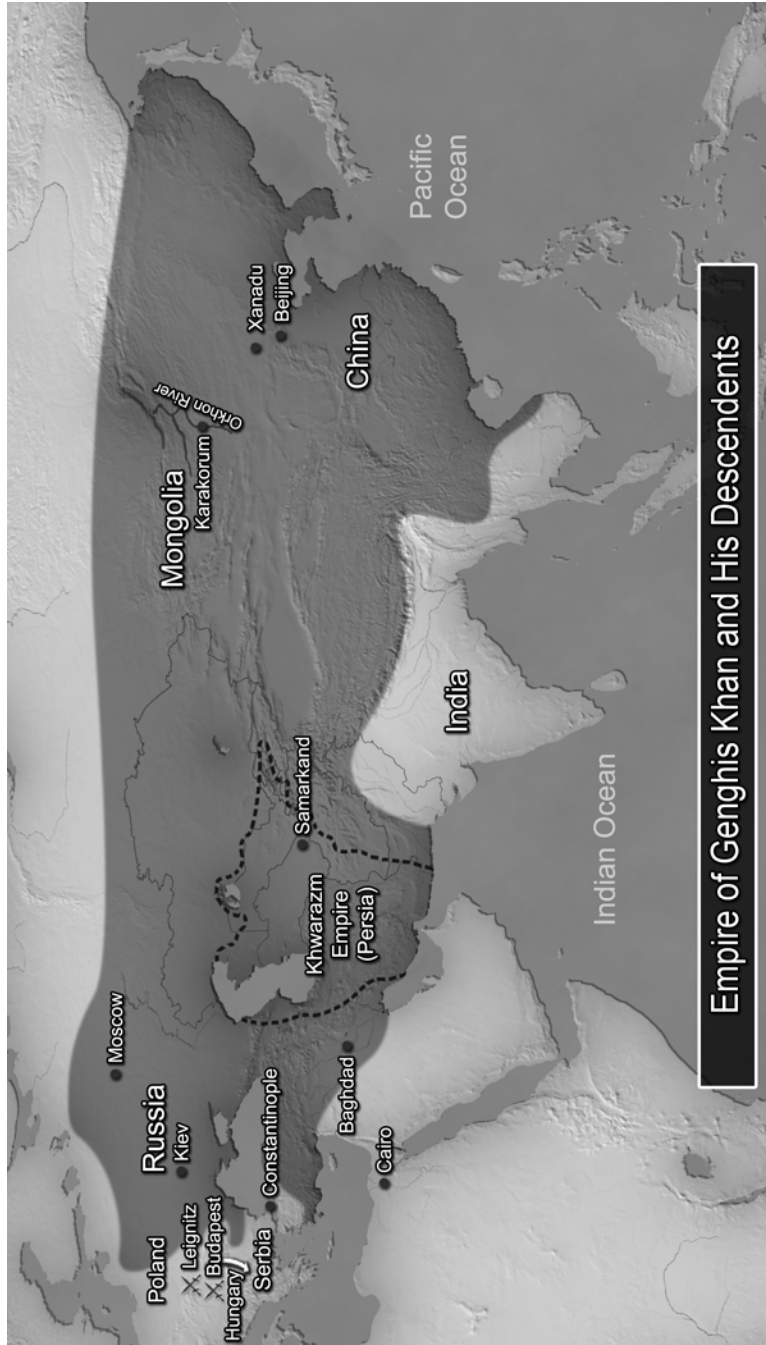
Supplementary Reading:

Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom*.

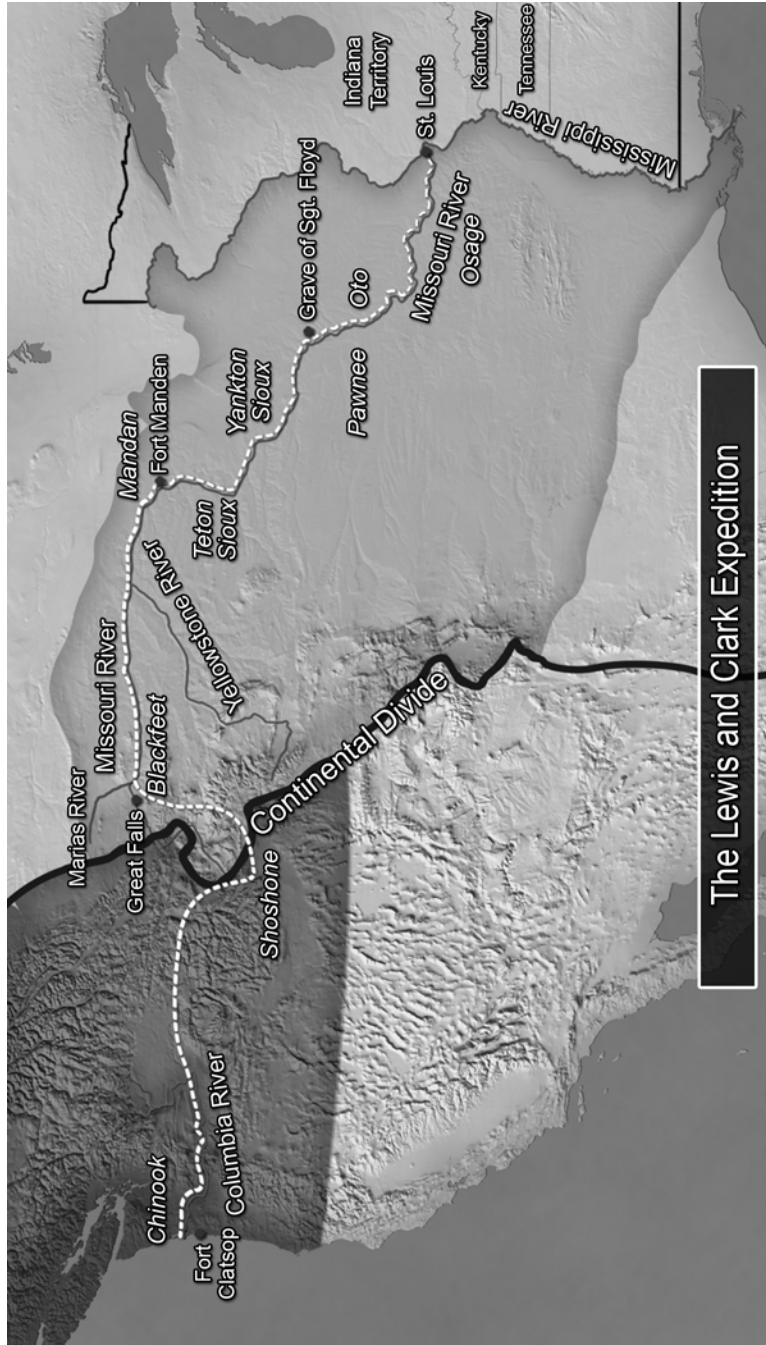
Hegel, *Philosophy of History*.

Questions to Consider:

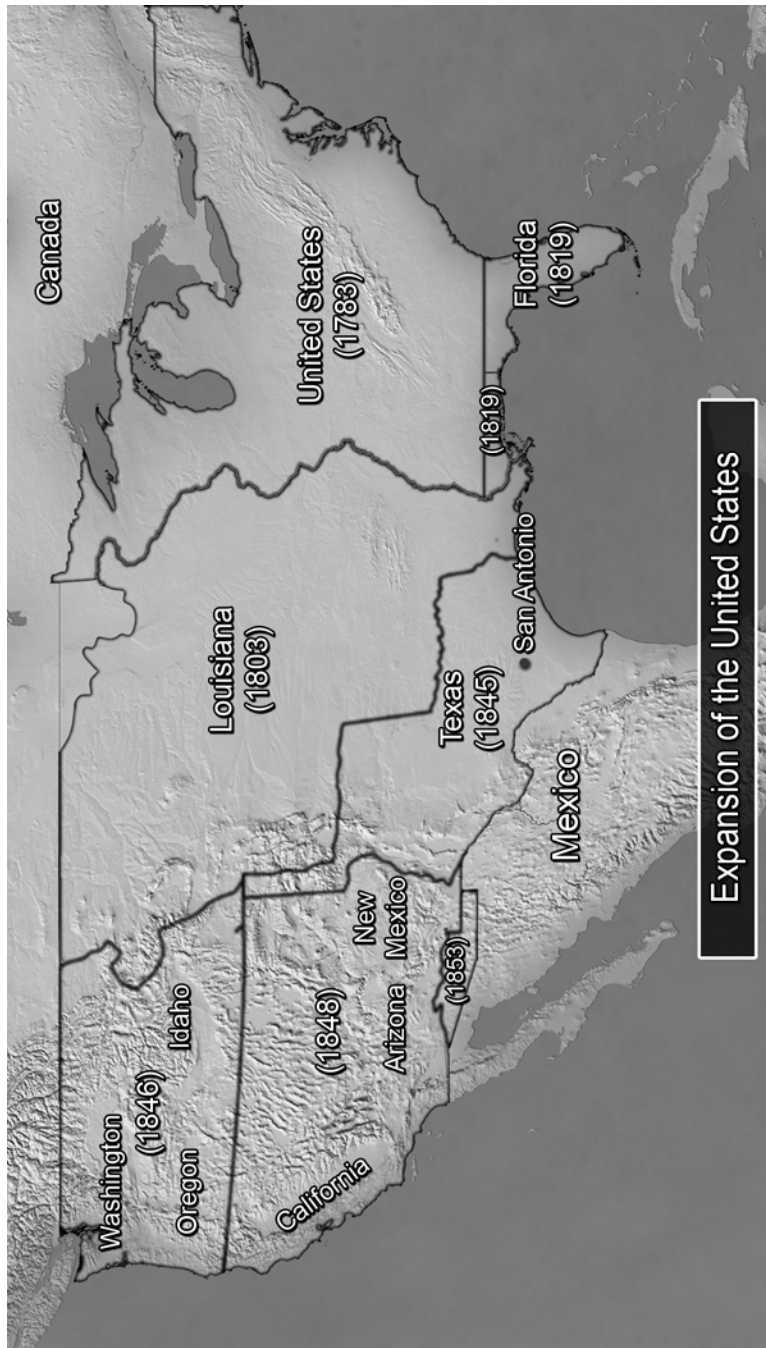
1. Can we, in our own professional and private lives, distinguish personal from private morality? Herodotus and the book of Samuel say no. What do you think?
2. If history does not teach moral lessons, is it still worth studying?



Empire of Genghis Khan and His Descendants



The Lewis and Clark Expedition



Bibliography

Note: In the Essential Readings, I have sought to give the firsthand sources in good translations that are conveniently available. In the Supplementary Readings, I have sought to recommend works that I thought best put our discussions into a broader historical context and that I find clearest and most helpful. This means that I have frequently recommended older, more traditional works that are available. I have followed Lord Acton's dictum that it is the mark of an uneducated person to read books he or she agrees with. The educated person reads books he or she disagrees with. Thus, I have frequently recommended books that disagree with me, because these are the ones we find most stimulating.

Essential Reading:

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Adler, Mortimer. *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1958. An almost exhaustive collection of meanings that have been attributed to the concept of freedom.

Arberry, A. J. *The Koran Interpreted*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. The best available translation of the Koran.

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———. “The Cult of Virtues in Roman Imperial Ideology.” In W. Haase, ed., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Reich*. New York/Berlin: De Gruyter, 1981. Division II, vol. XVII, part 1, pp. 7–140. A scholarly examination of the relationship between the power of the emperor and the rise of monotheism.

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Ferrell, Robert H. *Presidential Leadership: From Woodrow Wilson to Harry S Truman*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2005. An insightful examination of the leadership qualities of major presidents of this century.

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Internet Resources

<http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/history/quotations/index.html>

A brief but wide range of famous quotes about the meaning, lessons, and usefulness of history.

<http://www.thegreatideas.org/>

Mortimer Adler discusses the great ideas and books that have shaped history, including historical studies.

<http://historicalthinkingmatters.org>

A pedagogical tool to encourage students to use history to understand contemporary politics.