

## George Washington, God and The Battle of Boston



The Battle of Boston illustrates why George Washington and fellow patriots humbly deferred credit to God for their victories in the Revolutionary War.

In a very risky operation on the night of March 4th, 1776, Washington ordered General Thomas to move 3000 men to the base of Dorchester Heights. Under a bright moon, in full view of the British Fort, they built fortifications. A fortuitous fog rolled in over the British position as a steady breeze kept construction noise away from enemy ears. The Americans labored under the light of the moon, completing

their work about three in the morning.

At dawn, the British were amazed at the fortifications the patriots had constructed. Author William M. Thayer wrote:

The British General Howe exclaimed. "The rebels have done more in one night than my whole army would have done in months." ... Quickly as possible General Howe began to bombard the new fortifications on Dorchester Heights. All throughout the day he cannonaded the little American army and, under the cover of bombardment, prepared to land twenty-five hundred picked men at night, and carry the Heights by storm. His guns did little damage, however through the day. Washington was present in person, encouraging the soldiers, and directing them in strengthening the fortifications.

Under the darkness of night General Howe sent twenty-five hundred of his best soldiers, in transports to capture the 'rebel works.' But a furious north-east storm arose, and beat upon them with such violence, that it was impossible to land. They were compelled to postpone the attack until the next night. But the storm continued, and even increased. The wind blew a gale, and the rain descended in torrents, all through the following day and night, shutting up the enemy within their quarters, and allowing the Americans time to multiply their works, and render them impregnable.

When the storm ceased, an English officer declared that the American position was invincible in their strong position. That General Howe was of the same opinion ... and decided to evacuate.

Boston selectman Timothy Newell noted in his diary that the "hurricane", the "terrible sudden storm" was a "manifest interposition of Divine Providence." The perfectly timed awesome storm saved the Continental Army. Washington in a letter to his brother John Augustine wrote, "Upon their discovery of the works next morning, great preparations were made for attacking them, but not being ready before the afternoon and the weather getting very tempestuous, much blood was saved, and a very important blow prevented. That this remarkable interposition of Providence is for some wise purpose, I have not a doubt."

Howe's humiliating retreat, with the assistance of God, proved to be instrumental in swaying public opinion and many holdout states in the Continental Congress. Soon Georgia on April 5th, North Carolina on April 12th, Rhode Island on May 4th, followed by Virginia on May 15th authorized their delegations to vote for independence.

The army and citizens of Massachusetts celebrated with discharge of firearms, fasting and prayers. Washington ordered:



Thursday, the 7th instant, being set apart by the honourable the Legislature of this Province, as a day of fasting, prayer and humiliation, 'to implore the Lord and Giver of all victories, to pardon our manifold sins and wickedness, and that it would please him to bless the Continental arms with his divine favour and protection,' all officers and soldiers are strictly enjoined to pay all due reverence and attention on that day to the sacred duties to the Lord of Hosts for His mercies already received, and for those blessings which our holiness and uprightness of life can alone encourage us to hope through his mercies to obtain.

In celebration of their victory, Washington requested only a church service in thanksgiving. He listened with his officers to a sermon by Boston clergyman Dr. Elliott, who preached on a Bible passage from Isaiah 33:22, which concluded with "The Lord is our King; it is he who will save us."

Washington was fortunate to live long enough to witness part of God's "wise purpose", which was the establishment of the United States. "No people," he said in his First Inaugural Address, "can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men, more than the people of the United States." But he warned that "The propitious smiles (blessings) of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained."

Endnotes:

Photo, courtesy of the Library of Congress, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov>

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When a people lose their history, they lose a part of who they are.  
Reclaim your heritage, pass this on to a friend or family member.

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