

RELIGIOUS AND INTELLECTUAL
MOVEMENTS IN 18TH CENTURY
AMERICA

The Enlightenment/Age of Reason

- Began in Europe in the 17th century \implies Made its way to the American colonies in the 18th century
- Challenged traditional views about the world and humankind (Divine Right of Kings?)
- Believed that the world was governed by “natural laws” (think Newton and gravity)
- Emphasis on a scientific and logical view/understanding of the world
- Humans could acquire knowledge/truth through the use of their natural faculties (reason and empiricism)
- Movement away from relying on religion, superstition, and tradition as sources of knowledge
- Enlightenment thinkers believed that the human society could be improved, even perfected, through the application of human intellect (progressivism)



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Enlightenment Thinkers and Ideas

- Europe:
 - **John Locke:** *tabula rosa*, all men born with unalienable natural rights, social contract
 - **Charles de Montesquieu:** separation of powers/checks and balances
 - **Jean Jacques Rousseau:** social contract, law should be expression of general will
 - **Voltaire:** freedom of religion and expression
- America
 - **Benjamin Franklin:** America's preeminent scientist/inventor, progressive who founded first colonial post office, public library, insurance company, fire department, Univ. of Penn.
 - **Thomas Paine:** challenged England's authority to govern the colonies, supported colonial independence
 - **Thomas Jefferson:** author of Declaration of Independence, full of Enlightenment concepts

Poor Richard, 1737.

A N

Almanack

For the Year of Chrift

1737,

Being the third after LEAPYEAR:

<i>And makes since the Creation</i>	Years
By the Account of the Eastern Greeks	7243
By the Latin Church, when ☉ ent. ♀	6934
By the Computation of <i>W. W.</i>	5744
By the Roman Chronology	3004
By the Jewish Rabbits	5496

Wherein is contained,

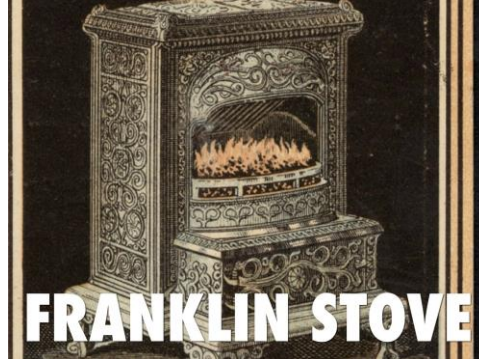
The Lunations, Eclipses, Judgment of the Weather, Spring Tides, Planets Motions & mutual Aspects, Sun and Moon's Rising and Setting, Length of Days, Time of High Water, Fairs, Courts, and observable Days.

Fitted to the Latitude of Forty Degrees, and a Meridian of Five Hours West from London; but may without sensible Error, serve all the adjacent Places, even from Newfoundland to South-Carolina.

By RICHARD SAUNDERS, Philom.

PHILADELPHIA:

Printed and fold by B. FRANKLIN, at the New Printing-Office near the Market, by the rocket.



FRANKLIN STOVE



Deism

- Product of the Enlightenment
- While Christianity believes God is a personal deity, who is actively involved in his creations' lives...
- Deists believe God is like a cosmic watchmaker who created an ordered world, based on natural laws, and then stepped away
- There is a God, but he is not concerned or involved in the day to day workings of the world or its inhabitants, does not influence or interfere
- Like a watch, the world and its “natural laws” are clear proof of the watchmaker’s intricate design
- Observation of natural world using reason are proof of God
- Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine, who were all influenced by Enlightenment thought, became Deists (or at least dabbled in it)

Worldview Models

adapted from Francis Schaeffer and RC Sproul



God is transcendent
and immanent

Judeo-Christian



God is transcendent
but not immanent

Deism



God is neither
transcendent nor
immanent

Secularism

DEISM

VS

THEISM

Deism is the belief in the existence of a supreme being, specifically of a creator who does not intervene in the universe

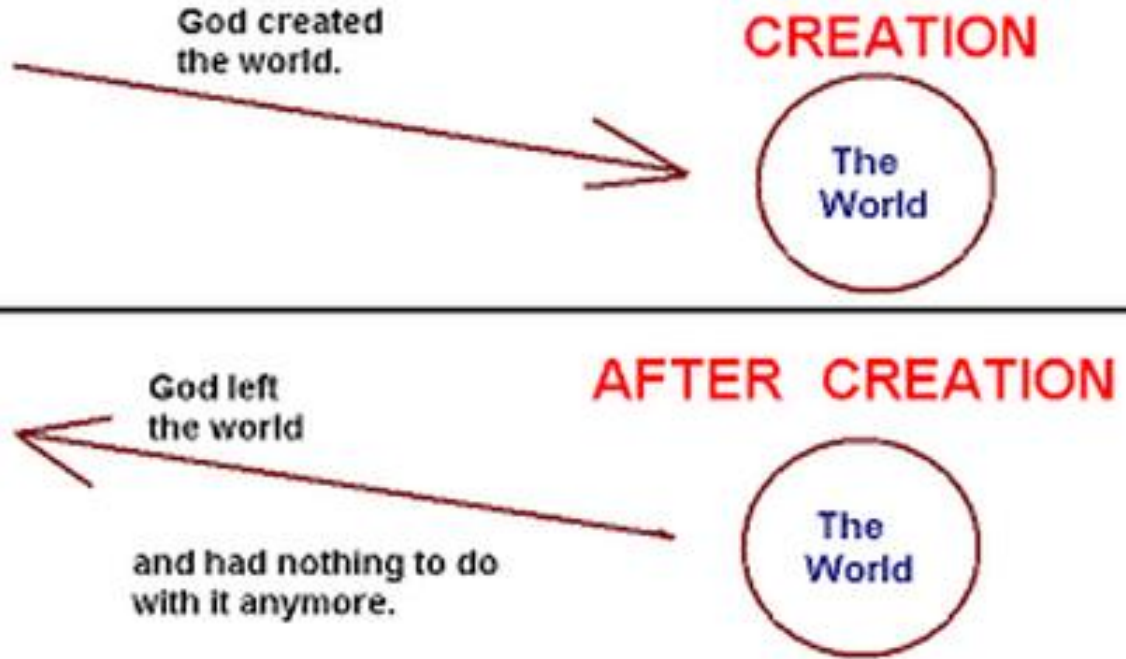
Theism is the belief in the existence of a god or gods, specifically of a creator who intervenes in the universe

Believes that that God does not intervene in human affairs

Believes that that God intervenes in human affairs

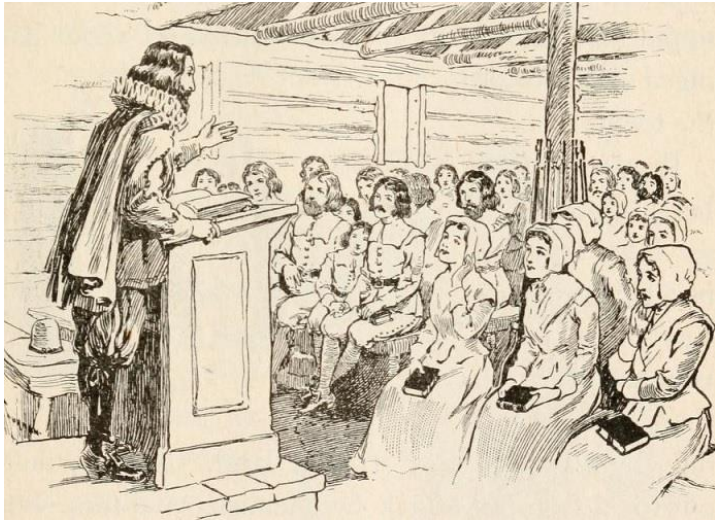
Does not accept miracles or supernatural revelations

Accepts miracles or supernatural revelations



The First Great Awakening

- As Enlightenment ideas spread throughout the colonies, religious influence declined
- Many colonists in the 18th century felt that organized religion had become stale, dull, and distant...



The First Great Awakening

- From 1730-1755, the American colonies were swept up in a series of religious revivals known as the **First Great Awakening**
- America had “fallen asleep” religiously and needed “awakening”
- **“New Light”** preachers began promoting a more personal, emotional brand of Christianity
 - They challenged the traditional ideas of predestination and sterile, intellectual study of scripture
 - In stead, they advocated personal, experiential faith (EMOTION over INTELLECT)
 - Argued that individuals could bring about their own salvation through a personal relationship with Christ...works won't get you to heaven!!!!

The First Great Awakening

- **Jonathan Edwards**

- American preacher that is thought to have started the revivals in Massachusetts and set the stage for other preachers to follow in the other colonies
- Famous fire and brimstone sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”

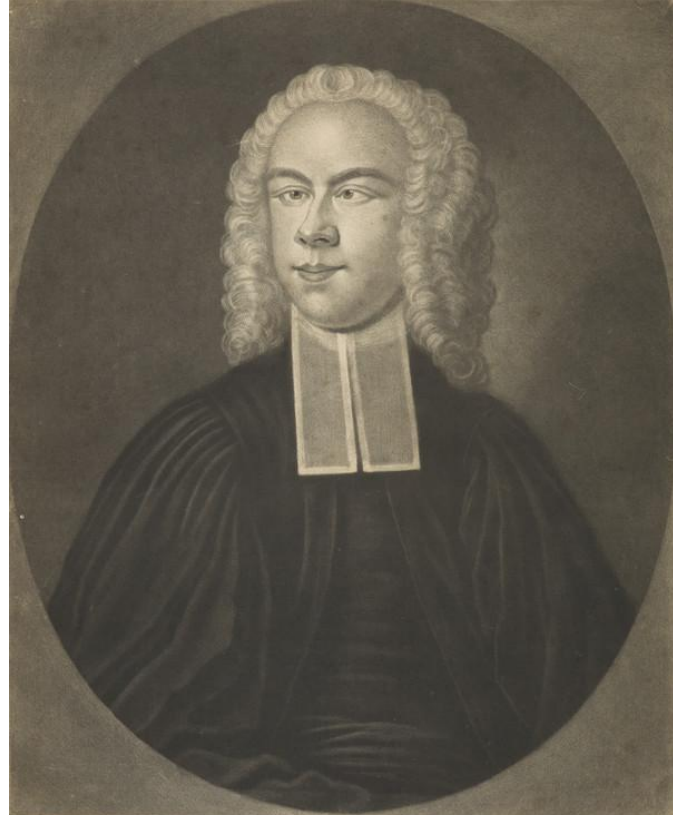
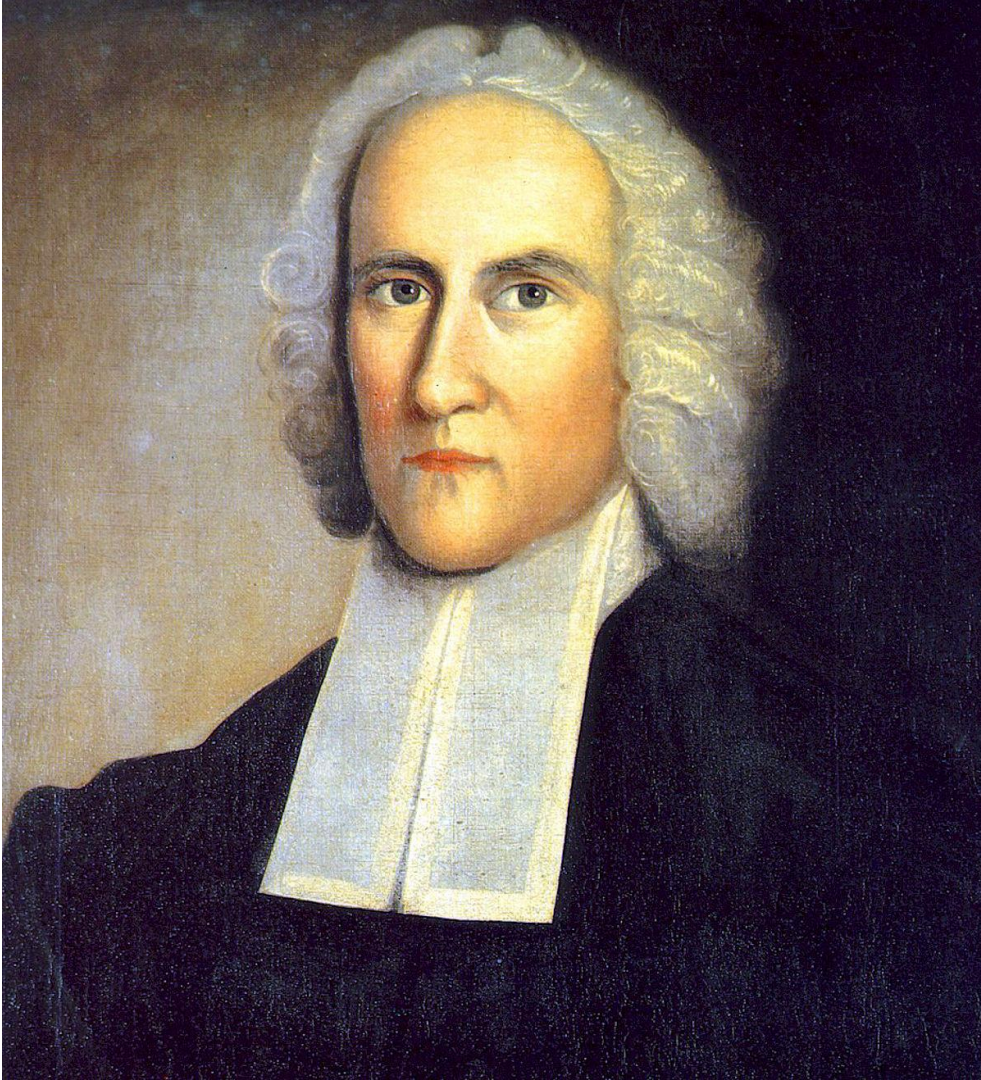
- **George Whitefield**

- a traveling (itinerant) preacher from London that spurred the causes of the Great Awakening in the southern colonies
- Spoke to crowds as large as 30,000









G. Beard Pinx! *J. Faber fecit.*
George Whitefield. A.B.
Sold by James Hutton at the Bible & Sun next to the Rose Tavern without Temple Bar

 NATIONAL GALLERIES SCOTLAND

George Whitefield (Whitfield), 1714 - 1770. Methodist leader, , multiple artists

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Impact of the First Great Awakening

- Encouraged colonists to challenge traditional religious authority and leave churches they weren't happy with
- Decline of "Old Light" denominations: Anglicans, Quakers, and Congregationalists
- Growth of "New Light" denominations: Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians (American forms of Protestantism) (increased religious diversity in colonies)
- New Light denominations work to convert Native Americans and African-Americans
- Foundation of new colleges: Princeton, Dartmouth, Brown, Columbia
- Unifying experience for the colonies, first shared movement, beginnings of common identity
- Set the groundwork for the colonists to challenge the authority of the Crown