

### 83.3 Battle Plans<sup>1</sup>

Greeting Patriots. I am Perry Greene with GNA. Thanks for listening today. I have entitled today's podcast, "Battle Plans."

You know that the Continental Army had a rocky start at the beginning of America's War for Independence. Providence saved George Washington's troops at Brooklyn Heights on Long Island, New York. The British drove the Continentals out of New York, across New Jersey, and into Pennsylvania. In six months, ranks dwindled from 20,000 to 2,000 exhausted soldiers who were planning to leave at year's end, as they had only enlisted for six months.

Philadelphians panicked, expecting a British invasion. The Continental Congress packed up and fled, even taking the Liberty Bell so the British could not melt it down for bullets. In essence, these congressional leaders moved the Capital so that the British could not claim victory if they captured Philadelphia. Congress their last instruction:

*"... until Congress shall otherwise order, General Washington shall be possessed of full power to order and direct all things."*

Washington rallied his troops by having his officers read **Thomas Paine's** pamphlet, "*The American Crisis*," to the depleted Army. In the pamphlet 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 their 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."*

On December 25, 1776, Washington and his men crossed the Delaware River and attacked the Hessians the next day at Trenton, New Jersey. The soldiers routed the Germans and gave America a much-needed victory.

After losing the Battle of Trenton, **British General Cornwallis** sent his 8,000 British troops to attack Washington at Princeton, NJ. The night before the battle, Washington left his campfires burning and silently marched his army to the rear of the British camp at Princeton. At daybreak, January 3, 1777, Washington attacked.

American troops under **John Cadwalader** began to retreat at one point in the battle. General Washington rode over and stopped the retreat, then rode ahead of his troops to within thirty yards of the enemy. Turning and facing his men, he yelled, "halt," and then, "fire." The British returned fire, filling the field with smoke. Many thought the British shot Washington being exposed to fire from both sides, but when the air cleared, Washington appeared, waving his men forward. The patriots captured three British regiments. Enthusiasm swept America!

There are numerous lessons from the Battle of Princeton. One is the critical role of leadership. Washington rode into harm's way to lead his men forward to victory amid the overpowering British forces. It is one thing for a general to sit in a protected bunker giving orders. It is another for him to be on the field leading the way. Washington chose the latter, and his men confidently followed.

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<sup>1</sup> FMI, see Federer, Susie. *Miracles in American History: 32 Amazing Stories of Answered Prayer*. Virginia Beach, VA, Amerisearch, Inc, 2016, pp. 51-53.

Another lesson is the necessity of planning and strategy. Washington did not turn his troops loose at Trenton or Princeton; he planned their attacks. At Trenton, he used the element of surprise to catch the Hessians off-guard and defeat them. At Princeton, he used a bit of military deception and made the British think the Continental Army was in one place while they outflanked the British and made a daybreak assault.

You may be familiar with the famous War General **Sun Tzu** in the book *Art of War*. One of the strategies he recommends is deception. He said:

*All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when we are able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must appear inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.*

Believe it or not, deception or “misdirection” is a biblical strategy for spiritual war. The Battle of Princeton reminds me of Gideon and his 300 men fighting the Midianites and winning in **Judges 6-8**. God pared down Gideon’s army from 32,000 to 300 to show that the real power of victory is the LORD, not Gideon.

The 300 had trumpets and torches that made their army appear more numerous. When Gideon gave the order, the 300 sounded their trumpets and exposed their torches, putting the Midianites into chaos. They fled from the pursuing Hebrews.

God practiced misdirection with His evil enemies through His Son. Jesus put Himself in harm’s way for us, and Satan used his puppets to kill the Son of God on the cross. What Satan did not see coming was the resurrection. **1 Corinthians 2:7-8** (NKJV) reads:

**<sup>7</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, <sup>8</sup> which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**

Jesus has a military strategy for His followers, too. The church is an army of believers set to challenge the “gates of Hell,” as He described in **Matthew 16:18**. We are an offensive AND defensive group. Still, we appear weak and incapable of holding our own, let alone being victorious over our enemy.

At first glance, we are just plain people with no unique spiritual qualities. Rabbis in Jesus’ day had a choice regarding how they trained disciples. They could accept the best students or the lesser ones. If they chose the lesser-gifted students, the rabbis would appear as more excellent teachers by taking those students from where they were to greater maturity. Jesus took twelve “nobodies” and turned them into spiritual giants through His teaching, resurrection, and empowering Spirit. We might say, “*Jesus majors on the minor.*”

Jesus can work with us as unpolished religious practitioners. Jesus has had a multi-part strategy to combat evil and spread His good news in the face of His adversary. **Acts 1:8** (NKJV) reads:

**<sup>8</sup> But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

Jesus’ strategy was for His followers to take the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and finally to the ends of the earth. This strategy involved geography, people groups, and spirituality. The element that made the difference was the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the believers.

As followers of Jesus, we may appear weak and ineffective, which is a spiritual misdirection. In reality, we are filled with the power of God and become “**more than conquerors,**” according to **Romans 8:37**.

Keep The Light of God’s Spiritual War Strategy Burning!

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