

YOU CAN'T WIN A WAR WITHOUT GOOD LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

You can't win a war without good leadership.

The American Civil War, which was fought from 1861 through the spring of 1865 resulted in the deaths of 620,000 American soldiers. In the summer of 1862, General George B. McClelland brought the Army of Potomac to the gates of Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. McClelland's army outnumbered Lee's army in every way and some historians believe that if McClelland had pressed the attack and captured Richmond in the battle called the Seven Days Campaign, the war could have been drastically shortened and tens of thousands of lives spared. But as one historian explains it:

...in the field, he (McClellan) was cautious to the point of paralysis and slow to the point of lethargy. Unwilling to risk the magnificent military machine he built to losses in combat, he hoped somehow its mere presence before Richmond would cause the Confederacy to collapse. Superior in numbers and equipment at the onset of the campaign, his army had the opportunity to overwhelm the Confederates at any time. Yet by moving slowly, he surrendered the initiative to his opponent.

President Lincoln's frustration throughout much of the war was the lack of a leader to lead the armies of the Union in a decisive campaign to defeat the Confederates.

You can't win a war without good leadership.

Since the rebellion of Lucifer, the universe has been embroiled in a war between God's Kingdom of Light and Satan's kingdom of darkness. The war broke out on the earth in the Garden of Eden when Satan pressed his attack against Adam and Eve and succeeded in causing them to betray God and eat of the forbidden tree. But God promised even then that from the woman would come a Savior who will crush the head of Satan and deliver the human race from the curse of the Fall. God will win this war, but you can't win a war without good leadership.

Time and again in this war it has appeared that the kingdom of darkness would swallow up the kingdom of light. The murder of Abel by Cain, the corruption of the human race that led to the Flood, the Tower of Babel and the scattering of the peoples and even after the election of Abraham and his descendants, the Egyptian captivity threatened to extinguish the kingdom of light in the Hebrew people. But just as God revealed their captivity, so also God revealed their liberation and raised up Moses to lead them out of Egypt back to the Promised Land.

God's purpose was to establish Abraham's descendants in the Promised Land to be His Kingdom of Light in the midst of the Kingdom of Darkness. The means by which the Israelites would become a Kingdom of Light was through obeying the laws of the Mosaic Covenant and receiving the blessings of God.

But Satan challenged God's campaign at every step. The Israelites were God's Chosen people whom He redeemed out of Egypt and claimed as His own possession. Yet, the Israelites had been infected with the kingdom of darkness through the idolatry they embraced in Egypt. They needed to be purified of their idolatry if they were going to serve as God's witnesses to the world.

Not only did their hearts need to be purified, but their land needed to be purified. The kingdom of darkness was entrenched in Canaan in the people groups that worshiped false gods and practiced witchcraft and human sacrifice in direct rebellion to God's law.

What was true about the American Civil War is even more true in the war between the Kingdom of Light and the kingdom of darkness. You can't win a war without good leadership.

MOSES AND JOSHUA LEAD ISRAEL TO EXPERIENCE COVENANT BLESSINGS

Moses lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt and for the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. At 120 years of age, God revealed to Moses that he was going to die and that Joshua would lead the nation to take possession of the Promised Land. We read in Deuteronomy 31:7-8

⁷Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall put them in possession of it. ⁸It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

Deuteronomy 31:7-8

Can you imagine assuming responsibility for several million people: to move them and all their livestock and possessions safely across a major river into hostile territory and then mount a military campaign to conquer fortified cities and then partition the land among the twelve tribes and oversee the settlement of all these people while keeping them united and devoted to God?

What a herculean task! Here is what God said to Joshua as he began to lead Israel:

⁶Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. ⁸This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Joshua 1:6-8

What is the key leadership principle God emphasized with Joshua? To know and obey the Book of the Law.

That remains the key principle for godly leadership today in our churches and in our homes. Good leadership is not a matter of education or business success or personality. Good leadership in this war of the kingdoms depends on the Word of God. In order to lead our families, men, we need to study and apply God's Word to our lives

daily. In order to lead our children, moms and dads, we need to study and apply God's Word first to our own lives. In order to lead our churches we need men, we need Elders, who are men of God's Word first and foremost.

Joshua obeyed God and lead according to the Book of the Law. And just as God promised, Joshua was successful. The Book of Joshua concludes with this summary

³¹Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work that the LORD did for Israel.

Joshua 24:31

ISRAEL IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES

Then Joshua died.

⁸And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years.

¹⁰...And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel. ¹¹And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals.

Judges 2:8, 10-11

For some reason there was a breakdown in training leadership for the generation following Joshua. As a result, though they were in the Promised Land, the Israelites unraveled spiritually. After Joshua's death, 400 years of spiritual and moral decay consumed Israel climaxing with a bizarre episode that included gang rape, mutilation and tribal genocide. Rather than revealing God to the nations Israel became as dark as the nations around her. Without godly leadership, Satan had his way with God's people and the people took on the worldview and practices of their pagan neighbors. Without godly leadership Israel's light was snuffed out and she profaned God's name.

During this period of her history Israel suffered terribly.

¹⁴...the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies... ¹⁵...the hand of the LORD was against them for harm, as the LORD had warned, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress.

Judges 2:14-15

Things would get so bad that the Israelites would eventually cry out to God and God would graciously deliver them.

¹⁶Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. ¹⁷Yet they did not listen to their judges... ¹⁹But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers...

Judges 2:16-19

This cycle of sin, punishment, repentance and deliverance continued for 400 years. Finally, the Israelites came to Samuel, a prophet and the judge of Israel, in approximately 1000B.C. and they demanded that Samuel appoint a king to rule over them like the nations around them.

GOD MADE A COVENANT WITH DAVID

God directed Samuel to do as the people demanded and Samuel appointed a man named Saul to be Israel's first king. Saul started out promising enough, but he ended badly. After Saul, God directed Samuel to anoint a man named David to be king. David was from the tribe of Judah (does that ring a bell?). Unlike Saul, David proved to be a godly man who deeply loved the Lord and loved God's Word. God described David as a man after His own heart. David united the tribes of Israel and led them to keep the Mosaic Covenant with God. Under David's godly leadership the light of Israel was reignited and she began to be a light to the gentile nations. As goes the leader so goes the people.

David so loved God that he wanted to build a house of worship for God in Jerusalem. God sent a prophet named Nathan to tell David that it would be David's son who would build the house of worship, but, in a play on words, God would build a house for David. The son in view here is Solomon. Keep that in mind as we 2 Samuel 7:11-16.

11...Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. 12When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, 15but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. 16And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.' "

2 Samuel 7:11-16

This is what we call the Davidic Covenant. Like the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant is unconditional. God promised David an eternal house or dynasty, an eternal kingdom and an eternal throne. In addition, God promised to discipline, but not depart from Solomon as he had departed from Saul.

THE HOPES BUILT ON THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

The Davidic Covenant is God's promise to Israel that He will someday raise up a leader Who will lead the nation of Israel to keep God's law and become the light to the nations that God purposed Israel to be.

The Davidic Covenant is a key to understanding biblical prophecy. The Davidic Covenant was the basis of Israel's continuing hope that God would raise up a king from the family of David who would deliver Israel from her enemies and lead them into the blessings of God's covenants.

For instance, Isaiah the prophet prophesied that Messiah will come from David's family and establish a kingdom of righteousness.

1There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse (David's father), and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. 2And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not

judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

Isaiah 11:1-5

The prophet Jeremiah prophesied to the southern kingdom that had been carried off into captivity in Babylon these words

¹⁴“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’

¹⁷“For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, ¹⁸and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever.”

¹⁹The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: ²⁰“Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, ²¹then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. ²²As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.”

Jeremiah 33:14-22

The prophet Ezekiel also wrote to those Jews suffering captivity in Babylon with these words of comfort:

²⁴“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. ²⁵They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. ²⁶I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. ²⁷My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Ezekiel 37:24-27

The prophets Hosea, Amos, Micah and Zechariah also prophesy of the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. As Dr. Dwight Pentecost writes:

Thus prophet after prophet gave comfort to the nation by reaffirming the hope of the Davidic Covenant – that one of David’s sons would sit on David’s throne and rule over David’s kingdom and that under that reign Israel would experience the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.¹

¹ *Thy Kingdom Come*, page 153.

When we open the New Testament, the very first verse identifies Jesus as the son of David

¹The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.
Matthew 1:1

When the messenger angel Gabriel came to Mary he spoke of the Davidic Covenant:

³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the **throne** of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the **house** of Jacob forever, and of his **kingdom** there will be no end.”
Luke 1:32-33

The Apostles anticipated a literal fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant with the reestablishment of David's dynasty, throne and kingdom. This comes out clearly at the first council of church held at Jerusalem. The council was convened to decide on the issue of Gentile evangelism: the issue in question was whether or not Gentiles were saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone or whether they also needed to keep the law of Moses in order to be saved.

Follow the logic of James as he made his recommendation on the issue of gentile evangelism:

¹³ ...James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. ¹⁵And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,

¹⁶“ ‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, ¹⁷that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things

Acts 15:13-17

James believed that after an unspecified amount of time during which time both Jews and Gentiles are saved through the preaching of the Gospel, God will reestablish David's dynasty and fulfill the Davidic Covenant.

This is why we believe that Jesus is going to physically return to the earth and reestablish the throne of David in Jerusalem and fulfill the Davidic Covenant. When Jesus comes, He will regather all the Jews to Israel and He will accomplish what no other human king could accomplish; He will lead God's people to be faithful to God and to serve God perfectly, not just for a few years, but forever. Israel will finally have the leadership she needs to win the war and be what God has called her to be.

WE NEED GODLY LEADERSHIP TODAY TO WIN THE WAR

Wherever godly leadership is lacking, Satan has his way with us; we take on the worldview and values of the world and the flesh. Whether nations or churches or families; wherever godly leadership is lacking, Satan swoops in to fill the vacuum through the world and the flesh. When we're not lead to focus on God we focus on ourselves and our selfish desires and we focus on the world which encourages us to indulge our desires. Wherever godly leadership is lacking we become like the people around us and our witness for Christ is compromised. Wherever godly leadership is

lacking our light is snuffed out. We need godly leaders in our lives to help us shine our light to those who are living in the darkness of the world.

Another way we say this here at Grace is, "as goes the leaders so go the people." This is a universal spiritual principle without exceptions. This is why it is so important that we elect godly men and women to serve in government. This is why it is so important that we carefully and wisely test and affirm godly men as elders and deacons in our churches. This is why it is incredibly important ladies to choose a man for husband who is a strong spiritual leader. This is why, men, it is so important that we take responsibility and lead our families spiritually. Do you remember the statistic we learned on Father's Day? That 70% of children who attend church with their fathers attend church when they are adults? As goes the leaders so go the people.

As God emphasized to Joshua, at the heart of godly leadership is the Word of God. We cannot lead if we do not know where we are going or how to get there.

What we need in our homes and our churches is a knowledge of God's story and of doctrine.

We need to help our children think biblically – giving them the moral and spiritual reasons behind our rules.

We need to model a Christ centered life to our kids by serving Christ in the church and being honest with them about our own walks with the Lord.

In our churches we need to establish a disciplined process by which we test and approve men to lead as our elders. In our churches we need to honor and express our gratitude for godly elders and deacons.

We're in the same war as the Israelites. We need godly leadership in our homes, churches and government.

You can't win a war without good leadership. God's going to win this war and His Man is going to be King over all the kingdoms of the earth. In the meantime, let's strive to grow as godly leaders in our spheres of influence as we push back the kingdom of darkness.