

DEREK PRINCE

the Pilgrim
LEGACY


WHITAKER
HOUSE

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THE PILGRIM LEGACY

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So they left that goodly and pleasant city which had been their resting place near twelve years; but they knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits.

—William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*

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INTRODUCTION: A STORY THAT MUST BE TOLD



In his farewell address on January 11, 1989, U.S. President Ronald Reagan returned to one of his favorite themes for describing America. He spoke again of the nation as “a city set on a hill.” These lofty words—taken directly from the Bible (see Matthew 5:15)—consistently struck a resonant chord in the hearts of all who heard them. On this occasion, Reagan expanded on this theme: “And she’s still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.”³

A DEEPER REASON

How does a nation become one of the greatest and most powerful in the history of the free world? How does such a

country become a light—a beacon for the lost pilgrims of the earth who are seeking a home? Some have argued that America's power and greatness are due to her abundant natural resources, combined with the heroic efforts and sacrifices of her people. This line of reasoning suggests that all its success is the result of fortuitous circumstances. But the reason is much deeper than mere coincidence. From the very beginning, the bright light that has shone from this nation has been powered from one source: an underlying faith in the living God. From its earliest days, America has been the “great experiment.” It began as a representative republic, a land ruled not by a monarchy, aristocracy, or tyranny but by laws written down in her constitution. This declaration of principles remains a remarkable document, hewn by men of great wisdom who were guided by the truths of God's eternal Word.

A SHIFT IN PHILOSOPHY

The light of this nation—which President Reagan spoke of in his farewell address—is still shining. But something is going wrong. Like a heavy, unanticipated fog, there is a darkness gradually moving in to dim that light, that beacon known as “America.” Instead of reflecting the light of Jesus Christ—the Light of the World—this country seems to be leading the world away from that light toward darkness: the dark philosophy of secular humanism.

What has happened? Why has America turned from its biblical foundations—from honoring God and His Word?

Why is this nation now seemingly bent on removing the recognition of God and the Bible from the public square? These are questions that must be addressed.

God has used America to bless the nations of the world, and countless people from those countries have made the journey to this land to become her citizens. One such man was Derek Prince, a well-known scholar and Bible teacher from England. At first, Derek knew nothing about the founding of America beyond a brief sketch he had learned from English schoolbooks. All of that changed, however, in the early 1970s.

In the pages that follow, Derek will share with us how, as a Britisher, he discovered the story of the Pilgrims. As he learned of their heroic struggle for religious freedom that led to the founding of this country, the unexpected truths he encountered made an impact on his own life. Derek became convinced that the legacy of the Pilgrims was a story that must be told.

This saga must not be erased from the history of America or from the public squares of nations throughout the world. What will keep the Pilgrim record from being extinguished by an encroaching agenda of darkness?

In many ways, that question is the basis for this book, dedicated to the Pilgrims and their unfading light. That light—the light of Christ—burned in the hearts of America's Pilgrims. And it is still shining today.

*His life is the light that shines through the darkness—and
the darkness can never extinguish it. (John 1:5 TLB)*

—The International Publishing Team
of Derek Prince Ministries

ONE

WINDS OF CHANGE



I grew up in England in a military family where it was customary to send boys away to school at around the age of nine or ten—sometimes even younger. These days, that sounds almost cruel to some people. But, in those days, it was the custom. I took to academic life very well and enjoyed a good measure of success.

Like most traditional families in Britain, we were Anglican. While I was attending Eton College, the time came for me to be confirmed in the Anglican church. I was about the age of fifteen, and my father required that I go through the necessary classes to be confirmed with the other boys. Although I did what my father wanted, inwardly, I rebelled. I found religion utterly boring and illogical. By the time I reached Cambridge University, where I chose philosophy as my field of study, I had shed all vestiges of any kind of faith.

OUT OF HUMANISM

My strong academic background in philosophy immersed me in the humanistic spirit of the modern age. In fact, when I first encountered the principles presented in the Bible, I was essentially a confirmed agnostic. I had never read the Bible. I didn't even own one. With the onset of World War II, however, I had to suspend my promising academic future as a professor of philosophy at Cambridge University to enlist as a conscientious objector in the British Army.

As I packed my belongings, at the last minute, I obtained a big, black King James Version of the Bible to take with me. My reasons for making this choice were typically practical. Since I had never read it, I needed to know it to refute it. My review of the Bible would be a purely intellectual exercise. I even thought reading it might make me a better philosopher. Also, because of the length of this "book," it would take many months to finish it.

THE ENCOUNTER

Like every other book on philosophy I had ever read, I started at the beginning—in Genesis. As I ventured into the story of creation, reading how the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters, little did I realize that this same creative Spirit was also hovering over the chaos and emptiness in my own heart and soul. At the same time I was reading the Bible, I was completely unaware that it was also "reading" me—quietly penetrating the innermost part of my being. Finally, one unforgettable

night when I was alone in my barracks, the One I had been reading about in the Bible—Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God—revealed Himself to me. My life was changed forever. I was marvelously converted and eventually answered God's call upon me to enter full-time Christian ministry.

Since that amazing moment when I personally encountered Jesus Christ, I have based my entire life and ministry on the Word of God. My own testimony is that the Bible is entirely reliable, trustworthy, and true. All of my research, lessons, and teachings are drawn straight from the Scriptures. Seldom have I made reference to any other source, historical or otherwise.

A POWERFUL EXAMPLE

In a sense, this book maintains that same biblical focus. What I share here will be drawn primarily from Scripture. On this occasion, however, I will also focus extensively on the historical record of the Pilgrims—in particular, the famous work by William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*. The truths that are resident in the Pilgrim narratives are powerful examples of how foundational principles in the Christian faith can be applied in a real and practical way to our circumstances today—and to the world situation at this time in history.

During my days in the British Army, as I was working my way through the Bible, my imagination was stirred by what I read. I was captivated by the story of how God called forth a people from Abraham—how, from a small band of sojourners

in a foreign land, He built a great nation. In much the same way, my imagination was captivated by the story of a small band of Europeans, the Pilgrims—who were also called by God, and who also sojourned in a foreign land to become a great nation.

In *The Pilgrim Legacy*, as you and I look back to the arrival of the Pilgrims in the New World, it is a good time for us to look to the rock from which all Americans were hewn. As we retrace those steps, it will also reveal where we have strayed from the path. Will we be able to humble ourselves and repent for detours we have taken that would have grieved our forefathers—mistakes that have definitely grieved our heavenly Father?

Therefore, as we read the story of the Pilgrims, let's pray and humbly ask that, once again, God will lead us. Let us ask Him to save us from the attack of enemies without and—even more importantly now—enemies within. This book is offered with deep gratitude for the example our Pilgrim ancestors left us. They fought the good fight—and won. May God grant us that same victory.