

VOLUME 1 ★ FROM THE COLONIAL ERA TO 1800

AMERICA

IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE

*“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
(Proverbs 1:7)*

EDITED BY KEVIN SWANSON



Generations
PASSING ON THE FAITH

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Introduction

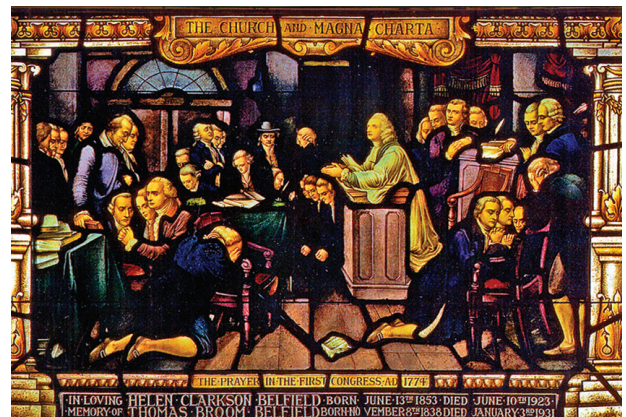
In God's Providence

“For I know that the Lord is great, and our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the Lord pleases He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places. He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasuries. He destroyed the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast. He sent signs and wonders into the midst of you, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh and all his servants. He defeated many nations and slew mighty kings.” (Psalm 135:5-10)

History

History is really and truly “His Story.” We can call it “God’s story” because God is directing all events on the stage of human history. This is what should make the story so interesting. There is something exciting going on because God is writing the story, and you and I play a part in it.

Historians who do not believe in God cannot find this excitement in history. Their histories will be boring because for them history is a series of meaningless events in a **random** universe. For them, there is no God in charge of the universe.



America's Founding Fathers openly pledged allegiance to God as the source of their liberty. In 1774, during the first session of the Continental Congress, the Founders joined in public prayer.

The Vision of the Founders

John Winthrop, founder and first Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, helped to write the first Constitution of the New England Confederation. These founders of America put their vision for the nation into these words in 1643:

"Whereas we all came to these parts of America with the same end and aim, namely to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to enjoy the liberties of the Gospell thereof with purities and peace, and for preserving and propagating the truth and liberties of the Gospell."

Recognizing God's Providence

America's Founding Fathers would constantly recognize the providential hand of God in every place and at every step. During the most difficult years of America's War for Independence from Britain, General **George Washington** would write to a friend:

"The many remarkable interpositions of the Divine Government in the hours of our deepest distress and darkness, have been too luminous to suffer me to doubt the happy issue of the present contest."

There is no such thing as good and evil. There are no heroes and no villains in the ultimate sense.

However, for us history holds great meaning and importance. There are godly men in history who act in strong faith. There are also evil men who rebel against the true and living God. They disobey His laws without regret and **repentance**. While men are responsible for the decisions they make, God is also sovereign over them.



Advertisement for the 1893 Columbian World Exposition in Commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the landing of Christopher Columbus in the New World (1492-1892).

When Joseph's brothers did a very evil thing in selling Joseph into slavery, was God involved? Joseph told his brothers later, "You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good" (Genesis 50:20). When extremely evil people put the Son of God on a cross and killed him, Peter said it was done according to the "determined purpose and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). This is how we will read every event that has ever taken place in history. This is what we mean when we say that God is sovereign over history.

The Lord Jesus Christ is also the **Sovereign** King of the world. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Therefore, the kings and presidents

of the earth are not free to do whatever they please. They must serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling, or they will quickly perish from the way (Psalm 2:8-10).

When nations displease God and disobey His law, they run the risk of being wiped off the map. We find this with nations and city-states in the Old Testament like Babel (Genesis 11), Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19), Tyre and Sidon (Ezekiel 26-28), Babylon (Isaiah 13), and others. God even punished his own special nation, Israel, for its rebellion against Him. Therefore, we can conclude that no nation is immune from God's judgment, or protected from His eye. "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3).

America

In God's **providence**, America the country came to be in 1776. This country was formed out of the best fruit of the Protestant Reformation. The thirteen colonies were not perfect, but they found strong rooting in a reforming faith. After 500 years of religious decline in Europe, the Protestant Reformation found more soil in which to blossom and bloom in the wild, unexplored territory of America.

The Rise and Fall of America

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD." (Psalm 33:12)

God blessed this nation for many centuries. America became the most **productive** nation on earth in the 1880s (as a percentage share of the World Gross Product). Finally, in 2015, China took first place as the most productive nation on earth. For the last century, America has been the most generous nation on earth. Since the 1800s,



Hail to the Chief

Sovereignty means supreme power, supremacy, the possession of the highest power, or of uncontrollable power. Absolute sovereignty belongs to God alone. Limited sovereignty is delegated by God to lesser authorities: parents in family government, church leaders in ecclesiastical (church) government, and civil leaders in civil government.

A Sovereign is a supreme lord or ruler; one who possesses the highest authority without control. God is the sovereign ruler of the universe.



America has sent the most Christian missionaries to the far reaches of the globe.

There is a great battle that goes on over the heart of a nation. The Apostle Paul reminded us

in Ephesians 6 that, “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age.” The battles are waged and won in the spiritual realm, more in the churches than in **legislative** chambers.

The Deists and the Unitarians undermined the Christian faith in the 1700s, and this weakened the nation. Then, the Great Awakening restored faith to the nation in the 1740s and 1750s. The liberals gained control of the mainline denominations between the 1890s and the 1920s. The evangelicals attempted a comeback between the 1930s and the 1980s. However, the atheists and the humanists gained complete control of the public schools and eliminated prayer and Bible reading by the 1960s. The universities were **radicalized** by the 1970s, and the sexual revolution destroyed the family by the 1990s. The tiny “Jesus Movement” of the 1970s, Creation ministries arguing against

evolutionary theories, and the homeschooling movement of the 1990s preserved something of a remnant. But, Christianity’s cultural impact on the national institutions was all but gone by the 2010s.

Immorality and the breakdown of the family would eventually destroy the nation. America forgot the God of the Bible, especially in its schools and media. And this would be its downfall.

America makes for a great story.

It is the story of the **preservation** of freedom.

It is the story of a nation blessed by God in a very unique way.

It is the story of a nation that met the judgment of God when it turned away from God.

It is the story of a nation that impacted the world by courageous missionaries, evangelists, and ministries that held to the authority of the Bible (despite the apostasy of the Western European nations).

In Review

Key Terms

- + Providence
- + Random
- + Repentance
- + Sovereign
- + Radicalized
- + Productive
- + Evolutionary
- + Preservation
- + Legislative

Key People

- + John Winthrop
- + George Washington



UNIT I

A New World in View

CHAPTER

1

Kingdom Wars: An Age-Old Struggle

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. . . . And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.” (Revelation 19:11, 16)

The battle between rival faiths is as old as history itself. Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God, people have been faced with the choice of following the true God or some false religion. As the study of biblical history shows, what a person believes about God affects his beliefs about everything.

When Jesus ascended to heaven, He began a reign with the intent of bringing all His enemies under His feet (1 Cor. 15:25). The increase of His kingdom would not come the way in which kings build their nations, however. Christ would transform His people from the inside out, not by the sword, but by the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart; not by government education programs but by the discipleship of the nations through the work of the church. That is how Jesus changed the world (Matt. 28:18-20).



Statue of Caesar Augustus in Rome Italy, who referred to himself as Divi Filius (Son of God) and Savior. The true Son of God, Jesus, was born around the 28th year of his reign.

They Want to Secure Their Power Position

Earthly rulers have challenged the reign of Christ from day one. As the very Son of God, He was born a King in Bethlehem. And today, He is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Reigning at the time of the birth of Christ, Augustus Caesar introduced himself as a competitor taking up the title “Divi filius” or “Son of God” for himself. The Prienne Calendar inscription of 9 BC introduced Augustus as “Savior.”

Non-Christian rulers do not like the idea of bowing down to God’s authority, because they are busy pledging allegiance to themselves. They despise God’s absolute laws in favor of their own. When a ruler insists on the right to do whatever he wants, without submitting to God’s sovereign rule or any power above him, he becomes a **tyrant**. His government will turn into a cruel totalitarian rule.

The early Church witnessed this conflict firsthand. The apostles who preached the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over individuals and nations were confronted with hostile opposition from religious leaders and civil rulers. Nothing in history has changed. Rulers of all types have been taking their stand against Jesus ever since He was first proclaimed King.

The Christian worldview continues to challenge all competing worldviews on the following five points:

- ✦ God is sovereign, not man.
- ✦ Rulers and governments have limited authority.
- ✦ Law is of divine, not human, origin.
- ✦ God judges in terms of His law.
- ✦ Nations are judged based on how faithfully they acknowledge God’s sovereignty and keep His law.

The study of history is the study of how

—Worldview—

A set of beliefs about the most important issues of life. A worldview is a way of viewing or interpreting reality.



Why Do the Nations Rage?

“Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.’ He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: ‘Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD has said to Me, “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”’ Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.” (Psalm 2)

—*Totalitarianism*—

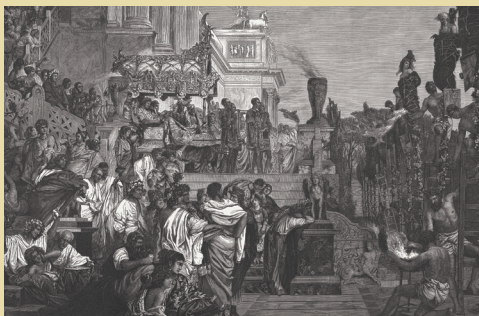
Centralized control by a civil government that wields total power over the citizenry.

Freedom vs. Tyranny

During one of the darkest periods of World War II, after the fall of France to the Nazis, the Prime Minister of England, Winston Churchill (1874–1965), made a speech that linked Christianity and freedom: “The Battle of France is over. I expect that the Battle of Britain is about to begin. *Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization.*” The fall of western civilization, Churchill concluded, would mean the rise of a new form of **paganism** (Nazism), the end of Christian civilization, and a return to both spiritual and political bondage.



The Acropolis and the Parthenon tower over Athens



Nero Caesar watching the burning of Christians

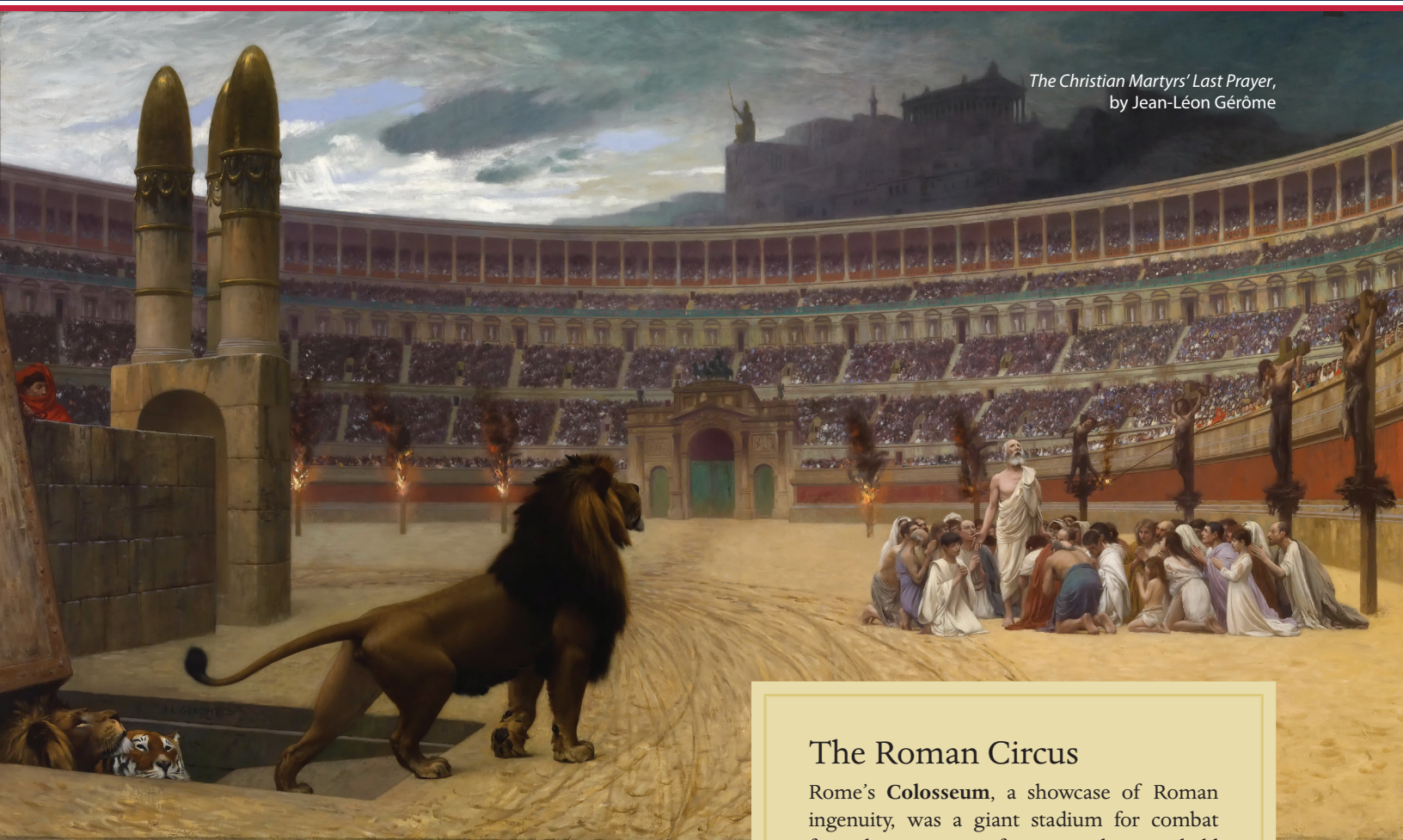
nations have answered the following questions of allegiance: Who is ultimately in charge? and Whose law should be obeyed?

The Greek and Roman Way

To understand the European **civilization** that gave birth to the New World, we must briefly study the **Classical Age** of ancient Greece and Rome and its battles with the Christian worldview. Many believe that Greece and Rome are the true foundation stones of America. Modern scholars often praise the Classical Age for its high **culture**, educational **philosophy**, architecture, legal code, and civil philosophy.

Despite the famed glory and magnificence of ancient Greece and Rome, these civilizations were at heart morally corrupt. For example, although Greece is often described as the “cradle of **democracy**,” Greek citizenship was granted only to a select few. The nobles served as the voice of the gods, whereas the majority of people had no voice in the way their government functioned. **Slavery** was common, and so was killing the most vulnerable members of society: the children. If a Greek woman decided that her baby had abnormalities or if she simply did not want him any more, all she had to do was leave him outside to die, or else give him up for a sacrifice to the gods. Human sacrifice did happen in classical Greece. In fact, one artist portrayed the practice in a sculpture in the Greek Parthenon, one of the best-known artifacts of the Classical Period. The sculpture depicted the sacrifice of two young women whose father, an Athenian king, sacrificed them to ensure success in battle.

Rome followed a similar path, performing human sacrifices for religious and political reasons, until the time of Emperor Constantine (AD 306–337). In addition, the Roman State became an idol when emperors required that they be worshipped. Emperor **Gaius** (AD 37–



The Christian Martyrs' Last Prayer,
by Jean-Léon Gérôme

41) demanded that a golden statue of himself be erected in the temple in Jerusalem. Emperor **Domitian** (AD 81–96) also claimed to be divine when he described himself as *dominus et deus*, “lord and god.” Those who refused to worship him with sacrifices were charged with treason.

The Roman Reign of Terror

Roman rulers initially tolerated the Christian religion as long as they believed it did not challenge the authority of the State. In time, however, this new faith came to be seen as an enemy of the Empire because of Christians’ sole allegiance to the **Triune** God of the Bible and His law. Pledging allegiance to the God of the Bible instead of to Rome was considered blasphemy,

The Roman Circus

Rome’s **Colosseum**, a showcase of Roman ingenuity, was a giant stadium for combat festivals. A series of pens and cages held animals under the field, and a system of hoists and primitive elevators lifted them into the arena for combat. Perhaps the greatest feature of this amphitheater was the series of **aqueducts** that enabled the arena to be flooded for mock naval battles.



GUTENBERG'S PRESS PRINTS BIBLE

1456

COLUMBUS DISCOVERS "INDIES"

1492

AZTEC EMPIRE FALLS TO CORTES

1521

VERRAZANO'S EXPLORATION

1524

CARTIER'S FIRST EXPLORATION

1534

1488

DIAS ROUNDS CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

1517

MARTIN LUTHER'S 95 THESES

1522

MAGELLAN'S EXPEDITION COMPLETED

1533

FALL OF INCA EMPIRE TO PIZZARO

1536

CALVIN PUBLISHES HIS INSTITUTES

The Roman Forum



Blue-Collar Togas

During the reign of Emperor **Trajan** (AD 98–117), nearly one third of Rome's population was made up of slaves. Most of them were taken from other countries and then sold at auctions in the public marketplace. Slaves did most of the manual labor of the society, including cooking, cleaning, farming, and construction. In fact, the magnificent buildings for which Rome is so famous were built with slave labor.



and Christianity became the State's greatest religious and political rival.

Emperor **Nero** (AD 54–68) instituted the first full-scale persecution of Christians in AD 64. He tortured some followers of Christ by covering them with animal skins and throwing them to packs of savage dogs. Other believers were doused with oil, suspended on poles, and burned to serve as nightly illumination for his garden parties.

When Emperor **Trajan** (AD 98–117) made Christianity a crime against the Roman Empire, hundreds of Christians were hauled into court. Only those who renounced Christ as the one true God and made an offering to the Roman gods and a sacrifice to the emperor were set free. Those who continued to call themselves Christians were punished by torture and death. Despite Roman **tyranny** and persecution, however, Christianity continued to advance throughout the Empire and finally became its official religion under Emperor **Constantine** in the early fourth century.

NERO PERSECUTES CHRISTIANS

64

CHRISTIAN EMPIRE AT CONSTANTINOPLE

330

ISLAMIC MOORS INVADE SPAIN

711

MARCO POLO BEGINS VOYAGE

1271

WYCLIFFE'S ENGLISH BIBLE

1381

70

FALL OF JERUSALEM

476

FALL OF ROMAN EMPIRE

1095

FIRST CRUSADE BEGINS

1347

BLACK DEATH

1453

CONSTANTINOPLE FALLS TO THE TURKS

Copy-Cattius

Some of our constitutional framers looked to the Greek and Roman Empires for wisdom, and borrowed a number of fundamental pagan principles (while rejecting pagan polytheistic worship). Many buildings in Washington D.C., with their columns and façades, reflect this emphasis on classical culture. Some American political writers during the eighteenth century even called themselves by Latin names like Publius and Cato. George Washington was known as a “Cincinnatus,” a Roman general and patriot. First displayed in the US Capitol during the 1840s, an enormous marble sculpture of the first US president dressed in a Roman toga can be seen at the National Museum of American History.



The Rise and Walls of the Roman Empire

Like all great nations, Rome started out small. Sometime in the eighth century BC, settlements of people living in Italy joined together in mutual protection to form a city: the city of Rome. By 238 BC, Rome's population had grown to about 150,000 people and had expanded beyond the boundary of the city to control the entire Italian peninsula.

In 27 BC, Rome became an empire when the ruler at the time, **Octavian**, was given the title Augustus (“majestic”); Augustus is considered Rome's first emperor. The army of the Roman Empire aggressively extended its borders throughout the Mediterranean area.

An emperor worship cult began with Augustus Caesar as the Romans attempted to turn government into a god. Emperor Domitian's reign (51-96) further popularized the practice. The empire reached its peak of expansion by AD 117 under Emperor Trajan. Trajan's successor, Emperor Hadrian, worked hard to keep Rome's borders secure by building miles and miles of walls to keep out warring tribes.

Subsequent emperors tried to maintain centralized control over their vast empires, but God limits the power of men. The greatest worldly powers will eventually come to an end. The nations over which Rome governed wanted the freedom to govern themselves. Christians refused to render absolute obeisance and worship to the state. So Rome weakened, and it wasn't long before barbarian tribes were attacking and advancing on all sides of the empire. There are many reasons why Rome fell, but the most important reason is that God brought it down.

*For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south.
But God is the Judge: He puts down one,
And exalts another. (Psalm 75:6-7)*



In Review

The study of history is the study of how nations have answered the following two questions of allegiance: Who is ultimately in charge? and Whose law should be obeyed? During the era of ancient Rome, culture denied God's rule over life and elevated the Roman emperor as God. As a result, terror and persecution reigned.

Key Terms

- + Worldview
- + Tyrant
- + Totalitarianism
- + Civilization
- + Authority
- + Tyranny
- + Classical Age
- + Paganism
- + Culture
- + Philosophy
- + Democracy
- + Slavery
- + Triune
- + Colosseum
- + Aqueduct

Key People

- + Octavian (Augustus)
- + Gaius (Caligula)
- + Domitian
- + Nero
- + Trajan



NERO PERSECUTES CHRISTIANS

64

CHRISTIAN EMPIRE AT CONSTANTINOPLE

330

ISLAMIC MOORS INVADE SPAIN

711

MARCO POLO BEGINS VOYAGE

1271

WYCLIFFE'S ENGLISH BIBLE

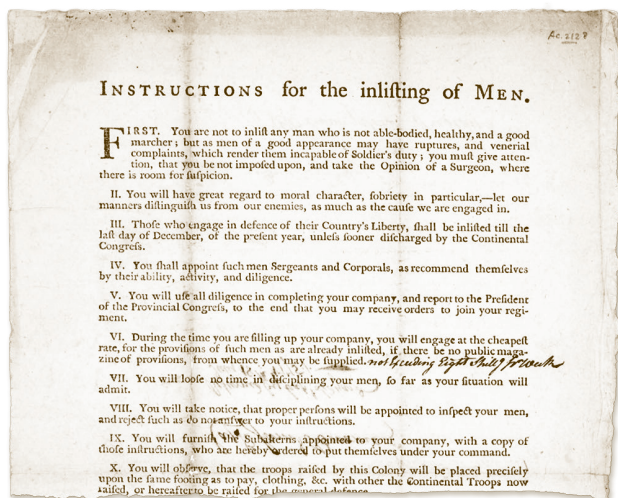
1381

70
FALL OF JERUSALEM476
FALL OF ROMAN EMPIRE1095
FIRST CRUSADE BEGINS1347
BLACK DEATH1453
CONSTANTINOPLE FALLS TO THE TURKS

CHAPTER 33

The Battle Begins

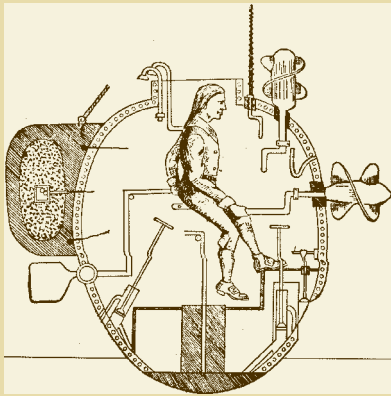
“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.” (Psalm 72:8-11)



War poster for enlistment of soldiers

Upon the signing of the Declaration of Independence, New England's most influential patriot, Samuel Adams announced, "We have this day restored the Sovereign to Whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come." These Founding Fathers were relieved to break from a nation that appeared to be rejecting Christ, embracing tyranny, and rewarding immoral leaders.

In fact, Benjamin Franklin suggested for the American seal the scene of Moses standing at the Red Sea seeking God's deliverance from Pharaoh's armies. The motto recommended was "Resistance to Tyrants is Obedience to God."



Up Periscope

On September 6, 1776, the submarine *Turtle* attempted to sink the British flagship HMS *Eagle*, part of the fleet blockading New York harbor, by attaching a cask of gunpowder to the hull of the *Eagle* and sneaking away before the powder exploded. The *Turtle* was invented by David Bushnell (1742–1824) from Connecticut, a recent graduate of Yale University, who named his sub for its shape. Had the attack succeeded, it would have been the first successful submarine attack in history. Unfortunately, the *Turtle* struck part of the *Eagle*'s rudder and was forced to surface before the explosive could be attached. The *Turtle*'s failed attempt did alarm the British, causing them to move their ships farther from shore. Bushnell gave up submarining to become a doctor.

Meanwhile, the British derided the American Christian piety. General James Grant who helped General Howe win the battle of New York called the Americans a bunch of “Bible-faced Yankees.” General Howe told the British Secretary of State this was a “religious war.”

The third prong of attack involved cutting off the rise of support for the independence movement in the Middle colonies. For this strategy to work, all three parts would have had to be carried out successfully, and that was the

British Strategy for War

After the war was well underway, the British came up with a three-pronged strategy to put down the rebellion in America. The first part of the strategy was to isolate the New England colonies from the rest of the country. After all, it was in New England that the Sons of Liberty had been most effective in organizing resistance to British authority. The British reasoned that if New England could be sealed off, it would be easier to defeat resistance in the rest of the colonies.

The second part of British strategy called for recruiting the Loyalists living in the Southern colonies. The British believed that if they sent forces in large numbers to the South, they could raise enough troops from those loyal to the Crown and overwhelm the rebel forces.

Public Relations Disaster

In the march across New Jersey, British and German troops looted the houses of both Loyalists and Patriots indiscriminately. After watching soldiers vandalize their homes and take their valuables—even featherbeds were stolen—many supporters of King George changed their minds.



FRENCH REVOLUTION
1789-99

WASHINGTON ELECTED SECOND TERM
1792

WHISKEY REBELLION
1794

WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS
1796

ALIEN AND SEDITION ACTS
1798

1791
BILL OF RIGHTS

1793
PROCLAMATION OF NEUTRALITY

1795
JAY TREATY RATIFIED

1797
JOHN ADAMS BECOMES PRESIDENT

1799
DEATH OF WASHINGTON

weakness of it. If one part of the plan failed, the British troops would be at risk of being cut off from reinforcements and supplies.

Washington on the Run

After cutting their losses in Massachusetts Bay, the British set sail southwards towards New York, and that is where Washington transferred his armies. Assuming the Redcoats would attack by sea, the Americans prepared to defend Long Island. However, General William Howe added reinforcements to his army, and successfully landed 32,000 troops on the West side of the island for an attack by land. Outflanked and outnumbered, the American troops were routed in the worst defeat in the war in the Battle of Long Island. When the gunsmoke had cleared on August 27, 1776, a sum total of 3,000 Americans were killed or wounded,

as compared to about 400 British casualties. The British gloated in the American losses, General Grant commenting: "If a good bleeding can bring those Bible-faced Yankees to their senses, the fever of independency should soon abate."⁷ But God gave the nation a reprieve, sending intense rains and floods over the next few days. By the evening of August 29th, the storm broke. All through that evening under clear skies, Washington's remaining troops retreated across the East River in small boats. However, when dawn broke, there were still a number of regiments still to move. Should the British notice the movements, they would attack immediately. But God was with them. Major Ben Tallmadge, Washington's Chief of Intelligence witnessed the second singular providence, and wrote of their escape:

"Those of us who remained in the trenches



Washington preparing to cross the Delaware River

GREAT AWAKENING
1730-45

STAMP ACT
1765

FIRST CONTINENTAL CONGRESS
1774

TREATY OF ALLIANCE
1778

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION
1787

1754-63
FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR

1770
BOSTON MASSACRE

1776
DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

1783
TREATY OF PARIS

1789
WASHINGTON TAKES OFFICE

Washington crossing the Delaware River
the night of December 25–26, 1776





Benjamin Tallmadge (1754-1835) and his son

Spy Master

Nathan Hale's harsh fate prompted George Washington to centralize intelligence operations, headed by chief of intelligence Major Benjamin Tallmadge (1754-1835). Coded messages were taken to Washington, who applied a "sympathetic fluid" that revealed the secret message. One of his agents stole the top-secret signals of the British fleet, which may have helped the French win several battles. During the British occupation of Philadelphia in 1777, the British requisitioned one of the rooms at the home of Lydia Darragh. According to the family account of the story, as the British discussed war plans in the room, Mrs. Darragh would press her ear to a crack in the floor. Her husband wrote down the information in shorthand on scraps of paper and his wife hid them in large cloth-covered buttons. Wearing the buttons, her fourteen-year-old son would meet his brother in the countryside who snipped off the buttons and got the information to Washington.

The Spy Game

Espionage played a crucial role in the war. Nathan Hale (1755-1776), posing as a schoolmaster, was hanged by the British when he was caught with information about the movement of Howe's forces. His final words were, "I only regret

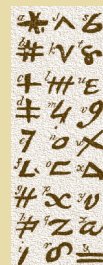
Nathan Hale
(1755-1776)

that I have but one life to give for my country." Hale was also accused of being one of the incendiaries who attempted to burn New York City to the ground in order to deprive the British army of its winter quarters. His statue stands at the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency as a tribute to one of the nation's first intelligence agents.

New York fire started by the Americans,
September 19, 1776

ABCs of Espionage

The Americans were not alone in the use of spies. The British were aided by the American Tories with secret communications. Coded messages were created using one of many cipher alphabets.

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Chester

Written between 1770 and 1778, this William Billings's composition became the most popular among colonials during America's War for Independence.

*Let tyrants shake their iron rod,
And Slav'ry clank her galling chains,
We fear them not, we trust in God,
New England's God forever reigns.*

*Howe and Burgoyne and Clinton too,
With Prescot and Cornwallis join'd,
Together plot our Overthrow,
In one Infernal league combined.*

*When God inspired us for the fight,
Their ranks were broke, their lines were forced,
Their ships were Shatter'd in our sight,
Or swiftly driven from our Coast.*

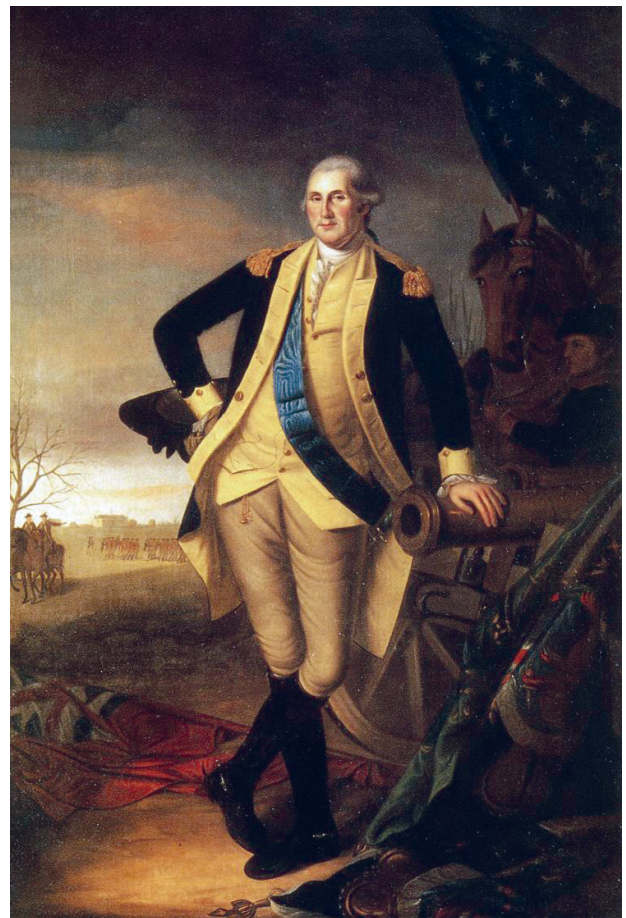
*The Foe comes on with haughty Stride;
Our troops advance with martial noise,
Their Vet'rans flee before our Youth,
And Generals yield to beardless Boys.*

*What grateful Off'ring shall we bring?
What shall we render to the Lord?
Loud Halleluiahs let us Sing,
And praise his name on ev'ry Chord.*

became very anxious for our own safety, and when the dawn appeared there were several regiments still on duty. At that time a very dense fog began to rise, and it seemed to settle in a peculiar manner over both encampments. I recollect this perfectly providential occurrence perfectly well, and so very dense was the atmosphere that I could scarcely discern a man at six yards distance. We tarried until the sun was risen, but the fog remained as

dense as ever."⁸

"The hand of God...intervened."⁹ All 9,000 troops survived—not a man was lost. Throughout the next few months, Washington continued his retreat across New York State crossing the Delaware river into Pennsylvania on December 8, 1776. For good measure, Washington's men seized all the boats along sixty miles on the east bank of the river. A discouraged Commander in Chief penned a letter about this time, commenting, "If every nerve is not strained to recruit a new army with all possible expedition, I think the game is nearly up." The British General Howe strategized that forcing the Continental Army



George Washington after the Battle of Princeton

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Catherine Schuyler (1734-1803) shown in the act of burning the fields

Military Tactics

The legend of Catherine Schuyler setting fire to wheatfields along the Hudson to deny food to the approaching British troops is not true. But her husband, General Philip Schuyler (1733–1804), who was assigned to command the defense of the Hudson Valley in New York, did attempt to slow down General Burgoyne's advance by having soldiers and residents destroy or remove food and livestock, destroy bridges, block roads, and dam creeks. These tactics did affect Burgoyne's advance, as he averaged only one mile a day after leaving Fort Ticonderoga.

into the wilderness for a winter would had him the victory, and Washington would surrender.

Washington Strikes Back

The Fall and Winter months of 1776-1777 were the darkest days in America's history. However,



Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804) in the uniform of the New York Artillery

small victories would make for a monumental difference at the beginning of the war. Historian David McCullough referred to the outcome as "little short of a miracle." And, Sir George Otto Trevelyan remarked, "It may be doubted whether so small a number of men ever employed so short a space of time with greater and more lasting effects upon the history of the world." William Jones told King George III in 1776, "this has been a Presbyterian war from the beginning... and accordingly the first firing against the King's troops was from a Massachusetts meeting-house."

While he was temporarily safe from a British assault, Washington faced another pressing problem. At the end of December, the enlistments for many of his troops would expire. He knew something had to be done to rouse the spirits of his men to encourage them to stay. And after his defeat at New York and his hasty retreat into New Jersey and then into Pennsylvania, Washington was aware that there were now critics in Congress calling for his removal.

In a remarkable act of courage, Washington attacked the Hessians (German troops) in Trenton on Christmas day, 1776. The Americans had crossed the Delaware, marched all night,

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The Germans Are Coming

When King George realized he could not raise enough men in England to send a strong army to America, he attempted to hire Russians from Catherine the Great. She refused and offered this warning: Using foreign troops was an admission of weakness. George turned to his fellow German princes, who had been in the business of renting bodies to warring powers for money for years. Many of the 30,000 troops came from the German province of Hesse, hence the name Hessians. In some cases, the “recruits” were kidnapped from their homes, or students taken unwillingly from their university studies. Some were taken from prisons, and others were young men who saw an opportunity to join the 200,000 Germans who were already enjoying life in America. The German soldiers did not like the unorthodox fighting methods



Hessian soldier

of the Americans. They also were perplexed by the German Americans' violent opposition to them, as well as by their enthusiasm for liberty.



Captured Hessian troops being led by Washington



The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton,
December 26, 1776

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Blind Ambition

Charles Lee was a British-born general who first served in America during the French and Indian War. At the outbreak of the War for Independence, Congress commissioned him as a major general. His ambition for supreme authority caused him repeatedly to disregard Washington's orders, hoping to achieve personal success which would convince Congress that he should replace Washington. A moral indiscretion in December 1776 led to his capture by the British, and his army was placed under Washington. Lee was later released in an exchange of prisoners. His order to retreat at the battle of Monmouth led to an American rout until it was stopped by Washington. Documents revealing his treasonable assistance to General Howe in planning the capture of Philadelphia in 1777 came to light. Lee was court-martialed for disobeying orders and suspended from service for a year. Congress permanently dismissed him from military service when his public criticism of Washington came to be too loud and disruptive for the nation. "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)



The capture of General Charles Lee

and attacked with nothing but bayonets—their guns were soaked. In 45 minutes the Americans had captured 900 prisoners, sustaining only two fatalities—both of which had froze to death on the early morning march. It was this, their weakest moment and most critical stage, at which the American army won an important battle and obtained much-needed supplies.

Receiving news of the American victory, General Howe sent **General Charles Cornwallis** (1738–1805) in pursuit of Washington. The American commander played a clever trick on his British foes by ordering his army to build large campfires at night and then withdraw quietly into the darkness of the woods behind the blazes. On January 3, 1777, Washington then marched his army on to Princeton where he defeated the British. After this victory, the Continental Army went into their winter quarters in Morristown, New Jersey. Word of the victories at Trenton and Princeton increased enlistments in the Continental Army and many who had Tory leanings came over to the Patriot cause.

Times that Try Men's Souls

But it was still a dark time for General Washington. The small victories at Trenton and Princeton boosted American morale, but Washington had yet to defeat a British army. **General Charles Lee**, who had defended Charleston and pushed the British out of the South in April 1776, had been appealing to Congress to remove Washington and appoint him as commander in chief. Lee promoted himself as being clearly more qualified for the position. To emphasize his point and to make Washington's job more difficult, Lee refused to join his troops with Washington's in the midst of the retreat through New York and New Jersey. Envy and pride always get in the way of that which is good (Proverbs 27:4, James

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3:14-16). When Lee was captured in December 1776 and turned over to General Cornwallis, Washington's primary competitor was now in British hands.

One man who observed General Washington's travails was **Thomas Paine**. He had been volunteering his services to the Continental Army and had witnessed the difficult retreat through New Jersey. He determined to defend Washington's cause. Writing a new pamphlet, *The Crisis*, Paine made the case for the Americans to persevere through these troubled times and events and look forward to their future of freedom. Despite his personal reservations about the Christian faith, Paine expressed a religious-like devotion that believed Divine Providence would sustain the Patriots and win the American cause. This was no time to despair. Paine wrote:

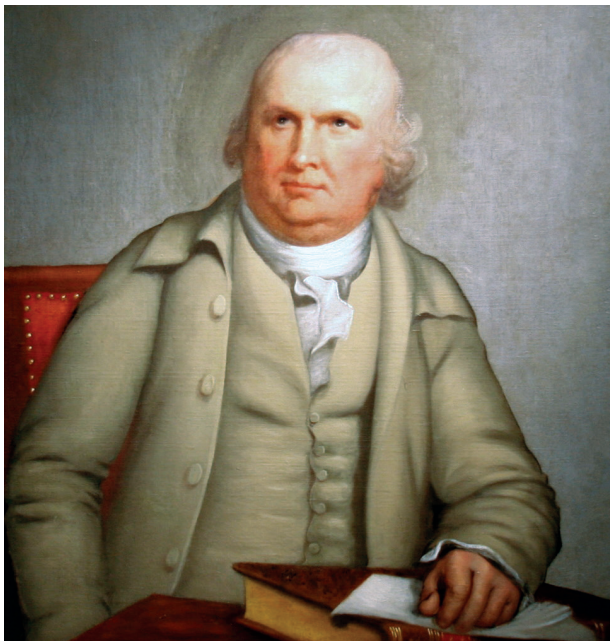
"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the

love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: 'Tis dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as Freedom should not be highly rated."

As with Paine's first pamphlet, his new piece had a stirring effect. Many soldiers continued to reenlist. However, Washington needed money to support new troops and to provide bonuses to the men who had extended their enlistments. He appealed to his friend, Robert Morris, a wealthy Philadelphia banker, who willingly offered the needed assistance. Morris' contribution helped keep hopes alive in the difficult winter of 1776-1777. The fires of freedom continued to burn.

Saratoga

During the next year, Americans would need hope, and divine intervention, to prevent the British from destroying the Continental Army. As determined as ever to carry out their strategy, the British made their plans for the spring of 1777. An army under the command of General John



Robert Morris (1734-1806)



Mortally wounded General Nicholas Herkimer directing the battle from under a beech tree

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General John Burgoyne (1722-1792)



General Horatio Gates (1727-1806)



Surrender of British General John Burgoyne at Saratoga, New York on October 17, 1777

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Burgoyne would move southward from Montreal, retake Forts Crown Point and Ticonderoga, occupy Saratoga, and proceed to Albany, the colonial capital of New York. There, Burgoyne would rendezvous with British armies under the command of General Henry Clinton and General Barry St. Leger (1737-1789). The plan called for St. Leger's forces to travel from Montreal to Albany. Meanwhile, General Clinton's forces would march from New York City to meet the armies of St. Leger and Burgoyne. If all had gone as planned, this would have effectively cut off and isolated New England and ensured the success of the first part of the British strategy.

As the Lord would have it, the northern campaign was a disaster for the British. At the first skirmish at the Battle of Oriskany, the army of Loyalists, British regulars, and Mohawk and Iroquois Indians led by Lt. Col. Barry St. Leger clashed with American General Nicholas Herkimer (1728-1777). The battle ended in a draw more-or-less, but with the Americans sustaining more casualties. American **General Horatio Gates** (1727–1808) marched north from Albany to engage General John Burgoyne at the **Battle of Saratoga**.

When the two sides collided, the Americans badly beat the outnumbered British troops. Confronted by superior numbers and with no word on General Clinton's reinforcements, who were only halfway to Albany, Burgoyne arranged for the surrender of his 5,000 troops to Gates on October 17, 1777. Saratoga was a tremendous victory for the American cause. Colonel Benedict Arnold, who had defeated Burgoyne in the opening battle but had suffered a broken leg during the fighting, played a vital role in Gates' victory.

In response to the victory at Saratoga, on November 1, 1777, the President of the Continental Congress, Henry Laurens, issued a proclamation establishing America's first

Thanksgiving Day. Portions of this historic proclamation are contained below:

“Forasmuch as it is the indispensable duty of all men to adore the superintending providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with gratitude their obligation to him for benefits



Mohawk chief Thayendanegea (1742–1807)

Evangelism Explosion

Thayendanegea, a Mohawk chief who had taken the name Joseph Brant (1742–1807), was converted to Christianity as a young man while attending a Christian academy in Connecticut. Commissioned as a British officer when war broke out, Brant's band of Loyalists and Indians fought valiantly at the Battle of Oriskany, New York. After the war, Brant worked hard for peace between Indians and the colonists and devoted his attention to missionary work among his people. He helped translate the Gospel of Mark and the Episcopal Prayer Book into the Mohawk language.

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A Most Serious Handicap

One weakness of Congress, that it had no power to levy taxes, was a considerable problem for the Americans. It could only ask states for money, and the state legislatures always gave much less than was requested. Each legislature was fearful of paying more than the other states. In order to buy supplies for the army, Congress began to issue paper money. People were not at all sure if Congress would ever redeem its Continental currency. If the war failed, the money would be worthless; even if the war were won, Congress might not ever make good on the paper promises. Continental currency therefore began to depreciate. In 1781, Thomas Paine had to pay \$300 in paper for a pair of woolen socks! Eventually, people refused to accept this currency, and “Not worth a continental” became a phrase of derision.



Continental currency

received, and to implore such farther blessings as they stand in need of.. It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive powers of these United States, to set apart Thursday, the 18th day of December next, for solemn thanksgiving and praise; that with one heart and one voice the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts, and consecrate themselves to the service of their divine benefactor; and that together with their sincere acknowledgments and offerings, they may join the penitent confession of their manifold sins, whereby they had forfeited eve-ry favor, and their humble and earnest supplication that it may please God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of remembrance...”

The Battle of Saratoga was the turning point of the American War for Independence. The failure of the British to cut off New England meant the collapse of the other two parts of their strategy for subduing America. But more importantly, it demonstrated to the French that the Americans had a fighting chance. Having been sorely defeated by the British in the French and Indian War, they were itching for revenge. But they were not willing to risk fighting



A Good Match

When the plump, barely-five-foot Martha “Patsy” Custis married the tall French and Indian War hero, George Washington, it was more a marriage of convenience. Martha was a widow with two children and one of the richest women in Virginia. Her warmth and understanding caused her husband to comment later that marriage was one of the most important events in his life. Washington never took one furlough during the eight long years of war. Martha, however, joined her husband every year at his winter headquarters. With a fire going and Martha engaged in her needlework beside him, Washington could almost forget the war.

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Battle of Germantown

the British again unless they had a real chance of victory. Saratoga convinced them that they had that chance. Guided by Benjamin Franklin's brilliant diplomacy, they soon made a treaty of friendship and commerce with America, which led to an outright military alliance. The French wanted revenge against England for past defeats, and this alliance was their golden opportunity.

From Peak to Valley

Meanwhile, General Howe headed for Philadelphia in an effort to capture the infant



George Washington at Valley Forge

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Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben (1730–1794)

Whipping the Troops into Shape

Friedrich Wilhelm, Baron von Steuben (1730–1794), a Prussian military commander, volunteered his services to the American Congress as drill master to the Continental Army without rank or pay, except expenses. Von Steuben joined Washington at Valley Forge in 1778. Commanding the men through a translator, he taught the freezing troops Prussian drill and tactics and turned the ragtag American farmers into a disciplined army equal to the best the British could field. Von Steuben's aid during the war was so effective that Congress pensioned him, and he also received grants of land from the states in which he had directed troops. Von Steuben's *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* remained America's official military manual for over three decades.

nation's capital city. Washington's forces tried to stop him at the Battles of Brandywine and Germantown in September 1777, but they were

defeated. By the year's end, Howe was solidly in control of Philadelphia and a discouraged Continental Army made its way into winter quarters at **Valley Forge**, Pennsylvania.

The winter months of December 1777 through March 1778, spent in Valley Forge, was the low point for Washington and his army. The American soldiers were still feeling the sting from previous military defeats. Washington also had to contend with a new competitor for his position as commander in chief—General Gates. After a spectacular win at Saratoga, Gates was very popular with the members of Congress. Since Washington had been appointed, many of the members who had voted for him earlier had left Congress to assist in setting up the state governments. Some of the powerful men who remained, including John Adams, openly supported Gates. Congress had appointed another Washington critic, Thomas Conaway, as Inspector General for the Continental Army.

Washington also had to fight his own people. Many farmers in the Valley Forge area had sold their livestock and harvests to the British, who were camped for the winter in nearby Philadelphia. Unlike Washington, the British could pay in hard currency. Meanwhile, the soldiers of the Continental Army barely ate enough to survive the harsh winter. Private James Martin wrote in his diary:

"The army was now not only starved but naked; the greatest part were not only shirtless and barefoot, but destitute of all other clothing, especially blankets. I procured a small piece of raw cowhide and made myself a pair of moccasins, which (while they lasted) kept my feet from the frozen ground, although, as I well remember, the hard edges so galled my ankles, while on a march, that it was with much difficulty and pain that I could wear

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them afterwards; but the only alternative I had was to endure this inconvenience or to go barefoot, as hundreds of my companions had to, till they might be tracked by their blood upon the rough frozen ground.”

Despite the deprivations, Washington’s men looked to him for encouragement. They kept their spirits high—at least as high as possible in the deplorable conditions. They were still free, and hope of a victory was not yet lost, as demonstrated at the Battle of Saratoga. Those who did not believe in Washington had long since left for home. The

men who survived the winter at Valley Forge knew the price they had to pay for liberty, and looked forward to the opportunity of challenging the British troops when the weather warmed. They did their best to keep themselves, and the dream of an independent United States, alive.

“I am consumed by the blow of your hand. When with rebukes you correct man for iniquity, you make his beauty melt away like a moth; surely every man is vapor.”
(Psalm 39:10-11)

In Review

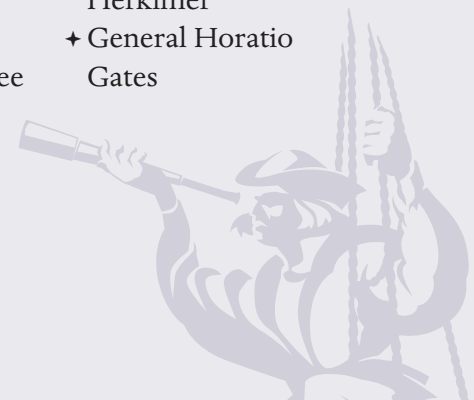
The British strategy to defeat the colonials was simple—isolate that hotbed of rebellion, New England, recruit thousands of Southern Tories to their cause, and stifle the rising support for independence in the Middle Colonies. The failure of any one part of this plan would doom the whole scheme. Washington’s forces were discouraged by having to evacuate New York early in the war, but were encouraged and emboldened by the twin victories at Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey, in late 1776 and early 1777. In October of 1777, the American victory at Saratoga, New York, doomed the British effort to cut off New England and proved, in retrospect, to have been the turning point of the war. Morale was severely tried during the following winter at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, where Washington’s iron will and leadership skills, as well as his soldiers’ ability to endure, were put to their ultimate test.

Key Terms

- ✦ Hessian
- ✦ Battle of Oriskany
- ✦ Battle of Trenton
- ✦ Battle of Saratoga
- ✦ *The Crisis*
- ✦ Valley Forge

Key People

- ✦ Alexander Hamilton
- ✦ General Nicholas
- ✦ General Charles
- ✦ Herkimer
- ✦ Cornwallis
- ✦ General Horatio
- ✦ General Charles Lee
- ✦ Gates
- ✦ Thomas Paine



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