SECOND SAMUEL
Chapter 10

David Defeats Ammon and Syria

After this the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. 2 And David said, "I will deal loyally with Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father dealt loyally with me." So David sent by his servants to console him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the Ammonites. 3 But the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think, because David has sent comforters to you, that he is honoring your father? Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city and to spy it out and to overthrow it?" 4 So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off half the beard of each and cut off their garments in the middle, at their hips, and sent them away. 5 When it was told David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown and then return." 6 When the Ammonites saw that they had become a stench to David, the Ammonites sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob, 12,000 men. 7 And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men. 8 And the Ammonites came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the gate, and the Syrians of Zobah and of Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the open country. 9 When Joab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in the rear, he chose some of the best men of Israel and arrayed them against the Syrians. 10 The rest of his men he put in the charge of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites. 11 And he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. 12 Be of good courage, and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God, and may the LORD do what seems good to him." 13 So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 14 And when the Ammonites saw that the Syrians fled, they likewise fled before Abishai and entered the city. Then Joab returned from fighting against the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem. 15 But when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together. 16 And Hadadezer sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the Euphrates. They came to Helam, with Shobach the commander of the army of Hadadezer at their head. 17 And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan and came to Helam. The Syrians arrayed themselves against David and fought with him. 18 And the Syrians fled before Israel, and David killed of the Syrians the men of 700 chariots, and 40,000 horsemen, and wounded Shobach the commander of their army, so that he died there. 19 And when all the kings who were servants of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became subject to them. So the Syrians were afraid to save the Ammonites anymore.

10:2 *deal loyally*. 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 the 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. 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. 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. Exact location unknown; perhaps east of the Jordan River near Dan. (TLSB)

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)

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

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

10:16 *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)