

126.1 An Adams' Family Legacy of Reconciliation

John Adams was born on October 30, 1735. He attended **Harvard College** and was admitted to the Bar in 1764, the same year he married **Abigail**. He was a delegate to the **Continental Congress** and recommended **Thomas Jefferson** write the **Declaration of Independence** and **George Washington** as the **Continental Army's** CIC. Adams was our first VP under President George Washington and our second president. One of his most memorable quotes came from a letter he penned on October 11, 1798, to the officers of the First Brigade of the Third Division of the Militia of Massachusetts:

“We have no government armed with power capable of continuing with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Greed, ambition, revenge, or seduction would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

Over time, Adams developed political enemies who had once been committed friends during their drive for Independence. In particular, He and Thomas Jefferson had a major falling out. Eventually, Jefferson replaced him as President, and the two men separated as bitter enemies.

The conflict between the two friends troubled **Dr. Benjamin Rush**, who wanted to reconcile the two patriots. Rush knew the scriptures and the importance of settling issues between friends. A lesson for all of us is Jesus' words in **Matthew 5:23-24** (NKJV), which read:

²³ **Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,** ²⁴ **leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

Dr. Rush had a dream about the two, which he felt was significant. On October 17, 1809, he wrote down an account of that dream and sent it to John Adams. Here is Rush's description of his vision:

“What book is that in your hands?” said I to my son Richard [who later became the Secretary of State under President James Monroe] a few nights ago in a dream. “It is the history of the United States,” said he. “Shall I read a page of it to you?” “No, no,” said I. “I believe in the truth of no history but in that which is contained in the Old and New Testaments.” “But, sir,” said my son, “this page relates to your friend Mr. Adams.” “Let me see it then,” said I. I read it with great pleasure and herewith send you a copy of it.

“1809. Among the most extraordinary events of this year was the renewal of the friendship and intercourse between Mr. John Adams and Mr. Jefferson, the two ex-Presidents of the United States. They met for the first time in the Congress of 1775. Their principles of liberty, their ardent attachment to their country. . . being exactly the same, they were strongly attracted to each other and became personal as well as political friends. . . . A difference of opinion upon the objects and issue of the French Revolution separated them during the years in which that great event interested and divided the American people. The predominance of the party which favored the French cause threw Mr. Adams out of the Chair of the United States in the year 1800 and placed Mr. Jefferson there in his stead. The former retired with resignation and dignity to his seat at Quincy, where he spent the evening of his life in literary and philosophical pursuits, surrounded by an amiable family and a few old and affectionate friends. The latter resigned the Chair of the United States in the year 1808, sick of the cares and disgusted with the intrigues of public life, and retired to his seat at Monticello, in Virginia, where he spent the remainder of his days in the cultivation of a large farm agreeably to the new system of husbandry. In the month of November 1809, Mr. Adams addressed a short letter to his friend Mr. Jefferson in which he congratulated him upon his escape to the shades of retirement and domestic happiness, and concluded it with assurances of his regard and good wishes for his welfare. This letter did great honor to Mr. Adams. It discovered a magnanimity known only to great minds. Mr. Jefferson replied to this letter and reciprocated expressions of regard and esteem. These letters were followed by a correspondence of several years in which they mutually reviewed the scenes of business in which

they had been engaged, and candidly acknowledged to each other all the errors of opinion and conduct into which they had fallen during the time they filled the same station in the service of their country. Many precious aphorisms [truths], the result of observation, experience, and profound reflection, it is said, are contained in these letters. It is to be hoped the world will be favored with a sight of them. . . . These gentlemen sunk into the grave nearly at the same time, full of years and rich in the gratitude and praises of their country.”¹

Adams wrote Jefferson while Rush initiated correspondence with him regarding this potential reconciliation. Adams and Jefferson began communicating and died as dear friends on the same day, July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the **Declaration of Independence**.

Adams served one presidential term. He established the **Department of the Navy** and the **Library of Congress**. He helped the states ratify the Constitution by writing a three-volume work entitled, “Defense of the Constitution of the Government of the United States,” while waiting to sign the Treaty of Paris, ending the hostilities with Great Britain.

John Adams was a Christian man who lived with an unshakeable trust in God. He recognized that our conflict with Great Britain was more significant than a military struggle. The Revolution was a spiritually-based war. Dr. Rush once recounted a conversation he had with Adams in Congress.

Upon my return from the army to Baltimore in the winter of 1777, I sat next to John Adams in Congress, and upon my whispering to him and asking him if he thought we could succeed in our struggle with Great Britain, he answered me, “Yes, if we fear God and repent of our sins.”

Like our ancestors, we need a reminder to look beyond the physical to the spiritual. As Paul wrote, “**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.**”²

Modern Americans do not know our ancestors’ God-based determination to be free. We have fallen into what John Adams foresaw in our prosperity. In a letter to his friend, Thomas Jefferson, he asked:

Will you tell me how to prevent luxury from producing effeminacy, intoxication, extravagance, vice, and folly?” He added, “I believe no effort in favour of virtue is lost.”

Before we can restore our republic, we must reconcile with and depend on God. We must regain our virtue.

Keep The Light of *Reconciliation in All Directions* Burning!

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¹ ¹ “Benjamin Rush Dream about John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.”, Wallbuilders, wallbuilders.com/benjamin-rush-dream-john-adams-thomas-jefferson/.

² Ephesians 6:12, NKJV