

SECOND SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 10

- Vv. 1- 5 *David's Ambassadors shamed.* The king of Ammon died and David sent ambassadors to express his sympathy. The princes of the country persuaded the new king that David was really seeking opportunity to spy out their land. They treated his ambassadors shamefully and this was taken as a cause for war.
- Vv. 6-19 *David's army was divided into two companies.* One was under the direction of Joab, and the other was led by Abishai. The armies of Israel were victorious, and the Syrians from Damascus came to aid the Ammonites. David then gathered his entire host together and crossed over the Jordan himself to direct the campaign. The Israelites were victorious and the Syrians withdrew.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Ambassadors for Christ*" (II Corinthians 5:20). The treatment of a country's ambassadors is tantamount to the same treatment of the country. When the people of Ammon cut off the beard of David's ambassadors and sheared their robes just slightly below the waist, they caused the men to be so ashamed that they were not willing to be seen in public. David took this treatment to be the same as shameful treatment of himself and of his entire nation. He therefore went to war. We are sometimes surprised to read that Jesus said to Saul, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9:5). As far as we know Saul never saw Jesus; but when he persecuted the followers of Jesus, it was as if he were persecuting Jesus. We need to realize that our treatment of God's workers is equal to the same treatment of God himself.

2. *Playing the man.* When the armies of Israel saw that the Syrians had joined with the Ammonites, they knew that the odds were overwhelmingly against them. Joab said, "Be of good courage and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God" (v. 12). When Christians are overwhelmed by the forces of evil, they need to begin playing the men for the sake of their brethren and for their God whom they serve.

III. TROUBLE IN DAVID'S FAMILY, 10:1—14:33.

1. The War With Ammon, 10:1-19.

David's Ambassadors Shamed. 10:1-5

And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.

2 Then said David, I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

3 And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honor thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David *rather* sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?

4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, *even* to their buttocks, and sent them away.

5 When they told *it* unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

1. *Who was Hanun?* 10:1

Hanun was the new king over the people of Ammon. David had subdued these people in one of his campaigns

(II Samuel 8:12). As the son and successor of Nahash, the king of the Ammonites in the days of Saul, he showed himself to be of the same warlike nature. He was not able to withstand the agitation of courtiers who misjudged the object of David's mission, and he treated David's ambassadors shamefully.

2. *Who was Nahash? 10:2*

A man named Nahash is mentioned in I Samuel 11:1-3. We cannot be sure that this is the same Nahash mentioned in II Samuel 10:2. We suppose that it was the same person. It may have been that the latter mention of the name refers to a son of the man formerly mentioned. It would be hard to understand how this man had helped David, since no specific mention of it is made. He may have befriended David during the time that David was in hiding from the presence of Saul. Nahash could have helped David in order to spite Saul, who had wreaked such vengeance on the Ammonites after they had gone out against the men of Jabesh-gilead.

Other tribes had fallen under the sword of David and Hanun was afraid to trust David because the other tribes had suffered such a fate. When the Ammonites mistreated the ambassadors from Israel, ample cause for war was present. The abuse of an ambassador was considered a just cause for war.

3. *Why did they doubt David's motives? 10:3*

The young prince was ready to act on suspicion. His advisors thought that David would hardly be so sympathetic as to send ambassadors to console the king when his father died. They thought that he had come to search out the city, to spy on it, and to overthrow it. The record in Chronicles indicates that they thought that he had come to spy out the entire land. This was the same motive attributed to Abner by Joab who came on a mission of peace to David at Hebron. Their suspicions are a reflection upon their own attitudes and motives, but David had

given them no reason to have such fears. Their suspicions were founded on national hatred and enmity which had possibly been increased by David's treatment of Moab and other neighbors of Ammon.

4. *How did Hanun treat David's servants? 10:4*

Hanun treated David's servants shamefully. He shaved off half of their beards and cut off their garments in the middle. Whether the men were shaved down one side of their faces or their beards were cut off so that they were only half as long as they were designed to be cannot be determined. Their garments were cut off so that they were ashamed to be seen in public. For that reason, David told them to stay in Jericho, near the Jordan river, and wait until their beards were grown and they could be outfitted with other clothes. They would then be free to return to Jerusalem and make a report of their mission.

David's Army Divided Into Two Companies. 10:6-19

6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men.

7 And when David heard of *it*, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

8 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishtob, and Maacah, *were* by themselves in the field.

9 When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice *men* of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians:

10 And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put *them* in array against the children of Ammon.

11 And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee:

12 Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.

13 And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him.

14 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

15 And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together.

16 And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond the river: and they came to Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them.

17 And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.

18 And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew *the men of* seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there.

19 And when all the kings *that were* servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

5. *What caused the war with the Ammonites?* 10:6

When a nation treats ambassadors shamefully, it is all the same as though they had treated the country in the

same way. David was furious, and then these steps were taken:

- a. Ammonites hired the Syrians—verse six
- b. The enemy's army divided—verse eight
- c. Israel's army divided to meet the enemy—verses nine and ten
- d. Joab routed the Syrians (verse thirteen); Ammonites fled before Abishai as a result—verse fourteen

Although the Ammonites hired Syrians to fight for them, they were unable to overcome the Israelites. The Ammonites and Syrians put an army into the field under separate commands and in segregated positions. To meet this strategy, Joab delivered a part of the army of the Israelites to the command of Abishai. Joab thought of the God of Israel as a God of battle and so trusted His deliverance. When Joab pressed the battle against the Syrians which were before him, the Syrians fled. The heart of the Ammonites failed within them when they saw that the Syrians were being defeated. They, too, retreated before the onrushing forces of Abishai.

Had the Israelites been prepared for a siege, they might have come to final grips with the Ammonites and Syrians soon after this first encounter. The Israelites were not ready to besiege the city, however, and the Ammonites were able to find refuge in Rabbath-Ammon. It was not until later that the siege was laid.

6. *Who was King Maacah? 10:6 b*

The Ammonites not only were able to hire men from the Syrians of Beth-rehob and Zobah, but they were able to get men from Maacah. Maacah was a city and small Syrian kingdom at the foot of Mount Hermon near Geshur (Joshua 13:13; I Chronicles 19:7). This territory was the land around the southern and eastern slopes of Hermon; it also took in a portion of the rocky plateau called Iturea. The land really belonged to Israel, but it was not possessed by them in Joshua's day. Its king con-

tributed 1,000 men to the Ammonites as they fought against David, but they were all defeated (verse 19).

7. *Who were the men of Tob? 10:6 b*

Isb-Tob is not to be considered as one word and translated as a proper noun, but rather it should be thought of as a reference to the "men of Tob." Tob was a district between Assyria and Ammon. Jephthah had taken refuge here when he fled from his brethren (Judges 11:3). Hanun was able to band all the Syrians together to stave off the attack David was about to make.

8. *Who were hosts of mighty men? 10:7*

David mustered all his mighty men. These mighty men were more than those listed as David's heroes (II Samuel 23:8-39). Here is a reference to the fact that David called all his army into this battle. This naturally meant that the militia was considered a different body from the veteran force. Later on, David was able to count 1,300,000 men of military age (II Samuel 24:9).

9. *What was Joab's strategy? 10:9*

Joab saw that two fronts were being formed by the enemy. One group was closing in before him; another was chasing him from the rear. He therefore took the best fighters from the men of Israel, and set them in a battle line against the better equipped and more experienced Syrians. He put the rest of the men under the leadership of Abishai and ordered them to go out against the Ammonites. Joab felt that the Syrians were the real threat and that it was important to beat them. Probably the bulk of the army went against the Ammonites.

10. *What was the meaning of Joab's remark to Abishai? 10:12*

Joab was a good soldier; he urged his men to be courageous. He exhorted them to fight like men. This was the battle cry of the Philistines when they learned that the ark had been brought out into the field of battle against them (I Samuel 4:9). They exhorted one another saying:

"Be strong and quit yourselves like men." Joab's reference to fighting for the "cities of our God" is very unusual, leading some to conjecture as to whether the original text made reference to the Ark of God. There is no real evidence for making any change in the word, however, and it appears that Joab was encouraging his people to fight for their towns. He did say that they ought to play the men, "for our people." He left the outcome of the battle in the hands of God saying, "The Lord do that which seemeth Him good."

11. *What was the outcome of the battle? 10:13*

Joab was victorious over the Assyrians, and they fled from him. The children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were beaten and then gave way before Abishai. The Ammonites withdrew to their city; probably the city of Rabbah. Joab called off the battle and he and his men returned to Jerusalem. The Israelites were not prepared for a siege; they had come out for a battle in the open field.

12. *Who was Hadadezer? 10:16*

Hadadezer was the king of Zobah. Having been defeated once by the Israelites, he was not satisfied until he had gathered another Syrian army which included the Syrians beyond the River Euphrates. The extent of the Syrian principality cannot be exactly ascertained, but it is generally concluded to have extended from the border of the Ammonites to the Euphrates River and beyond.

13. *Where was Helam? 10:17*

Helam is a spot that is not known for sure today. The Hebrew was rendered "their army," by Thenius. Cornill, an Old Testament scholar, restores the name to the text in Ezekiel 47:16, which would place it on the boundary of Hamath and Damascus. Hoffmann, another Old Testament geographer, identifies it with Aleppo. Another spot known as Alema (1 Maccabees 5:26), now the modern Alma in Hauran, is a third suggested location. Undoubt-

edly it was on the northeast border of David's territory and centrally located to those who had come together to avenge the initial defeat handed them by the Israelites under Joab and Abishai.

14. *What caused David to go out to battle? 10:17*

Hadadezer sought help from other Syrians. David considered the second engagement important enough to demand his own time and leadership. Naturally, the Israelites would be more valiant in the presence of their king. It was said that the courage of the men of England was so much greater when the Duke of Wellington was on the field that his presence was equal to an additional troop of one thousand men.

15. *Who won the second battle? 10:18*

Once again the Israelites were victorious over the Syrians. There is no word in the text for *men*, the original reading would say David slew seven hundred chariots. The object of this throughout the Bible is always something that has life. The King James translators have rightfully supplied the word *men* here, and indicated that David slew seven hundred charioteers. In addition, he slew 40,000 horsemen and also killed Shobach, their captain. It was a decisive victory.

16. *What was the outcome of the war? 10:19*

Syria was made a vassal of Israel. The Syrians were afraid to enter into a league with the Ammonites after this campaign. David still had a matter to settle with Ammon, and this was the reason for the campaign mentioned in the following text. The fact that David was able to subdue these Syrians makes it clear that he was indeed a very strong ruler. Israel was coming to her most prosperous time. The indication is that all the Syrian kings were servants to Haderezer. This implies that he was the chief ruler and had subject monarchs under him. Once David had subdued him and his coalition, he had nothing to fear from the Syrians.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL
CHAPTER 10 IN REVIEW

1. What king died in Ammon? _____
2. What was the name of the new king? _____
3. What officers of David's were treated shamefully by the Ammonites? _____
4. Where did David's officers tarry before returning to Jerusalem? _____
5. What other people joined the Ammonites to fight Israel? _____
6. Who led David's men against Ammon? _____
7. What other captain led part of David's men? _____
8. Who won the battle? _____
9. Did David himself go to the battle? _____
10. How many horsemen did David slay? _____

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 11

- Vv. 1- 5 *David's sin with Bathsheba.* David was in Jerusalem while his army was besieging Rabbah in Ammon. He was attracted to Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his soldiers. He brought her to his court and committed adultery with her.
- Vv. 6-11 *David's attempt to cover his sin.* In an effort to hide the fact that Bathsheba was to bear a child which David had fathered, he called Uriah to Jerusalem from the field of battle. He attempted to get him to go to his own house while he was in Jerusalem, but Uriah refused and thwarted David's attempt to make it appear that the child was Uriah's.
- Vv. 12-21 *Uriah killed in battle.* A last desperate effort was made by David. Uriah carried instructions back to Joab which resulted in his own death. Uriah was sent to the front of the battle near the city walls, and then Joab