

God molds men in the Crucible of Crisis

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, July 5th

Before God can really use a man, he first has to: Shake him (Jdgs 6:1-6); Wake him (Jdgs 6:7-10) and Shape Him! (6:11-40) See also 1 Cor 3:18; Ro 8:28,29; 1 John 4:4.

Describing the last days Jesus asked: Lk 18:8 *"when the Son of man comes, shall he find faith (Pistis: Persuasion, Conviction!) on the earth?"* This type of faith (conviction) isn't forged in the coziness of Comfort, but in the Crucible of Crisis! (Isaiah 48:10,11; 1 Pt 1:7)

Last week we looked at some of the ways God shaped Gideon (Judges 6) as well as the men who joined him (Jdgs 7), so he could use them to accomplish His plan of deliverance.

Notice the parallels between Gideon's crisis and colonial America's.

1. Like Gideon's army, *the American Patriots were outnumbered.*

A. The English had a military > 500,000

- 1) They hired 30,000 German "Hessians"
- 2) They also had 25,000 "loyalists" who spied and/or fought for them.

<https://observer.com/2017/07/soldiers-militia-american-revolution/>

B. Washington seldom commanded more than 48,000 at any one time.

- 1) Soldiers pay was sporadic at best.
- 2) Farmers would have to return to plant and harvest. *Paine called them "Summer Soldiers!"*

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/american-revolution-fags>

2. Like Gideon's Army, the patriots were "part time" and Preoccupied.

A. Like Israel's enemies, the English used trained soldiers who were paid to fight.

B. The patriots (like Israel) were farmers or tradesmen with dual responsibilities *and little to no pay.*

3. Both Gideon and America had "Abiezers" who committed early and challenged others to help. Judges 6:34,35

A. Patrick Henry March 1775 *"Give me liberty or give me death"*

- 1) He led a small force the next month to oppose the confiscation of gunpowder from Williamsburg, forcing the Royal Governor (Dunmore) to flee.
- 2) A month later (April 21st) VA Governor Dunmore Ordered the confiscation of gunpowder from Williamsburg.
- 3) Patrick Henry became the Provisional Governor of Virginia.

B. Paul Revere April 19, 1775

- 1) 800 British troops were sent to Concord, Mass., to arrest Sam Adams and John Hancock and to seize a cache of weapons.
- 2) Dr. Warren sent Paul Revere to warn Pastor Jonas Clark (with whom they were staying).
- 3) Pastor Clark alerted his congregation and 70 men from the Church to oppose the British. When the men refused British orders to disarm, the British shot and killed 8. The colonists returned fire, and the "shot that was heard around the world" was fired.
- 4) Hundreds of other patriots gathered at Concord Bridge to oppose the British, eventually driving them back to Boston.

C. Dr. Warren was a physician who personally lead in the Battle of Bunker Hill. (June 1775)

"Now is no time for any of American's children to shrink from any hazard. I will set her free or die."

D. Pastor Peter Muhlenberg Jan 21, 1776 recruited 162 of his men to join the fight.

- 1) By the next day, he led 300 men to form the nucleus of the 8th Virginia Regiment.
- 2) Many other Pastors were inspired to join him and led the men of their churches to fight for their liberty. *They were so effective that the British named them "The Black Robe Regiments"*

E. Thomas Paine published "The American Crisis" Dec 23, 1776

- 1) America's "men" were stirred and eventually some 210,000 fought in the war.

4. Both Gideon & Washington had to deal with:

A. Detractors/Critics. Judges 8:1-3 *While Washington fought, the politicians debated!*

B. Weariness and lack of provision. Judges 8:4-9

- 1) Men of Succoth (bounty) and Penuel (facing God) refused his 300 men food and water.
- 2) Washington's troops often went hungry and without respect or support.

C. Spies and Traitors.

- 1) Gideon's son Abimelech turn on him and murdered his brothers after his passing. Jds 9
- 2) Washington had his Benedict Arnolds,

5. Washington (like Gideon) refused to become a "King".

A. Gideon became a Judge, but refused to be crowned King. Jdg 8:22-27

- 1) God blessed with 40 years of peace

B. Washington voluntarily stepped down from leadership

- 1) God Blessed his commitment and the infant America! Washington wrote in 1778 that *"The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all of this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked, that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations."*
- 2) Historian Alexis de Tocqueville summed up America's greatness in his book "Democracy in America" (1835) *"America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great!"*

Conclusion:

Faith is forged in the crucible of Crisis because Crisis has a pruning/purging effect.
(Mt 13:20,21; 1 Pt 1:7; John 15:2)

The temperature in the crucible (crises) will increase during the last days!
(2 Tim. 3:1)

Application:

Mt 5:14-16 *"Ye (we) are the light of the world!"*

If we're not willing to let our (God's) light shine; *The darkness will prevail!*

In the context of another Crisis 1 Chron. 12:32 reveals that: *"the children of Issachar...had understanding of the times...to know what Israel ought to do"*

DO WE?

Eph. 5:17 *"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."*

Rightly discerning "God's Will" as we face the crises of our changing and challenging culture should be at the top of our priorities!

Mt 6:33; Col. 1:18