

The Battle of Poitiers, A.D. 732: Islam Invades Gaul under Abd ar-Rahman; Charles Martel Organizes a Frankish Army; the Campaign at Tours & Poitiers; Arrogance & Greed Distract Islamic Soldiers; Abd ar-Rahman Is KIA; Islam Forced from Europe Preserving the West for Christianity; Saul's Failure to Follow the Lord's Orders; He is Removed from Office; the Current Encroachment of Islam into the West; the Petition for Divine Deliverance in Psalm 44:1-26

THE BATTLE OF POITIERS

A.D. 732

MEMORIAL DAY SPECIAL - 2014

Following the fall of the Roman Empire in A.D. 476, Germanic peoples began to move westward. Small groups systematically crossed the Rhine infiltrating and ultimately dominating the Franks. The same migration was being advanced by the Moslems in the South. Under the leadership of Saracen (Arabian) General Abderrahman ('Abd ar-Rahman), Islamic hoards conquered Persia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, and Spain. All these occupied areas submitted to the caliph, the name of Mohammed was mentioned in prayer, and the Qur'an was revered as the book of the law.

Having conquered Spain, the caliph reappointed Abd ar-Rahman to the government of that country in A.D. 729. His consistent victories had made him the idol of the troops. His army had made several forays into Gaul and had learned about the national character and tactics of the Franks.

Over the next two years, Abd ar-Rahman made extensive preparations for the conquest of Gaul. Besides his own troops, Abd ar-Rahman recruited a large number of Berber¹ cavalry. In the summer of 732, he crossed the Pyrenees at the head of an army estimated at over 80,000 strong.

The campaign that followed proved to be a turning point in world history. The might of Abd ar-Rahman's forces had the better of those assembled in Gaul. The Franks were disorganized under minor rulers of districts and towns who were constantly engaged in various struggles for power.

In addition, these districts were in an ongoing struggle for safety against fierce tribes of the unconverted Frisians (Netherlands), Bavarians, Saxons, and Thuringians (Germanics) intimidating the Christianized Germans.

Christianity in the west was under direct assault from heathens to the east and the south. Unprepared to field a comparable army to withstand the invasion from the south, the only solution was from divine intervention.

Charles Martel (c.688-741), whose cognomen is the anglicized Latin noun *Martellus*: "the Hammer," was the Duke of the Austrasian Franks, the bravest and most thoroughly Germanic part of the nation. He emerged as the leader of a militia of veterans from among the Franks.

The crucial battles that he would engage with Abd ar-Rahman at Tours and Poitiers would prevent Islam from amalgamating Western Europe under Sharia law for another 12-hundred years. Charles's victory over Abd ar-Rahman enabled Christianity to emerge as the dominant faith of the Western world. That victory, decisive in its ramifications, we now remember as the West once again finds its freedom and culture being systematically threatened by the slow but indefatigable advance of the Sons of Hager.

The Battle of Poitiers \pwä-tyä'\ is summarized by one of the preeminent historians of the nineteenth century, Sir Edward Shepherd Creasy \krē'-sē\, an Englishman, born in 1812, professor of history in University College, and author of several historical works, the best of them being the *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, which he published in 1851.

¹ "Descendants of the pre-Arab inhabitants of North Africa. The Berbers strenuously resisted the Arab invasion of the 7th century AD, but they were eventually converted to Islam. Many Berbers also adopted Arabic as their language and were thus assimilated into the Arab community. The Berbers played an important role in the Muslim conquest of Spain in the 8th century" (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. [Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010], 2:117).

The accounts of the battle vary. Creasy contends that comparing the accounts of both sides is a particular advantage to the historian. Accounts from one side are often embellished by exaggerations, distortions, and even fiction that national vanity often puts forth. In this case, Creasy found that the most objective account was by the Arabian writers:

They tell us how there was war between the count of the Frankish frontier and the Moslems, and how the count gathered together all his people, and fought for a time with doubtful success. “But,” say the Arabian chroniclers, “‘Abd ar-Rahman drove them back; and the men of ‘Abd ar-Rahman were puffed up in spirit by their repeated successes, and they were full of trust in the valor and the practice in war of their emir. So the Moslems smote their enemies, and passed the River Garonne \ga-ron',² and laid waste the country, and took captives without number. And that army went through all the places like a desolating storm. Prosperity made these warriors insatiable.

At the passage of the river, ‘Abd ar-Rahman overthrew the count, and the count retired into his stronghold, but the Moslems fought against it, and entered it by force and slew the count; for every thing gave way to their cimeters,³ which were the robbers of lives. (pp. 187–88)

All the nations of the Franks trembled at that terrible army, and they betook them to their king Calvus, and told him of the havoc made by the Moslem horsemen, and how they rode at their will through all the land of Narbonne \när-bän', Toulouse \tu-lüz', and Bordeaux \bor-dō', and they told the king of the death of their count. Then the king bade them be of good cheer, and offered to aid them. He mounted his horse and he took with him a host that could not be numbered, and he went against the Moslems. And he came upon them at the great city of Tours \tür'. And ‘Abd ar-Rahman and other prudent cavaliers saw the disorder of the Moslem troops, who were loaded with spoil; but they did not venture to displease the soldiers by ordering them to abandon every thing except their arms and war-horses. And ‘Abd ar-Rahman trusted in the valor of his soldiers, and in the good fortune which had ever attended him. But (the Arab writer remarks) such defect of discipline always is fatal to armies. So ‘Abd ar-Rahman and his host attacked Tours to gain still more spoil, and they fought against it so fiercely that they stormed the city almost before the eyes of the army that came to save it; and the fury and the cruelty of the Moslems toward the inhabitants of the city was like the fury and cruelty of raging tigers. “It was manifest,” adds the Arab, “that God’s chastisement was sure to follow such excesses; and Fortune thereupon turned her back upon the Moslems. (p. 188)

² “River in southwest France that rises on the slopes of the Pyrenees, in Spain; flows northwest past Toulouse and Bordeaux” (*Merriam-Webster’s Geological Dictionary*, 3d ed. [Springfield: Merriam-Webster Publishers, 2007], 417).

³ “Scimitar \si'-ma-tär': a saber having a curved blade with the edge on the convex side and used chiefly by Arabs and Turks” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. s.v. “scimitar.”

“Near the River Owar⁴, the two great hosts of the two languages and the two creeds were set in array against each other. The hearts of 'Abd ar-Rahman, his captains, and his men, were filled with wrath and pride, and they were the first to begin the fight. The Moslem horsemen dashed fierce and frequent forward against the battalions of the Franks, who resisted manfully, and many fell dead on either side, until the going down of the sun. Night parted the two armies; but in the gray of the morning the Moslems returned to the battle. Their cavaliers had soon hewn their way into the centre of the Christian host. But many of the Moslems were fearful for the safety of the spoil which they had stored in their tents, and a false cry arose in their ranks that some of the enemy were plundering the camp; whereupon several squadrons of the Moslem horsemen rode off to protect their tents. But it seemed as if they fled; and all the host was troubled.

And while 'Abd ar-Rahman strove to check their tumult, and to lead them back to battle, the warriors of the Franks came around him, and he was pierced through with many spears, so that he died. Then all the host fled before the enemy and many died in the fight. This deadly defeat of the Moslems, and the loss of the great leader and good cavalier 'Abd ar-Rahman, took place in [732].” (pp. 188–89)

It would be difficult to expect from an adversary a more explicit confession of having been thoroughly vanquished than the Arabs here accord to the Europeans. The points on which their narrative differs from those of the Christians—as to how many days the conflict lasted, whether the assailed city was actually rescued or not, and the like—are of little moment compared with the admitted great fact that there was a decisive trial of strength between Frank and Saracen, in which the former conquered. The enduring importance of the battle of Tours in the eyes of the Moslems is attested not only by the expressions of “the deadly battle” and “the disgraceful overthrow” which their writers constantly employ when referring to it, but also by the fact that no more serious attempts at conquest beyond the Pyrenees were made by the Saracens. Charles Martel, and his son and grandson,⁵ were left at leisure to consolidate and extend their power. The new Christian Roman empire of the West, which the genius of Charlemagne founded, and throughout which his iron will imposed peace on the old anarchy of creeds and races, did not indeed retain its integrity after its great ruler's death. Fresh troubles came over Europe; but Christendom though disunited was safe. The progress of civilization, and the development of the nationalities and governments of modern Europe, from that time forth went forward in not uninterrupted, but ultimately certain career.⁶ (pp. 189–90)

Creasy quotes European historians of the eighteenth century who credit the victory at Poitiers as the deliverance of Christianity from the sons of Hagar:

Friedrich von Schlegel \shlā-gal\, German writer who prospered in the early 1800s, comments in his *Philosophy of History* that the effort was “a mighty victory” in terms of fervent gratitude:

“The arm of Charles Martel saved and delivered the Christian nations of the West from the deadly grasp of all-destroying Islam.” (p. 331)

Leopold von Ranke \rān'-ka\, German historian of the late 1800s, in his *History of the Reformation in Germany*, describes the battle as:

⁴ Probably the Loire \lwär\; flows through Tours and empties into the Bay of Biscay.

⁵ Charles Martel: Bequeathed rule to sons Pepin (the Short) and Carloman; grandfather of Charlemagne.

⁶ E. S. Creasy, *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World: from Marathon to Waterloo* (New York: A. L. Burt, Publisher, 1851), 187–90.

“One of the most important epochs in the history of the world, the commencement of the eighth century, when on the one side Mohammedanism threatened to overspread Italy and Gaul, and on the other the ancient idolatry of Saxony and Friesland once more forced its way across the Rhine. In this peril of Christian institutions, a youthful prince of Germanic race, Karl Martel, arose as their champion, maintained them with all the energy which the necessity for self-defense calls forth, and finally extended them into new regions.” (vol. 1, p. 5)

Thomas Arnold was Regis professor of History at Oxford in the mid-1800s. In his *History of the Later Roman Commonwealth*, Arnold ranks the victory of Charles Martel:

“... among those signal deliverances which have affected for centuries the happiness of mankind.” (vol. 2, p. 317)

Today we observe Memorial Day, but we are to remember those who have entered the contests imposed by predators upon our client nation on Friday, May 30.

The overview of the Battle of Poitiers is intended to take us back in time to an event that spared Western Europe of a religious evil that threatened the demise of Christianity.

At Tours and at Poitiers, the Moslem hoards clearly outnumbered the army of Charles Martel. Victory in the campaign would have allowed Islam to move with alacrity throughout the various nations of Europe. Under 'Abd ar-Rahman, they had already seized much of the Middle East and the whole of North Africa, a circumstance that remains true today. Once ensconced in an area, the extreme legalism of Islam, approved and encouraged by the writings of the Qur'an, imposes draconian constraints upon the people it dominates.

Charles Martel and his men spared the Christian world of that dire fate. But he had the assistance of his opponents viscous hatred of Christianity coupled with greed and avarice. Driven by brutality toward their foes, the Moslems so inhumanely treated the Christians that even an objective Arab observer wrote, “God’s chastisement was sure to follow such excesses.”

The Moslems had no fear of the Christian army, but they did have fear their booty was being plundered by them; so much so they abandoned their deployment to defend their tents only to leave the impression of retreat. 'Abd ar-Rahman, in an effort to restore order, was sliced asunder by the spears of Martel’s troops.

Many battles are lost because of improper motivation for victory. The duty of an army is to defeat the enemy in order to preserve or restore the freedom of the people for whom they fight. False motivation for victory often leads either to defeat or Pyrrhic victory.

Saul provides a great example of improper motivation leading to a Pyrrhic victory. He won the battle, but lost his job. Samuel gave Saul his marching orders from on high:

1 Samuel 15:2 - “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel [see Exodus 17:8–16], how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.

v. 3 - ‘Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”

Saul had his orders, but instead of following them to the letter, he did otherwise:

1 Samuel 15:7a - Saul defeated the Amalekites ...

v. 8 - He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

v. 9 - But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

Informed by the Lord that Saul had not carried out His orders, Samuel arose early the next morning to meet Saul and obtain a situation report:

1 Samuel 15:13 - Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD."

v. 14 - But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

1 Samuel 15:15 - Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed."

v. 16 - Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait, and let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he [**Saul**] said to him, "Speak!"

v. 17 - Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel,

v. 18 - and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.'

v. 19 - "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"

v. 20 - Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

v. 21 - "But the people took *some* of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

v. 22 - Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed [**your orders**] than the fat of rams.

v. 23 - "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king."

There is a difference between the evil of the Moslem's brutal assault on Tours and the Lord's instruction to wipeout the Amalekites. 'Abd ar-Rahman and his army invaded Gaul unprovoked. Their treatment of Christians was looked on by the Lord as unjust and unwarranted.

Circumstances in the divine decree led to the ultimate conquest of the Saracens. Their lust for spoils inspired failure to follow orders resulting in defeat.

In Exodus 17:8-16, Amalek attacked the Israelites at Rephidim without cause. The Jews won the engagement, but God informed Moses that He "will have war against Amalek from generation to generation" (v. 16). The final coup de grâce was order by the Lord in 1 Samuel 15, but Saul failed to carry out his assignment.

Principles: **(1)** Do not fail to carry out divine mandates, **(2)** do not mess with the Jews, and **(3)** do not mess with Christians.

On September 11, 2001, the Sons of Hagar mounted an unprovoked attack on the United States. It resulted in the slaughter of almost 3-thousand innocent civilians in three states. Our leaders had carte blanche authority to wreak havoc on the whole of Islam, but chose to isolate the battle to so-called “radical Islamists” and the nation of Iraq. To date, nothing has been resolved.

On September 11, 2012, the Sons of Hagar attacked the U.S. Mission in Benghazi, Libya, killing four Americans. To date, nothing has been resolved.

We have God on our side, but we have chosen to use limited warfare on those who seek to avenge the loss at Poitiers by renewing the conquest of Christendom, both on the European and North American continents.

On this Memorial Day, we salute the victims of these unprovoked assaults, the first responders that rode to the sound of the guns, and, of course, the warriors of our armed forces that have engaged the Arabic enemy under the constrained rules of engagement their civilian authorities imposed upon them.

Our confidence is singularly invested in the grace and power of God to deliver us from this modern-day ‘Abd ar-Rahman since our national leaders, much like Saul, have no integrity, no plan, and no clue.

All client nations are the primary targets of the Dark Side and as a result must be prepared to function under that reality. Failure to do so results in the five cycles of discipline, yet God stands ready to deliver the Pivot, but in His good time.

Our present condition can be summarized by the writer of Psalm 44. This Psalm has two parts. Verses 1–8 review Israel’s deliverance by the Lord from her adversaries, but verses 9–26 present a cry for divine deliverance during times of national reversionism.

Put in a modern context for client nation America, verses 1–8 describe an expression of gratitude for God’s deliverance from our enemies from the nation’s founding through World War II.

Verses 9–26 describe the frustrations of believers from the Korean War to the present hour as they plead for divine intervention, but are frustrated by its apparent delay.

Here now is Psalm 44 as I read from the New American Standard Bible: