

LEADER'S/USER'S GUIDE
FOR THE RCA/COLUMBIA PICTURES HOME VIDEO

CROMWELL

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1. About the Guide

This material is supplied for the leader/host who is using the video for a class or small group as well as for those using the motion picture for entertainment and personal enrichment. Here you will find further back ground, questions to discuss, and other available resources.

The film unfolds an historical epic set in Stuart England during the 17th century. Just 22 years after the Pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth Rock in search of religious freedom, their fellow Puritans in England became engaged in a revolution for the same cause. Protestantism was on trial and with it the principles of civil liberty. Oliver Cromwell, played by actor Richard Harris, rises to the center of this religious and political storm as the chief champion and protector of Puritanism double-dealing ensure a bitter fate. Two civil wars ensue between the Roundheads (Puritans) and the Cavaliers (royalists). In the end, Cromwell becomes the sole ruler of England, Scotland and Ireland.

2. How to Use This Video

If you are using this motion picture for a class or small group, it is important to prepare your group for the experience. It can generate thinking about the religious world view which is profoundly a part of the cultural, political and economic heritage of both Great Britain and the United States.

During the closing scene of the film the camera zooms in on Oliver Cromwell's tomb in Westminster Abbey. Inscribed on the stone is the epitaph: "Christ, not man, is King." This is a statement of thought-provoking implications. In our own time a church-state controversy rages around us. In this conflict many Christians call for a return to nostalgic notions of a "Christian America." Others seek a "reconstruction" of government based upon principles of Biblical law found in the Old and New Testaments. Still others view political involvement as misdirected at best, or just plain wrong.

While Secularists champion words like tolerance, diversity, pluralism, choice, lifestyle, status, etc. all leading cultural indicators appear to suggest that American civilization is gravely troubled. Violent crime, child poverty, teen pregnancy, abortion, child abuse, teen suicide, divorce, single parent families are all on the rise. Many of us seek to find an appropriate way in which to respond to the spiritual and social needs of our own society. Our purpose is not to get into specific contemporary issues or Christian responses to them, but to provide a case study as to how one individual Christian was compelled to make a difference in his own time. His influence and leadership of others would change the course of a great nation.

3. Back ground Information to the Video

Puritanism was the English extension of the European Protestant Reformation. Though no specific date marks its inception, it began as an organized movement in the 1600's during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. A compromise between Reformed or Calvinistic doctrine and liturgical worship in the Anglican Church gave rise to the Puritan movement. This "Elizabethan Settlement" was viewed by the Puritans as an endorsement of Catholic liturgy and Episcopal government. Dissatisfied and impatient with this halting of the Reformation, the Puritans desired to "purify" the church of the vestiges of Catholic ceremony, ritual, and hierarchy. Within eight decades this quarrel with the state church expanded to other areas of personal and national life.

The influence of the continental reformers, especially John Calvin, on both Scottish and English clergymen gave rise to Presbyterianism. This type of Puritanism advocated that the church be ruled by elders rather than bishops and archbishops. Presbyteries were to replace dioceses in a more republican and representative fashion. As a consequence, many English Puritans championed this Presbyterian polity in the reform of the Church of England.

With the death of the childless Queen Elizabeth in 1603, the English throne passes to the Stuart family. King James VI of Scotland became James I of England. He hated the Presbyterianism in his native Scotland because of its inherent republican implications for political reform of the monarchy itself. "No bishop, no King, a Scottish Presbytery as well agreeth with a Monarchy as God with the devil," the King is attributed to have said. Though we know King James for his authorization of the Bible translation which bears his name, he was no friend to the Puritans. His high Anglicanism and religious intolerance forced many Puritans, like the Pilgrims, to flee England during his reign.

In 1625 King James' son Charles ascended to the throne. Like his father before him, King Charles held to the divine right of kings. "A good king acknowledges himself ordained by God for his people...I alone must answer to God...It is for me to decide how a nation is to be governed, how my subjects are to be ruled, and above all how the church is to be established under the rule of law. These are the divine right of kings...," so said King Charles.

He and his archbishop, William Laud, rigidly and efficiently organized the Anglican Church to include the reintroduction of the lighting of candles, burning of incense, making the sign of the cross, bowing at the name of Jesus, images of the virgin Mary, and vestments for the clergy.

These acts coupled with Charles' marriage to the French Catholic princess Henrietta Maria outraged the Puritans. The Puritans believed that England was on a path counter to the Reformation. Their protests were answered by official persecutions including torture and mutilations. During the 1630s some 20,000 Puritans emigrated to the Bay colony in Massachusetts seeking refuge and believing that they could establish a model commonwealth for all of England to see; "A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."

In seeking counsel about leaving England for New England, John Winthrop, the future Governor of the Bay colony was advised, "The Church and Commonwealth here at home has more need of your best ability in these dangerous times than any remote plantation." Winthrop, however, decided to depart for New England. In contemplating this same issue, Oliver Cromwell decided to stay in England. The future of England would be forever changed because of his decision.

4. The Historical Setting of the Video

King Charles and Archbishop Laud were not content to limit the changes in the Anglican Church to England alone. Their agenda included a thorough reordering of worship in Presbyterian Scotland. The introduction of a new Prayer Book incited a riot in Edinburgh, and ensuing nationalistic sentiment led to war between the two nations. The Bishop's War (1639-40) drained the English treasury of money and this necessitated the summoning of Parliament in April, 1640 to raise additional taxes to fill the government's coffers.

Previous to 1640 Parliament had not been summoned since 1628. In that year Charles had dissolved the Parliament with a proclamation forbidding anyone to speak of calling another. The Puritan majority in the new Parliament had several grievances for the King to address concerning religion and taxation, but this Parliament was short-lived. Unable to reach a compromise with the Parliament, Charles dissolved it on May 5, 1640.

In November, 1640 Charles summoned another Parliament, later known as the Long Parliament. The Scots had invaded England and forced the King to make a treaty. Terms of the treaty included pay to maintain the Scotch army until a proper settlement of the church affairs could be reached. With the King desperate for revenue, the Long Parliament met at Westminster. It was resolved to correct the King's arbitrary government, punish his counselors, and amend the constitution to prohibit further absolute rule.

5. Other Characters in the Video (in order of appearance)

John Pym - a Puritan, member of the House of Commons, eloquent leader and architect of the parliamentary party and its "Grand Remonstrance," champion of constitutional rights, responsible for the impeachment and resultant of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford.

Henry Ireton - a Puritan and Independent, Cromwell's son-in-law, cavalry commander, later commissary-general in the New Model Army, author of the "Proposals" for the settlement of the kingdom in the aftermath of the war.

Elizabeth Cromwell - Cromwell's devoted wife

Oliver Cromwell, the younger - Cromwell's second son, captain in his father's regiment, died of smallpox in 1644 (the video's account of his death in battle is inaccurate.)

Richard Cromwell - Cromwell's third son, eventual successor to his father as Lord Protector, weak and ineffective leader, abdicated his rule within a few months.

Edward Montague, Earl of Manchester – a Puritan and Presbyterian, member of the House of Lords, Cromwell's incompetent commander in the Eastern Association Army of Parliament, later removed from command in the reorganization of the Army under the New Model.

Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford – a royalist, commander of the King's Irish army, recalled to England to defend against the Scottish invasion, feared by many Puritans that he would crush political resistance to the King with an Irish army, impeached by Parliament and executed in early May, 1641.

Sir Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon – a royalist, member of the House of Lords, and advisor to King Charles. (The video is inaccurate in its portrayal of Hyde's testimony for the prosecution at the King's trial. This testimony is completely fictitious.)

Queen Henrietta Maria – the French wife, trusted counselor, and friend of King Charles, a devout catholic.

Charles, Prince of Wales – eldest son of King Charles who would become King Charles II at the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

Hugh Peter – a Puritan and Independent, one of the most famous and effective of the New Model Army chaplains.

Prince Rupert – a royalist, nephew of King Charles who personifies the term Cavalier, a fearless cavalry leader, splendid in dress and lifestyle, brilliant strategist, and bold tactician.

Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex – a Puritan and Presbyterian, member of the House of Lords, Lord General of the Parliamentary Army, an ineffective commander later removed from command in the reorganization of the Army under the New Model.

Sir Thomas Fairfax – a Puritan, Cromwell's commander and General of the Army as reorganized under the New Model, (The video's account of Cromwell's appointment as General of the Army is inaccurate. Cromwell did not become General of the Army until after the King's death and Fairfax's retirement. The video is also inaccurate in its portrayal of Fairfax's participation in the trial of King Charles. Though nominated to the Commission, he never appeared in court, but rather absented himself in protest of the procedure.)

John Bradshaw – a Puritan and Independent, president of the court for the trial of King Charles.

6. For Discussion

We hope you will provide time to discuss the video after the showing. Here are some questions that you may find useful.

1. The English poet John Milton described Cromwell as "our chief of men..." What personal characteristics describe Cromwell?
2. What aspects of Cromwell's character do you admire most?
3. In one of his speeches Cromwell states the rule of his public life, "I have been called to several employments in this nation, and I did endeavor to discharge the duty of an honest man to God and His people's interest, and to this Commonwealth," What does this mean? In an address to his fellow officers in 1647 he said, "we all desire, to lay this at the foundation of all our actions, to do that which is the will of God." How is this a key to understanding his life and motivations?
4. Cromwell believed that religion was the cause of the Civil War, "The Cause is of God and it must prosper." In a speech after the war he said, "Religion was not the first thing contested for, but God brought it to that issue at last...and at last it proved that which was most dear to us." How is this political crisis understood in terms of religion?
5. Cromwell had no schooling or experience in the military arts prior to the English Civil War, yet he was very successful as a commander. Many have attributed his success to the quality of his soldiers. The Puritan pastor Richard Baxter says that, "He (Cromwell) had a special care to get religious men into his troop; these men were of greater understanding

than common soldiers...and making not money but which they took for public felicity, they were more engaged to be valiant." In recruiting men for his regiment Cromwell promised the town of Norwich, "Pray raise honest, godly men and I will have them in my regiment." Likewise he selected his officers on the same principal of zeal for the cause, "If you choose godly, honest men to be captains of Horse, honest men will follow then...I'd rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows, than that which you call 'a gentleman,' and is nothing else," said Cromwell. Why do you think Cromwell was so successful as a commander?

6. Cromwell regarded the execution of King Charles as an act of justice upon a "man of blood." He said later, "If the civil authority...did in answer to their consciences, turn out a tyrant, in a way which Christians in aftertimes will mention with honour, and all tyrants will look at with fear...They that have acted this great business have given reason of their faith in the action..." Do you agree?
7. Was Cromwell's statesmanship conciliatory or coercive?
8. Cromwell desired a constitutional government, yet he dissolved the Long Parliament by force of arms. In its place he instituted the five-year minority rule of the Protectorate to prevent anarchy or a restoration of the Stuarts and to "win the people to the interest of Jesus Christ." Were his actions justified? Was he guilty of the kind of offense he condemned in King Charles?
9. What do you see as the major issues today pertaining to the relationship between church and state?
10. What can be learned from the Puritans and Cromwell for Christian response to critical issues of Religion and politics that we currently face?

7. Additional Resources

For a very basic and readable introduction to the Puritans we suggest Leland Ryken's *Worldly Saints: The Puritans As They Really Were*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1986 and John Adair's *Founding Fathers: The Puritans in England and America*, Baker Book House, 1982. For further reading on the life of Oliver Cromwell, the best biography is Charles Firth's *Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900. Antonia Fraser's *Cromwell: The Lord Protector*, Alfred A. Knopf Publishers, 1974 is one of the latest and largest biographies. Christopher Hill's *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, Harper & Row, 1970 is also a noted work. For additional studies on the Civil War we suggest Richard Ollard's *This War without an Enemy: A History of the English Civil Wars*, Atheneum Publishers, 1976. An excellent video had been recently produced by Cromwell Productions for the Campaigns in History series entitled *The English Civil War: By the Sword Divided*. It contains accurate file reconstructions, modern reenactments, period images and the most advanced 3-D computer mapping techniques available. It can be obtained through Sturmer & Klein, 11900 Parklawn Dr, Rockville, MD 20852. Orders can be placed toll free at 1-800-285-4952. Price is \$29.95.

8. Transcript Reprint of Cromwell's Speech To Two Houses of Parliament, January 20, 1658

My Lords and Gentleman of the House of Commons, I meet you here in this capacity by the Advice and Petition of this present Parliament. After so much expense of blood and treasure, we are now to search and try what blessings God hath in store for these Nations. I cannot but with gladness of heart remember and acknowledge the labour and industry that is past your past labour, which hath been spent upon a business worthy of the best men and the best Christians.

It is very well known unto you all what difficulties we have passed through, and what issue we are now arrived at. We hope we may say we have arrived if not altogether at what we aimed at, yet at that which is much beyond our expectations. The nature of this Cause, and the Quarrel, what that was at the first, you all very well know; I am persuaded most of you have been actors in it: It was the maintaining of the Liberty of these Nations; our civil liberties as Men; our Spiritual Liberties as Christians. I shall not much look back; but rather say one word concerning the state and condition we are all now in.

You all know very well, the first Declaration, after the beginning of this War, that spake to the life, was a sense held forth by the Parliament. That for some succession of time designs had been laid to innovate in matters of Religion. And those very persons who, a man would have thought should have had the least hand in meddling with Civil things, did justify them all. All the Civil transactions that were, - they justified them in their pulpits, presses, and otherwise! Which was verily thought, had they succeeded in it, would have been a very good shelter to them, to innovate upon matters of Religion also. And so to innovate as to eat-out the core and power and heart and life of all religion! By bringing on us a company of poisonous Popish Ceremonies and imposing them upon those that were accounted "the Puritans" of the Nation, and professors of religion among us,-driving them to seek their breed in an howling wilderness! As was instanced to our friends who were forced to fly for Holland, New England, almost any whither, to find Liberty for their Consciences.

Now if this thing hath been the state and sum of our Quarrel, and of those Ten Years of War wherein we were exercised; and if the good hand of God, for we are to attribute it to no other, hath brought this business thus home unto us as it is now settled in the Petition and Advice,-I think we have all cause to bless God, and the Nations have all cause to bless him.

I well remember I did a little touch upon the Eighty-fifth Psalm when I spoke unto you in the beginning of this Parliament. Which expresseth well what we may say, as truly as it was said of old by the Penman of that Psalm! The first verse is an acknowledgement to God that He "had been favorable unto his land," and "brought back the captivity of His people;" and then how that he had "pardoned all their iniquities and covered all their sin, and taken away all His wrath;"-and indeed of these unspeakable mercies, blessings, and deliverances out of captivity, pardoning of national sins and national iniquities. Pardoning, as God Pardoneth the man whom he justifieth! He break through, and overlooks iniquity; and pardoneth because He will pardon. And sometimes God pardoneth Nations also! -And if the enjoyment of our present Peace and other mercies may be witnesses for God to us-we feel and see them every day.

The greatest demonstration of His favour and love appears to us in this: That He hath given us Peace;-and the blessings of Peace, to wit, the enjoyment of our liberties civil and spiritual! And I remember well, the Church in that same eighty-fifth Psalm falls into prayer and into praises, great expectations of future mercies, and much thankfulness for the enjoyment of present mercies; and breaks into this expression: "Surely salvation is nigh unto them

that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land." In the beginning its called His land; "Thou hast been favorable to Thy land." Truly I hope this is His land! In some sense it may be given out that it is God's land. And he that hath the weakest knowledge, and the worst memory, can easily tell that we are "a Redeemed People,"-from time to time when God was first pleased to look favorably upon us, to redeem us out of the hands of Popery, in that never to be forgotten Reformation, that most significant and greatest mercy the Nation hath felt or tasted! I would but touch upon that,-but a touch: How God hath redeemed us, as we stand this day! Not from trouble and sorrow and anger only, but into a blessed and happy estate and condition, comprehensive of all Interests, of every member, of every individual;-an imparting to us of those mercies there spoken of as you very well see!

And then in what sense it is "our Land;"-through this grace and favour of God, That He hath vouchsafed unto us and bestowed upon us, with the Gospel, Peace, and rest out of the Ten Years War; and given us what we would desire! Nay, who could have forethought, when we were plunged into the midst of our troubles, That ever the people of God should have had the liberty to worship God without fear of enemies? Which is the very acknowledgement of the Promise of Christ that "He would deliver His from fear of enemies, in that they might worship Him in holiness and in righteousness all the days of their live."

This is the portion that God hath given us; and I trust we shall forever heartily acknowledge it! -The Church goes on there, in that Psalm, and makes her boast yet father: "His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land." His glory; not carnal, nor anything related thereto: this glory of a Free Possession of the Gospel; this is that which we may glory in! And it is said father, "Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other." And note, it shall be such righteousness as come down from heaven: "Truth shall grow out of the Earth, and Righteousness shall come down from Heaven." Here is the Truth of all truths; here is the righteousness of God, under the notion of righteousness confirming our abilities,-answerable to the truth which He hath in the Gospel revealed to us! And the Psalm closeth with this: "Righteousness shall go before Him, and shall set us in the way of His steps;"-that righteousness, that mercy, that love, and that kindness which we have seen, and been made partakers of from the Lord, it shall be our Guide, to teach us to know the right and the good way; which is, To tread in the steps of mercy, righteousness and goodness that our God hath walked before us in.

We too have a Peace this day! I believe in my very heart, you all think the things that I speak to you this day. I am sure you have cause.

And yet we are not without the murmurings of many people, who turn all this grace and goodness into warmwood; who indeed are disappointed by the works of God. And those men are of several ranks and conditions; great ones, lesser ones,-of all sorts. Men that are of the Episcopal spirit, with all its branches, the root and the branches; -who gave themselves a fatal blow in this Place, when they would needs make a "Protestation that no Laws were good, which were made by this House and the House of Commons in their absence;" and so without injury to other cut themselves off! Men of an Episcopal spirit: indeed men that know not God; that know not how to account upon the works of God, how to measure them out; but will trouble Nations for an Interest which is but mixed, at the best,-made up of iron and clay, like the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's Image: whether they were more Civil or Spiritual was hard to say. But their countenance was like to be known beforehand; iron and clay make no good mixtures, they are not durable at all!

You now have a godly Ministry; you have a knowing Ministry; such a one as, without vanity be it spoken, the world has not. Men knowing the things of God, and being able to search into the things of God,-by that only which can fathom those things in some measure. The spirit of a beast knows not the things of a man; nor doth the spirit of man know the things of God! "The things of God are known by the Spirit." Truly I will remember but one thing of those, the misguided persons now cast out from us: Their greatest persecution hath been the People of God;-men really of the spirit of God, as I think very experience hath now sufficiently demonstrated!

But what's the reason, think you, that men slip in this age wherein we live? As I told you before, they understand not the works of God. They consider not the operation of His Laws. They consider not that God resisted and broke into pieces the Powers that were, that men might fear Him;-might have liberty to do and enjoy all that we have been speaking of! Which certainly God has manifested to have been the end; and so hath He brought the things to pass! Therefore it is that men yet slip, and engage themselves against God. And for that very cause, saith David, "He shall break them down, and not build them up!"

If, therefore, you would know you what foundation and stand, own you foundation to be from God. He hath set you where you are: He hath set you in the enjoyment of your Civil and Spiritual Liberties.

I deal clearly with you, I have been under some infirmity; therefore dare not speak father to you;-except to let you know thus much, That I have with truth and simplicity declared that state of our Cause, and our attainments in it by the industry and labor of this Parliament since they last met upon this foundation-You shall find I mean, Foundation of a Cause and Quarrel thus attained-to wherein we are thus estated. I should be very glad to lay my bones with yours; -and would have done it, with all heartiness and cheerfulness, in the meanest capacity I ever yet was in, to serve the Parliament.

If God give you, as I trust He will,-He hath given it you, for what have I been speaking of but what you have done? He hath given you strength to do what you have done! And if God should bless you in this work, and make this Meeting happy on this account, you shall all be called the Blessed of the Lord. The generations to come will bless us. You shall be the "repairs of breaches, and the restorers of paths to dwell in!" And if there be any higher work which mortals can attain unto in the world, beyond this, I acknowledge my ignorance of it.

As I told you, I have some infirmities upon me. I have not liberty to speak more unto you; but I have desired an Honourable Person here by me-to discourse, a little more particularly, what may be more proper for this occasion and this meeting.

9. Cromwell's Deathbed Prayer, August 30, 1658

Lord, though I am a miserable and wretched creature, I am in Covenant with Thee through Grace. And may I, I will, come to thee, for Thy People. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do some good and Thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death.

Lord, however Thou do dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them. Give them consistency of judgment, one heart and mutual love; and go on to deliver them, and with the work of reformation; and make the name of Christ glorious in the world.

Teach those who look to much on Thy instruments to depend more upon Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy people too. And pardon the folly of this short prayer-even for Jesus Christ's sake. And give us a good night, if this be Thy pleasure. Amen