**Class # 5 - George Washington and Avraham Avinu: Our Forefathers**

Senior Fellowship Leadership Program

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10 Steps to Redemption

# George Washington Reads The Declaration of Independence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDZp5-w-fZ8>

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that 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.”

1. Why did Jefferson start the declaration of Independence with the above statement?
2. How did the freedom of religion [1st amendment of the Constitution] flow naturally from this statement?
3. Why could there not be a national religion in the USA – unlike all other European countries?
4. Why did General George Washington read the declaration of independence to the troops on July 9th during the defense of New York City?
5. How does this event reveal about George Washington personality?
6. General George Washington was seen lost in prayer in the woods during the battle against the British. What does that reveal about his character?
7. Why was that moment a foreshadowing to George Washington becoming the first and only unanimously voted in President?

3. Chavruta time with CH. 15 & Ch. 18:

*The Pact Between Halves*

15:5 He then took [Abram] outside and said, 'Look at the sky and count the stars. See if you can count them.' [God] then said to him, 'That is how [numerous] your descendants will be.' 15:6 [Abram] believed in God, and He counted it as [righteousness](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=15#C294). 15:7 [God] said to him, 'I am God who took you out of Ur Casdim to give you this land as a possession.' 15:8 'O Lord, God,' replied [Abram], 'How can I really know that it will be mine?' 15:9 [God] said to him, 'Bring for Me a prime heifer, a prime goat, a prime ram, a dove and a young pigeon.' 15:10 [Abram] brought all these for Him. He split them in half, and placed one half opposite the other. The birds, however, he did not split. 15:11 Vultures descended on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. 15:12 When the sun was setting, Abram fell into a trance, and he was stricken by a deep dark dread. **15:13 [God] said to Abram, 'Know for sure that your descendants will be foreigners in a land that is not theirs for 400 years. They will be enslaved and oppressed. 15:14 But I will finally bring judgment against the nation who enslaves them, and they will then leave with great wealth. 15:15 You shall join your fathers in peace, and you will be buried at a good old age**.

15:16 The fourth generation will return here, since the Amorite's sin will not have run its course until then.' 15:17 The sun set, and it became very dark. A smoking furnace and a flaming torch passed between the halves of the animals. 15:18 On that day, God made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the Egyptian River as far as the great river, the Euphrates; 15:19 [the lands of] the Kenites, the Kenizites, the Kadmonites, 15:20 the Hittites, the Perizites, the Rephaim, 15:21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Yebusites.

**Beraishit, Ch.18.18-19**

18:18 Abraham is about to become a great and mighty nation, and through him all the nations of the world [will be blessed](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=18#C356). 18:19 I have [given him special attention](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=1&CHAPTER=18#C357) so that he will command his children and his household after him, and they will keep God's way, doing charity and justice. God will then bring about for Abraham everything He promised.

Sephorno comments of the Bris:

[verse 5] במה אדע, for possibly my descendants will sin and forfeit their claim to this land.

[verse 6] קחה לי עגלה, take a heifer for Me, in order to enter into a covenant concerning this assurance. Converting God’s promise into what is known as a “covenant,” is equivalent to God reinforcing His promise by an oath, something which is unconditional and irrevocable. (Rosh Hashanah 18) Moses himself confirmed this interpretation when he said ([Deut 9,5](https://mg.alhatorah.org/Devarim/9%22%20%5Cl%20%225%22%20%5Co%20%22Devarim%209%3A5)) “not due to your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart, but due to the wickedness of these nations does God dispossess them on your account; and in order to keep His promise which He had sworn to your forefathers Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov

Rambam, Laws of Character Traits, 1:6-7
[Our Sages] taught [the following] explanation of this mitzvah: Just as He is called "Gracious," you shall be gracious; Just as He is called "Merciful," you shall be merciful; Just as He is called "Holy," you shall be holy;

In a similar manner, the prophets called God by other titles: "Slow to anger," "Abundant in kindness," "Righteous," "Just," "Perfect," "Almighty," "Powerful," and the like. [They did so] to inform us that these are good and just paths…Since the Creator is called by these terms and they make up the middle path which we are obligated to follow, this path is called "the path of God." This is [the heritage] which our Patriarch Abraham taught his descendants, as [[Genesis 18:19](https://www.chabad.org/8213#v19)] states: "for I have known Him so that he will command his descendants...to keep the path of God." One who follows this path brings benefit and blessing to himself, as [the above verse continues]: "so that God will bring about for Abraham all that He promised."

1. What does Avraham and George Washington need to launch a nation – beyond a land and a people?
2. What advantage did Avraham have over George Washington?
3. Did George Washington offer instruction on how to pursue Happiness? How about Avraham?