

SECOND SAMUEL

Chapter 10

David Defeats the Ammonites

In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king. ² David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father. When David's men came to the land of the Ammonites, ³ the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think David is honoring your father by sending men to you to express sympathy? Hasn't David sent them to you to explore the city and spy it out and overthrow it?" ⁴ So Hanun seized David's men, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away. ⁵ When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, "Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back." ⁶ When the Ammonites realized that they had become a stench in David's nostrils, they hired twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers from Beth Rehob and Zobah, as well as the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob. ⁷ On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men. ⁸ The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance to their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the open country. ⁹ Joab saw that there were battle lines in front of him and behind him; so he selected some of the best troops in Israel and deployed them against the Arameans. ¹⁰ He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother and deployed them against the Ammonites. ¹¹ Joab said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you are to come to my rescue; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come to rescue you. ¹² Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The LORD will do what is good in his sight." ¹³ Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him. ¹⁴ When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were fleeing, they fled before Abishai and went inside the city. So Joab returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem. ¹⁵ After the Arameans saw that they had been routed by Israel, they regrouped. ¹⁶ Hadadezer had Arameans brought from beyond the River; they went to Helam, with Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them. ¹⁷ When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan and went to Helam. The Arameans formed their battle lines to meet David and fought against him. ¹⁸ But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there. ¹⁹ When all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace

with the Israelites and became subject to them. So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.

10:1 *king.* Nahash (see v. 2; 1Sa 11). (CSB)

Ammonites. See note on 1Sa 11:1. (CSB)

10:2 *show kindness.* The Hebrew for this expression suggests that a formal treaty existed between the Israelites and the Ammonites. Perhaps this explains why there is no account of a war against the Ammonites in ch. 8, and why the Ammonites did not come to the assistance of the Moabites (8:2). (CSB)

dealt loyally. Honored the treaty between himself and David. (TLSB)

10:3 *Do you think.* Rhetorical question implies a “no” answer. (TLSB)

city. Rabbah, the capital (11:1; 12:26). (CSB)

10:4 *shaved off half of each man’s beard.* In the Eastern world of that time this was considered an insult of the most serious kind. A beard was shaved only as a sign of deep mourning (see Isa 15:2; Jer 41:5; Eze 5:1). (CSB)

cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks. A customary way of degrading prisoners of war (see Isa 20:4). (CSB)

Grievous insult. For the Israelites, a man’s beard was his greatest ornament. To increase the insult, the long garments were cut off, exposing the men. (TLSB)

10:5 *Remain at Jericho.* To avoid a ruined reputation in the capital city. (TLSB)

Jericho. See notes on Jos 6:1, 26; 1Ki 16:34. Jericho remained unrestored during the centuries between Joshua’s conquest and the time of Ahab. (CSB)

10:6 *become a stench.* David and Israel were enraged at them. (TLSB)

Beth Rehob. See Nu 13:21; Jdg 18:28. (CSB)

Exact location unknown; perhaps east of the Jordan River near Dan. (TLSB)

Zobah. See note on 8:3. (CSB)

Maacah. See Dt 3:14; Jos 12:5; 13:13. (CSB)

Tob. See Jdg 11:3, 5. (CSB)

10:8 *entrance of the gate.* Gate of the Ammonites' capital city, Rabbah (11:1). (TLSB)

10:9 *both in front and in the rear.* The battle in front was with the Ammonites arrayed outside their capital city. The battle to the rear was with the Syrian mercenaries coming to the aid of the Ammonites. (TLSB)

10:10 *Abishai.* See note on 1Sa 26:6. (CSB)

10:14 *the city.* Rabbah, their capital. (TLSB)

returned from fighting. Joab did not lay siege to Rabbah to totally defeat the Ammonites. (TLSB)

10:16 *Hadadezer.* See note on 8:3. (CSB)

Helam. A town close to the northern border of Gilead. (CSB)

10:17 *he gathered all Israel.* David went because there was much at stake. The outcome of this battle determined who would rule the Palestine-Syrian region until the reign of Rehoboam (931–914 BC). (TLSB)

10:18 *seven hundred.* Evidently a copyist's mistake; in 1Ch 19:18 the figure is 7,000. (CSB)

10:19 *they made peace with the Israelites.* There is no indication that Hadadezer himself made peace with Israel as his vassals did in the aftermath of this defeat. These events represent David's last major campaign against combined foreign powers. (CSB)

Ch 10 The new Ammonite king rejects David's offer of peace, listening instead to those who speak evil of him. In the end, Joab and David defeat and humble the Syrian kings by the Lord's hand. Often in this world, good deeds are rewarded with unthankfulness. Yet God would have us continually act in good faith toward all. Thanks be to God, who fights for us and covers our shame in the mercy of Jesus. • Gracious Lord, we give You thanks for defending us covering our shame, and keeping us by Your grace. Amen. (TLSB)