

## **BIBLICAL WARFARE**

By Raymond White

The Bible is so filled with wars, big and small, that we could almost believe that war is what the book is about. And each time we are drug into one of its bloody battles we are tempted to ask questions about the morality of war as though those are the only sort of questions that matter.

But that's shortsighted. We could instead ask the Bible a much more practical question about war; namely, how do you win? The Bible is a great military field manual, one that generals would do well to consult from time to time. It is, after all, the longest running history of human warfare ever written. Surely it has some good military advice.

The first adage of war is simple: If you must fight, you'd better make darn sure you win. As General Patton said (at least in the movie): "No one ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor fool die for *his* country." Inspired by those words of wisdom, let's consider war in the scriptures, not the waging of it, but the winning of it.

### **[1] FALSE PEACE**

First and foremost, don't get suckered into believing in a false peace. If war is unavoidable because your enemy will not be deterred, you must face the truth: a war is about to be declared on you and you *must* decide on *some* plan of action. You must prepare to do *something* — fight, run, surrender — decide, or you will lose before you start. Do not put your head in the sand and hide from the truth.

*Jeremiah 6:14 They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.*

*Jeremiah 23:17 They [false prophets] say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.*

*Ezekiel 13:10 Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was not peace...*

Well, they were wrong. They took advice from exactly the wrong people and therefore did exactly the wrong things. And when war came, they were so surprised. Not only had they not prevented it, they were not at all ready for it.

### **[2] APPEASEMENT**

Generally appeasement doesn't do much good, it just encourages your enemy to demand more and more from you and gives him more courage to believe that you are an easy prey. And it will end only when he demands something you cannot give and then there is war.

*1 King 20:5 And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad [king of Syria to Ahab] saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children, :6 yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.*

Ahab submitted to this nonsense and gave the king of Syria almost everything he demanded. But finally Ahab reached his limit and war was unavoidable..

*1 Kings 20:9 ... All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. :10 And Benhadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.*

Ahab said you can have all my gold and all my silver (appeasement) but not my wives and children. And Benhadad replied, I'm coming to get you. It wouldn't have mattered what Ahab agreed to give up, Benhadad was spoiling for a fight and that fight would have happened no matter what.

### [3] ACCEPTING PEACE

But there is a second lesson in this story. Benhadad had already won the war without firing a shot — Ahab had surrendered just on the threat of invasion. Since victory came so easy, Benhadad decided to demand more and that was a mistake. Ahab got mad, fought after all, and defeated Benhadad.

*1 Kings 20:11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.*

Ahab said, putting on battle clothes is not when you brag of victory. Taking them off after you've won is when you brag. In other words, don't count your chickens until they're hatched. This was Ahab's declaration of war, saying, well come on then, let's have at it.

*1 Kings 20:20 And they [Israel] slew every one of his men: and the Syrians fled.*

The lesson is this: Never engage a battle when you've already won. Every battle is a flip of the coin and you never know how the next battle may turn out. Victory may suddenly become defeat.

### [4] STRATEGY

You always want to deploy on "good ground," ground of your own choosing.

***1 Kings 20:23*** *And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.*

Syria had lost their previous battle with Israel, and they desperately wanted to win the next. They understood the fundamentals of good ground. They knew that in the hills their chariots were useless and they stood no chance. So, what they wanted to do, and it made sense, was to sucker the Israelites into a battle on the open plain where Syrian chariots could be brought to bear.

But the Israelites, and God, also understood good ground strategies, they were no dummies. And that is why they would not be suckered into fighting on the plain.

At the battle of Gettysburg, the Confederate army tried to flank the Union army, but to do it they had to take a hill called The Little Round Top. But three Confederate charges failed to take it, mostly due to good tactics of its defending Colonel Chamberlain, the courage and determination of Chamberlain's men, and the fact that the hill they were defending was very good ground to defend.

***1 Chronicles 14:14*** *Therefore David enquired again of God; and God said unto him, Go not up after them; turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.*

What the Israelites needed was trees to make Syrian chariots useless. That simple choice of terrain, good ground versus bad ground, made all the difference.

Also note that David was wise to ask God *again*. And God answered, don't fight here, fight there. You had better get more than one general's opinion. Don't be so sure that you have the best plan. Someone else may have a better idea and you'd better listen to good advice. People's lives are on the line and a general must get it right the first time. Pay attention to what *all* your field commanders have to say, then decide.

Selecting this forested ground was essential for Israel's victory. Had they engaged the Syrians on the open plain, Israel would have lost. And this illustrates another military strategy called "close combat." If you don't have artillery or tanks or chariots, and your enemy does, you want close combat, man-to-man, so that your enemy can't bring his superior weaponry to bear. But if you have the superior weaponry, you *don't* want want close combat, you want to kill your enemy from a distance.

A good example of strategic close combat was the Battle of the Bulge in 1945. The American 101<sup>st</sup> was surrounded by the Germans at Bastogne and the Germans had the tanks and artillery. But the Germans couldn't use their advantage because in order to do so they would have had to first withdraw their infantry, and the Americans kept the German infantry engaged in close combat.

***Jeremiah 49:16*** *Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD.*

I suppose the lesson here is that although good ground is a superior strategy and gives advantage, there are no guarantees. You can have the best ground on the field and still lose. Nobody had better ground to defend than the Ammonites at Petra, and they lost.

***Jeremiah 51:53** Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD.*

Ultimately, there is no such thing as a well-defended city. Every wall can be breached. The Babylonians were so confident and felt so safe behind their strong walls that they were having a drunken party the night that the Persian army breached that wall and conquered the city.

How did the Persians do it? They went *under* the wall, through the water system.

***Obadiah 1:1** ...concerning Edom... :3 The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? :4 Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.*

Edom thought they were impregnable because they lived in the high canyons.

## [5] TACTICS

Good battle tactics include flanking your enemy and crossing the T. It also includes tricking your enemy into making a blunder so that you *can* flank your enemy or cross the T.

***Joshua 8:2** And thou [Joshua] shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king...Lay thee an ambush for the city behind it. :3 So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai: and Joshua chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night. :4 And he commanded them, saying, Behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city: go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready. :5 And when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, :7 Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city. :8 And when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire.*

The Israelites suckered the people of Ai into a foolish attack that lost them their city and their lives.

But what the stealth of this attack may have actually accomplished (I think) was that it enabled the Israelites to flank their enemy and effectively “cross the T.” Well, it may or may not have been quite crossing the T, depending on if there was a T to cross. And that depends on how Ai deployed its men which we don’t know.

In any case, Israel used a bait army to lure the army of Ai into an unsound straight ahead attack allowing Israel to flank the enemy by secretly lying in wait. And if Israel

used their lateral positions to attack the enemy flanks, we call that a double-envelopment, which is more like crossing an H than a T. Or in this case — since Israel was also behind the enemy, between the enemy and the city — we call that a triple envelopment.

Washington pulled off a triple envelopment at the battle of Cowpens.

Hannibal pulled off a double envelopment against the Romans in 216 BC at the Battle of Cannae and destroyed Rome's 86,000 man army.

But not to let the idea of crossing the T go to waste, here are two examples of that — flanking the enemy at its finest.

Alexander, before he was “the great,” was a young tag-along in his father Philip's Macedonian army. At the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC, the Macedonians were at war with the combined armies of Athens and Thebes. Philip had instructed his son to station himself and his light cavalry on a hill and watch the battle, and be useful if he sees an opportunity. So Alexander did just that.

The Macedonians faced two armies: the Athenian line joined to the Theban line. As Alexander watched, the Athenian line advanced, but the Theban line did not get the message for whatever reason and did not advance. That left the Athenian line with an exposed end, and Alexander saw his opportunity. He brought his cavalry down swiftly on that exposed end, and cut the Athenians to pieces. He had “crossed the T” and won the battle for his father, distinguishing himself and his cavalry.

Here's another example of crossing the T, this one during World War I.

Sergeant York single handedly captured two German infantry companies (half a battalion) and their commander. This action may be the most impressive example of solo soldering in military history. Well, there was Cuchulain who defeated an army, and Sampson who defeated a nation. But other than those, there's no competition for military greatness.

How did York do that? First of all, he was a sharpshooter who never missed, a male version of Annie Oakley.

His unit was taking casualties from German positions well posted on a hill that overlooked them. You know, that good ground I already talked about. York took matters into his own hands and snuck up the hill to the end of the German line, something only a single person could do, a squad would likely have been seen and killed.

When York was in position, he shot the first German on the end, then the next, then the next and so on. He could not afford to miss and he didn't miss.

When the Germans saw themselves falling in sequence, they assumed that they were being attacked by an American unit that had flanked them and crossed the T. And so they threw up their hands and surrendered. Only when they were in custody did they learn the truth that they had indeed been flanked, but it was a single American soldier who had crossed that T. And this, Sergeant York did twice, capturing two companies. How he survived, God only knows.

But speaking of solo soldiers, there was also Manfred von Richthofen, the German fighter pilot of World War I who shot down 4000 allied aircraft. Now, only 800 of the 4000 were armed, but still, 800 is an impressive kill record, an ace record that will never be broken (without nukes of course because nukes would be cheating).

How did the Bloody Red Baron do it? A theory is that his tri-plane had a tighter turning circle. Well, I suppose. But other German pilots had tri-planes too and no one on

either side of the conflict came close to matching Manfred's killing skill. He was the best, by far. He had a knack for it, the master of good aerial tactics.

Who in the Bible does that remind you of? How about a quick-draw sharp-shooter named David? You know the story and its verses so I won't repeat it here. But I will point out that it is an over simplification to say that David was protected by God and therefore Goliath couldn't kill him.

Well, that is true, but the rest of the story deserves to be told.

David had a military secret. He was good, real good with that sling, and he knew he would win, probably on the first shot — (but he wasn't recklessly confident so he brought extra stones just in case).

How did he *know* he would win? And how do *we* know that with his skill set he couldn't lose? Answer: he had already killed a lion and a bear. And as any bear hunter will tell you, bears are not that easy to kill, even with a high powered rifle. My father, who was a hunter, liked to tell stories about charging bears who, already shot in the heart, lived long enough to kill the hunter. David was not going into battle with an untested weapon, he had a clear tactical advantage and he knew it. And really, he couldn't lose.

The real miracle of David's life was that Samuel knew it, and ordained David to be king. Now that right-on-the-money prediction, that was miraculous.

What tactical skills did David and von Richthofen and Sergeant York have in common? First of all, they were all very good shots.

## [6] FORGIVENESS

An irony of warfare is that the better you treat your prisoners of war, the more likely your enemy will surrender when things go badly for them.

*1 Kings 20:31* And his servants said unto him [Benhadad], *Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our head, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life.*

So Benhadad surrendered because he was confident that he would be well treated. The converse is, if you treat your P.O.W.s badly, torture and kill them, then your enemy will fight to the last man and in that pointless struggle you may lose. And even if you win, you will incur far more pointless casualties.

## [7] KINDNESS

Sometimes a little kindness can avoid hostilities altogether.

*Proverbs 25:21* *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink. :22* *For thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.*

In 1857 when Johnston's army invaded Utah to "put down" (meaning to destroy) the so-called Mormon rebellion (there was none), that army found itself trapped in a

harsh winter of the Rocky Mountains and was on the verge of starving and freezing to death.

Brigham Young saw an opportunity here and instead of killing them, the Mormons sent food and supplies to the invading army and saved their lives.

By Spring, the army had received new orders from Washington and, rather than invade, they simply marched through Salt Lake City without hostilities and built a fort west of the city.

Had the Mormons let that army die, or worse, had killed them which they could have, I am certain that the Americans would have been so angered by the tragedy that they would have sent another army, and another, until the Mormons had been exterminated. It was that act of kindness to a hostile enemy that saved them.

In June of 1941, the Nazi army invaded the Ukraine and expelled the Soviets. The Ukrainians hailed the Germans as delivering heroes. But then Hitler made another of his characteristic military blunders. He could have treated the Ukrainians well and given them guns to fight Russians. But instead, he treated them poorly and took their food for his army causing mass starvation. And thus the Germans had yet another enemy to face, one of their own making.

### [8] MERCY

This is a simple idea. Show mercy to your enemy *after* you have defeated them.

*2 Kings 6:22 And he [Elisha] answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. :23 And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.*

Because of Israel's kindness extended to the defeated Syrian army, the Bible says that "Syria came no more into the land of Israel."

This is true on a large scale too.

Following World War I, the allies punished Germany with demands for war reparations. That bad treatment guaranteed the rise of Hitler (or someone like him) and the onslaught of World War II.

But following World War II, General Marshall had a different idea. Because of the Marshall Plan, instead of punishing Germany and Japan, America rebuilt those two nations which subsequently became two of our most important friends and allies. And there has not yet been a World War III, thanks to General Marshall.

### [9] LOGISTICS

Armies cannot fight without food and water. You'd better make sure there is sufficient water enroute.

*2 Kings 3:9 So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was not water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them. :10 And the king of Israel said, Alas! That there LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!*

Israel's army traveled with cattle of course. What else was there to eat? And besides, cows walk! So you don't have to cart them around like barrels of wheat.

But they didn't plan this march well, there were no water sources and without water they nearly lost their upcoming battle with Moab.

*2 Chronicles 32:4 So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?*

Later, as the Assyrian army approached, Israel figured that one way to stop that oncoming army was to eliminate the water sources, "stopped all the fountains." How they did that I don't know, but was a good idea.

There was one time when no water almost finished off Alexander the Great's entire army. They were moving along on a desert beach that had no fresh water (I forgot where, Arabia maybe?) and they had not drunk for days. They were rescued by his navy which brought water to them. One ill-advised desert march almost cost him everything.

Johnston's Army, which invaded Utah in 1857, almost starved in the winter because a small group of Mormons (20 or 30) led by Lot Smith kept destroying their advanced food supplies. And whenever that American army arrived at where food was supposed to be, that food had been destroyed. That left the Americans stranded and starving, and delayed hostilities by one winter which was enough time for the American government to come to its senses, realize that the Mormons were no enemy, and call off the "Utah War".

Rommel's Africa corps was stopped not by military defeats but because the Americans and British kept destroying the German gasoline depots. Rommel's tanks simply ran out of gas.

President Grant defeated the plains Indians by killing the buffalo herds. That was kind of tough on the buffalo and lots of Indians starved (some of whom may have been my ancestors), but it did stop hostilities. Actually, the loss of those herds may yet cause us more grief than all the Indian wars ever could have. Without those buffalo, huge areas of farmland are being lost to desertification. North America is becoming the next Sahara. We need our buffalo herds back. That or millions of free range cattle.

The point is: the way to defeat your enemy without engaging him is to cut his logistic lines; that is, deprive him of food or water or gasoline or whatever he needs to field an army.

## **[10] GET THE KING**

Of course, if you can just kill the enemy king, that alone will sometimes win.



**2 Kings 3:26** *And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through even unto the king of Edom: but they could not.*

Moab and Edom were going at it. When Moab saw that they were losing, they tried to kill the king of Edom.

They failed, but it was a worthy idea. It *could* have worked.

**2 Chronicles 18:30** *Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots that were with him, saying, Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel.*

In other words, get Ahab and save all this grief. It was worth a try. A good plan, they just couldn't pull it off.

It did work, however, for Alexander the Great. In one battle, the Greeks attacked through the center of the Persian line directly towards the Persian king. When the king saw what was coming at him, he quit the field and saved himself.

But Alexander's plan worked anyway, because when the Persian king left the field, that so demoralized his army that they surrendered. The Persian king had proved to be a coward and that alone won the battle.

Near the end of World War II, when Hitler committed suicide, that news ran quickly through the German army, and it was that news of his death that caused them to surrender and put an end to the war in Europe. So killing the leader worked. It just wasn't us who killed him.

The point is: Sometimes just getting the leader is all you need to do.

### [11] AVOID

Never fight a pointless war. Sometimes ancient peoples fought wars just because they felt frisky and wanted to fight. Aside from the cruelty of it, you might lose. Even in the best of situations, the outcome of a battle is a flip of a coin.

**2 Kings 14:8** *Then Amaziah [king of Judah] send messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face.*

In other words, we have nothing better to do so let's have a war.

**2 Kings 14:10** *Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee? [2 Chronicles 25:19]*

Jehoash sensible and tried to get out of this pointless war. He replied to the foolish Amaziah: Heh, you've just had a battle, you defeated Edom and now you're feeling frisky. Just stay home and glory in that victory. If you come after me you might lose.

**2 Kings 14:11** *But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Bethshemesh, which belongeth to Judah.*

So Amaziah had his silly war — and lost!

**2 Kings 14:12** *And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents. :13* *And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah...and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits. :14* *And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Sameria.*

There's so much that's tragic in this story, but mainly the pointlessness of the war. And the fact that Amaziah was otherwise a pretty good king. It's one thing to lose a war. But quite another to lose a war that you shouldn't have engaged in the first place.

**1 Kings 20:21** *And the king of Israel [Ahab] went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.*

The interesting thing about this war is that the Syrians had already won, Ahab had surrendered. But the Syrians kept demanding more and more booty to the point where Ahab finally got angry, and fought — and won! The moral: Never fight a war that you've already won; you may lose.

Even good kings make this mistake, and there was no better king than Josiah and here's what happened to him.

**2 Chronicles 35:20** *After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him.*

This was not Josiah's fight. The Babylonians had just defeated the Assyrians and the Egyptians; they were quite capable of taking care of themselves. They didn't need the Jews to harass the Egyptians who were retreating back to Egypt through Judea. The Jews had nothing to do with this and should have stayed out of it.

But Josiah was feeling feisty and probably wanted to demonstrate a friendship to Babylon, so he attacked the retreating Egyptians. This was a pointless thing to do because the battle of Carchemish had already been won.

**2 Chronicles 35:21** *But he [Necho] sent ambassadors to him [Josiah], saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day...*

Necho didn't want another war, he had just lost one. Just leave us alone, he was saying, and we'll be out of here.

*2 Chronicles 35:22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him.*

But Josiah wanted his war and he got it.

*2 Chronicles 35:23 And the [Egyptian] archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. :24 ...and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died.*

And for what? Fighting an enemy that was already defeated and retreated was pointless. This was the only bad decision Josiah ever made and it cost him his life. And worse than that, it turned the destiny of Judah. Judah lost its last good king who was replaced by a bad one. So the consequences were far reaching.

### [12] ALLIANCES, PART 1: GOOD ALLIES

Sometimes a carefully chosen alliance does work to your advantage. It does help to have friends.

*2 Kings 16:9 And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him [Ahaz]: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.*

Rezin, the king of Syria, when he decided to attack Judah, did not expect Judah to appeal to Assyria for help. This was an unexpected turn of events. That miscalculation got Rezin killed and Syria conquered.

So, from Judah's perspective, that alliance worked. The enemy of their enemy was indeed their friend, for a little while anyway.

But the whole notion of alliances comes with two warnings: *First*, your ally has his own agenda and may turn on you later. And *second*: your ally may drag you into a war that is not your own.

### [13] ALLIANCES, PART 2: FICKLE ALLIES

Reducing your enemy by persuading their allies to stay out of a conflict certainly is a legitimate effort. Whatever works, in this case, bribery caused a fair weather ally to change sides.

*2 Chronicles 16:1 Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah...:2 Then Asa [king of Judah] brought out silver and gold...and sent to Benhadad king of Syria...saying :3 break thy league with Baasha king of Israel :4 and Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel...:5 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard of it, that he left off...*

Asa bought off his enemy's ally, Syria, and it worked. Sometimes gold is the answer.

But there is a problem with this strategy: Such alliances are fleeting. Bought friends are not friends for long.

**2 Chronicles 16:7** *Hanani the seer came to Asa and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria and not relied on the LORD thy God...:9 from henceforth thou shalt have wars. 18:10 Thus saith the LORD [a false prophet is speaking] with these thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed.*

The alliance with Syria doesn't last very long. In another generation, Judah is drug into a war with Syria and because of Judah's alliance *with Israel!*

But treachery isn't the only thing that might cause an ally to flake out on you. Sometimes cowardice is sufficient. Imagine if you go to help your ally, and your ally quits the battle and leaves you fighting his battle. That's what happened to the Syrians.

**1 Chronicles 19:19** *And when the servants of Hadarezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with David, and became his servants: neither would the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more.*

The Syrians lost 47,000 men in this war. They engaged this war to help their allies the Ammonites. But the Ammonites quit and the Syrians took the brunt of it.

That's sort of what happened in Viet Nam. America went in to help its French allies. Then the French gave it up and America was left stuck with the mess.

**2 Kings 20:12** *...the son...of the king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. :13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, ...:16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. :17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.*

The old adage, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend," only goes so far. Assyria was Israel's enemy, and Babylon was Assyria's enemy. Does that mean that Babylon is Judah's friend? Yes, but only for one generation.

Babylon did destroy Assyria so the Israelites could cheer. But not for long — not when Babylon turned its gun-sights on Judah. The moral is, keep your secrets secret. Don't tip your hand even to your friends. Remember, Russia was America's war ally. But after World War II, all bets were off and the cold war began in earnest.

And let's not forget the Medes. They helped Babylon destroy Assyria, but then they soon helped the Persians destroy Babylon. They were tough bunch, the Medes (today's Kurds). You have to keep an eye on your allies. They can change their allegiance quickly.

I once made the mistake of showing a rifle to my next-door neighbor, a 32 Winchester Rifle that my father had left me. A few months later, it was burgled out of my house. The burglar knew exactly where to get it — I know that because the dog poop trail led straight from the front door across the living room to the bedroom closet where the

gun had been. They were good neighbors but their rotten kid burglarized it from me. I never recovered the gun, but I learned a valuable lesson: don't give your neighbors a tour through your house showing them where the family jewels are hidden. And kings, like Hezekiah, should not give foreign dignitaries tours of the city treasures, which is exactly what Hezekiah did. Invading armies have long memories.

#### [14] ALLIANCES, PART 3: DANGEROUS ALLIES

But the biggest danger of alliances is that they may suck you into a war that is not your own.

*Proverbs 26:17 He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. [Pit-bull, I imagine]*

Really try to not get involved in someone else's battle. Austria, not Germany, started World War I. Austria grabbed Bosnia, the Serbs retaliated, and Germany came to the aid of its ally Austria, and thus the blood bath began, and Germany got the worst of it. George Washington was right to warn us against international treaties.

*Ezekiel 17:15 But he rebelled against him in [king of Babylon] in sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people. :17 Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war...*

This was bad for Israel in that Egypt didn't offer much help. But ultimately it was worse for Egypt because they got sucked into Israel's war and were totally defeated.

#### [15] SURRENDER

Sometimes it's better to just give up and avoid the carnage. Not always but sometimes.

*2 Kings 24:12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.*

And they survived. Nebuchadnezzar was not an unreasonable man. He did not torture or kill them, he just took a bunch of them to Babylon as hostages, like Daniel.

*1 Chronicles 11:4 And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which was Jebus; where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. :5 And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David. :6 And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief.*

The Jebusites could have saved themselves a whole lot of grief by making a pact with David in the first place. “You want our city to be your capital? Sounds like a good deal for us. Let’s do it.” That’s what they should have said instead of resisting and getting killed for their effort. Sometimes (but not always) surrender is the best strategy. When Alexander the Great came through in 333 B.C. on his way to Egypt, Jerusalem did not resist him. Tyre did. Tyre got wiped out and Jerusalem was left alone.

***Jeremiah 21:9** He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.*

The way to survive the coming siege is to surrender. “His life shall be unto him for a prey.” That means the invading king won’t kill you because, having surrendered, you are now valuable as a war prize.

***Jeremiah 27:8** And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand. **:11** But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the LORD; and they shall till it, and dwell therein.*

Sometime winning is not so important as surviving. If you can’t win, surrender. At least you’ll be alive, and you children after you.

***Jeremiah 27:17** ...serve the king of Babylon, and live: wherefore should this city be laid waste?*

## [16] LOYALTY

Above all, a general must have and must earn the loyalty of his men. He must do this by holding their lives in high regard and not selling them cheaply.

***1 Chronicles 11:17** And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate. **:18** And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the LORD. **:19** And said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? For with the jeopardy of their lives they bought it. Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest.*

David’s army was thirsty and hadn’t had water for a few days. Then David offhandedly said, “I really wish I had some water from Bethlehem.” Three of his loyal

soldiers, hearing that, risked their lives, snuck through an enemy line and brought some Bethlehem water back to David.

But that created a problem for David. To drink it would mean that he was using his privileged position to drink what his men could not. It also meant that he was willing to risk his men's lives just for a drink of water. Since he had so much regard for the lives of his men, he would not drink "the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy."

### [17] SENSE OF DESTINY

What moves an army to victory is an overall, overwhelming sense of destiny, of purpose, of "the times"; that is, "this is our moment."

*1 Chronicles 12:32 And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.*

### [18] SINGLE PURPOSE

A man who has more than one motive will run when threatened. A man with a single motive, victory, will stand his ground.

*1 Chronicles 12:33 Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank: they were not of double heart.*

These men could *keep rank*, meaning they would not flee under fire. The reason is because they had a single purpose, *not of double heart*, and that purpose was to win.

In the movie "Gettysburg", one Confederate general says of his troops, "All the cowards and deserters have already left. Every man here knows his duty." Those are the men you need to win wars. Of course you also need a good general, and Lee wasn't, so they lost. But the confederate defeat at Gettysburg was not the fault of those brave men, just the fault of one stupid general.

### [19] WILL

When a nation loses the will to fight and defend itself, it cannot win.

*Leviticus 26:15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your sould abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: :16 I also will do this unto you I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. :17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.*

*:19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass.*

God was pointing out to them that that because of their sins they will lose their will to defend themselves.

***Jeremiah 48:10** Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.*

There are times when refusing to fight is a mistake. Sometimes, you have to fight. When Hannibal engaged the Romans, he was defeating them at every battle. Then why did he finally lose? Because as he lost troops, he sent word home to Carthage saying: “Reinforce me! I need troops! Then I can finish this.” But they had lost interest in the war and wouldn’t send reinforcements. As a result, Hannibal just ran out of army.

But Rome wasn’t finished with Carthage. Rome wanted revenge! And at the constant instance of Cato — (he said “Burn Carthage to the ground” at the end of every speech to the Senate) — the Romans finally did just that.

Well, Carthage deserved it, for their disinterest in their own war.

## [20] GOD ON OUR SIDE

Above all, your cause had better be just, you’d better prey for victory, and you’d better have God on your side.

***Joshua 5:13** ... When Joshua was by Jericho ... there stood a man ... with a sword drawn ... and Joshua went to him and said ... Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? :14 And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship ...*

This man was either an angel or was God. I think he was God because we are not supposed to worship angels.

***2 Chronicles 6:34** If thy people go out to war against their enemies...and they pray unto thee...and the house which I have built for thy name :35 Then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.*

In other words, God, give us victory in war. God is not impartial in war, he does take sides — if there is a right side and a wrong side.

***2 Chronicles 32:7** Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him.*

When the angels in heaven are on your side, how can you lose?

***Psalms 18:34** He teacheth my hands to war.*



This is a powerful verse. If God is teaching you how to make war, then you are an indestructible soldier.

### [21] BE ARMED

Peace is maintained by a ready army. I'm sorry, but that's the truth. Just because God is on your side doesn't mean you should be lackadaisical and remiss in your war preparations. God will do his part, but you'd better do your part.

*2 Chronicles 17:13 And the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem. :14 Of Judah...Adnah the chief, and with him might men of valour three hundred thousand :15 And next to him was Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand :16 Amasa...and with him two hundred thousand :17 And of Benjamin, Eliada...and with him armed men with bow and shield two hundred thousand :18 And next to him was Jehozadab and with him an hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for the war.*

Jehoshaphat's Judea enjoyed a long running peace. But he never disarmed. What keeps your enemies in check is their fear of your army.

*2 Chronicles 32:5 Also he [Hezekiah] strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shield in abundance.*

No one ever had God on his side more than Hezekiah. Ultimately, the Assyrian army was destroyed by an angel, but Hezekiah didn't know that in advance. So he built two walls and stockpiled lots of ammo. He was prepared for Assyria — he was as ready as he could be. He did not dump the responsibility entirely on God.

Theodore Roosevelt's famous line, "Walk softly but carry a big stick," is true in every age. And it's also the reason that the Swiss avoided two world wars, not because they negotiated with the Germans, but because they were armed to the teeth.

It's true that the Sioux Indians were defeated by the Americans, so preparing for war didn't help them. But would peace have served them better? That's not clear. We can ask the five civilized tribes — Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole — how peace served them. They lived for peace and lived like white men. What did they get? The Trail of Tears. We can also ask the Jews of Hitler's Germany. They dutifully turned in their guns as ordered. What did they get? Gassed. The Jews are right to say, "Never again!" Ask the people of Carthage at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Punic War. It was not a war — they were unarmed. But that didn't keep the Romans from destroying them: Every time Cato addressed the Roman Senate he said: "Burn Carthage to the ground!" Finally they did.

Sometimes, the only way to peace is war. A horrible reality, but a reality none the less. Sometimes a determined invading enemy can only be deterred with a stubborn resistance. Make the invasion costly enough, and maybe it will stop.

Liberals insist that “there is nothing worse than war.” That’s simply not true. There is one thing worse than war: genocide. And what exactly is genocide? It is a war where only one side has guns.

***Nehemiah 4:18** For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.*

Even the workmen were armed and ready in case they were attacked. They did not depend on whatever police force they had, they were prepared to defend themselves.

***Psalms 29:11** The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace. There’s no escaping it. Peace is established with strength.*

## [22] FRIENDLY FIRE

Failed coordination risks death by friendly fire; that is, killed by your own people which is the most tragic way for a soldier to die. But if you can lead your enemy into this death trap where they kill themselves, that’s a good thing.

Here are two battles won by friendly fire.

***Judges 7:22** And the thee hundred [Gideon’s army] blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man’s sword against his fellow, [the Midianites] even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabath.*

***2 Chronicles 20:23** For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. :24 And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.*

The Battle of Gettysburg changed the whole course of the civil war, and the final defeat at Gettysburg was. General Pickett’s ill-fated charge into the center of the union line. That charge cost the Confederacy the battle and ultimately the war.

That foolish charge was a product of General Lee’s poor generaling.

What does this have to do with friendly fire?

I wager that Lee would not have done that if General Stonewall Jackson had been there to advise him against it. Lee, I believe, would have listened to Jackson, and the battle and the war might have turned out much differently. Where was Jackson? He was dead. Jackson had been killed by a single bullet just one month earlier fired by a Confederate soldier. One bullet of friendly fire changed the entire war.

## [23] INTELLIGENCE

Every field commander knows that correct information is often the difference between victory and defeat.

**Proverbs 26:6** *He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage.*

I don't understand all the imagery but it doesn't sound good. If you have a vital message to send, you'd better make sure that the messenger gets it right. Any way that you can find out what your enemy is thinking or doing, that's a good thing.

**Nehemiah 4:12** *And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them [the enemy] came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you. :13 Therefore set...the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.*

The Israelites were blessed in this instance with some good intelligence from those who lived near the enemy and knew what was about to happen. Israel, now armed with knowledge about enemy whereabouts, used that knowledge to win.

**Isaiah 9:5** *For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise...*

Soldiers had better know what they're doing. Fighting bravely but without a clear objective will just get you killed. Whether its bugles or semaphore flags or telegraph, or the internet, the troops had better get their marching orders and get it correctly.

**Jeremiah 13:21** *What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? For thou has taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?*

Whatever you do, don't give your enemy intel about yourself. How stupid it is to educate your enemy about yourself. That's just what Hezekiah did, giving Babylonians a tour of Jerusalem. And the Jews paid a heavy price for the king's egotistical foolishness.

**Isaiah 39:4** *And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. :5 Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: :6 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.*

Today's friend will be tomorrow's enemy. Hezekiah made a terrible mistake showing off his treasures to his "friends" the Babylonians. Very soon they were not so friendly and they were back for the treasure.

**Jeremiah 40:13** *...Johanan...came to Gedaliah... :14 And said unto him, Dost thou certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites hath sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to slay thee? But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam believed them not. :15 Then Johanan the son of Kareah spake to Gedaliah in Mizpah secretly saying,*

*Let me go, I pray thee, and I will slay Ishmael...:16 But Gedaliah...said unto Johanan...Thou shalt not do this thing: for thou speakest falsely of Ishmael. 41:2 Then arose Ishmael...and smote Gedaliah...with the sword, and slew him...*

Gedaliah had received good intelligence, but did not believe it and failed to act. And so he was assassinated.

But it's not just the enemy you need information about, but about your own troops. When you order "Attack!" (or for that matter, "Retreat!"), you'd better make darn sure they get the message. Often the battle turns on the efficiency of the signal corps.

In 1904, there was a naval war between Russia and Japan. The Japanese won, decimating the Russian navy. How did that do it? Marconi had just invented wireless transmission. The Japanese took that new technology to heart and installed it on all of their war ships. The Russians did not. The fact that Japanese ships were able to communicate with each other, that was what gave Japan the victory.

The most important intelligence, however, is knowing when the war is over. The Battle of New Orleans was fought on January 8, 1815, nine days *after* the treaty was ratified by the British on December 30, 1814. Then why did the battle happen? Because there were no telephones to notify the opposing armies. And the casualties? 13 American dead and 291 British dead. Not a large loss of life, but large enough for those 304 unfortunate soldiers who died in a battle that should not have happened.

#### [24] TREACHERY

When your enemy says, "Let's meet under truce and talk this out," that's when to be most afraid. A white flag is no guarantee of safety, it is not a suit of armor.

*Nehemiah 6:2 That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. :3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?*

Nehemiah was no fool. He smelled a rat and begged off with a legitimate reason, "I'm too busy" was his excuse, and a good excuse it was. Is it wrong to lie when a courteous lie saves your life? Nehemiah's lie sounds right to me.

#### [25] COURAGE

It goes without saying, you can't win without courage and a determination to do your duty under fire. Cowardice on the field leads to defeat.

*Psalms 78:9 The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. :10 They kept not the covenant of God...*

They lost this battle because they turned coward and ran.

In World War II, Stalin had a simple way to deal with cowardice: the Russians shot every deserter. Stalin said, “It takes a brave man to be a coward in the Red Army.”

## [26] RUN

Yes I know, cowardice loses battles. I just said so. But sometimes escape is the only sensible thing to do.

*Jeremiah 51:45 My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.*

Run, flee, escape. Get as far away as you can. It is a true adage: “He who fights and runs away will live to fight another day.”

My favorite general in all military history is Sam Houston. Not because his victory at San Jacinto was so huge, although it was — he had won Texas with a single battle and that was huge — but because he accomplished it with so few casualties.

How did he do that? He was the master of retreat. He and his rag-tag Texas army simply refused to engage Santa Ana until conditions were absolutely right about everything. And so Santa Ana chased Houston all over Texas, and Houston just kept refusing to fight. That is *until* one day the Mexicans were so weary of the pursuit that at siesta, they left no sentries. And that was Houston’s moment. The Texans rode into the Mexican camp, and almost without firing a shot subdued the entire Mexican army.

Now that’s class. What other generals can boast of a victory, I mean a *major* victory, with so little loss of life? Not many.

Retreat. At times it can be a wonderful strategy.

At Waterloo, General Wellington used a feigned retreat into the woods behind him and suckered General Ney’s cavalry into attacking. In those trees, the French met British infantry squares and Ney’s command was destroyed.

Side lesson: Never advance a cavalry or armor division on an infantry position without supporting infantry. It’s suicide.

## [27] WILLING

I guess the most important strategy of war is to be willing to fight. If you won’t fight, you can’t win.

*Psalms 144:1 Blessed be the LORD my strength which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.*

It is not just our hands that we hope God teaches to war, but our hearts as well.

In past wars, it was discovered that half of our battle casualties died without having fired a single shot. That statistical fact was sobering, because it means that our natural aversion to killing often gets our soldiers killed and loses battles.

Hunters call it “buck fever,” or at least my dad did. The buck is in your sights, and you’re going to pull the trigger, and you’re going to pull the trigger, and ... the buck scampers away and you haven’t pulled the trigger. Well, okay, so you don’t have the

heart to kill a dear, no harm done, but on the battle field, that reluctance will get you killed.

It's also true of gun owners. Gun owners will brandish a pistol when they confront an intruder, but half the time that intruder will advance on the gun owner, disarm the gun owner, and shoot the gun owner with his own pistol. And that outcome could have been prevented at any moment by the gun owner simply by pulling the trigger. But he, or she, wouldn't.

If you ask a policeman for advice, "Should I own a gun?" that policeman will likely alert you to this statistic and ask you back, "Are you sure you can pull the trigger if you need to?"

This natural reluctance to kill obviously has serious ramifications in battle. So serious that trainers in World War II taught soldiers that it was okay to kill, that they had permission to kill. And that did reduce the number of casualties, but not enough.

Today military trainers train soldiers, not that it's okay to kill, but that they have a duty to kill, that's what they are there for. And if they can't do that, they shouldn't be there.

In John Wayne's last movie, "The Shootist". he played an old gunfighter, J.B. Books, who was dying of cancer. A teenage boy, Gillom played by Ron Howard, was enthralled by the gunfighter's life and he asked the dying gunfighter this question: "Which is more important? To draw fast or to shoot straight?" John Wayne's answer was: "What's more important than either is to be willing to pull the trigger."

### **[28] BE SURE AND BE CAREFUL**

When you are considering a conflict, you have to ask yourself: Is this really what you want to do? Is this the hill you want to die on?

*Proverbs 25:8 Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when they neighbour hath put thee to shame.*

It's easy to start a war, it's not so easy to end it, as Kaiser Wilhelm found out. And while you're at it, while you're considering whether this is a war that you ought to fight or not, surround yourself with the best advisors you can get.

*Proverbs 24:6 For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counselors there is safety.*

Hitler lost World War II in large part because he wouldn't heed the advice of his own generals. Truth is, they were afraid to disagree with him. And so by having *so* much control, Hitler guaranteed his own defeat.

### **[29] PAY**

Armies have to be paid. If you're going to wage war, you have to pay them well.

**Ezekiel 29:18** ...yet he had no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus... **:19** Therefore...I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.

Nebuchadrezzar certainly paid his army well. He had the spoils of Egypt to do it. Napoleon was also determined to pay his army well. He paid them with gold or with nothing. If he didn't have gold, he refused to pay them until he did have gold, which he got from the next conquered city. That's why they followed him to hell and back.

### [30] SCORCHED EARTH

The very bad thing about scorched earth is that it kills non-combatants, and usually your own people. That is a very high cost to delay defeat. But some armies do it anyway, destroy everything. If you're that willing to kill your own people just to win a war, then you don't deserve to win.

**Joel 2:3** A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them.

As the allied armies marched across Germany in 1945 towards Berlin, Hitler issued his infamous scorched earth policy. It was called the Nero Decree. Hitler hated the allies so much that he was willing for his own German people to starve to death rather than concede anything useful to his enemies.

Fortunately, Albert Speer, Minister of Armaments and War Production for the Third Reich, refused to carry out that blood thirsty order. As a result of his courageous defiance — (it took a lot of courage to defy Hitler, Speer could have been shot) — millions of Germans probably owe their lives to that one man. So despite whatever evils that man had done, he did one good thing anyway, he saved Germany from Hitler's final revenge.

The point is, if you are going to lose and you know it, what should plan-B be? Of course the answer must be to secure the survival of as many of your people as possible, so that in the aftermath, there will be life.

**Deuteronomy 20:19** When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an ax against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege. **:20** Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

God is saying, have your war if you must (people do that), but while you are destroying each other, don't destroy the surrounding trees, at least not the fruit bearing trees. If you must cut down trees to make war, do not cut down the fruit trees. When your

senseless war is over, *somebody* is going to live there, and they might as well have trees. This forbids scorched earth.

### [31] WINNABLE

And finally, before you engage any battle, you'd better make sure you can win.

*Luke 14:31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?*

It feels strange that Jesus Christ, the king of peace, would give us advice on war. But he did. He also said this —

*Luke 22:36 ... he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.*

I think he meant it. Makes you feel like exercising your 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment rights.