

### Israel Defeats the Ammonites and Arameans

#### 2 Samuel 10

2 Samuel 10 - *"It happened after this that the king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. <sup>2</sup> Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the people of Ammon. <sup>3</sup> And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not rather sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?" <sup>4</sup> Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. <sup>5</sup> When they told David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return."*

*<sup>6</sup> When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, the people of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men. <sup>7</sup> Now when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. <sup>8</sup> Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And the Syrians of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah were by themselves in the field.*

*<sup>9</sup> When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best and put them in battle array against the Syrians. <sup>10</sup> And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, that he might set them in battle array against the people of Ammon. <sup>11</sup> Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. <sup>12</sup> Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do what is good in His sight." <sup>13</sup> So Joab and the people who were with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. <sup>14</sup> When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai, and entered the city. So Joab returned from the people of Ammon and went to Jerusalem.*

*<sup>15</sup> When the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered together. <sup>16</sup> Then Hadadezer sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the River, and came to Helam. And Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army went before them. <sup>17</sup> When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in battle array against David and fought with him. <sup>18</sup> Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians, and struck Shobach the commander of their army, who died there. <sup>19</sup> And when all the kings who were servants to Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Syrians were afraid to help the people of Ammon anymore."*

## Background Notes

Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, was mentioned at the beginning of King Saul's reign. 1 Samuel 11:1 - *"Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead..."* Jabesh Gilead was a city of Israel on the east side of the Jordan River. Because of this threat, the people of Jabesh Gilead sent an SOS to King Saul. Saul mobilized the Israeli army and they defeated the Ammonites.

As a result of being defeated by King Saul, Nahash was kind to David when David and his men were fugitives from King Saul (v1-2). The Bible doesn't tell us what Nahash's act of kindness was or exactly when it took place, but probably a delegation of Ammonites brought some much needed supplies to David and his men while they were hiding from King Saul in the Judean wilderness. In any case, David wanted to repay this deed of kindness. He sent a delegation to Ammon with a message of condolence after Nahash died and his son Hanun became king.

2 Samuel 8:11-12 mentions that David had already subdued Ammon, and they were paying tribute to Israel: *"King David also dedicated to the LORD... the silver and gold that he had dedicated from all the nations which he had subdued— from Syria, from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the Philistines, from Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah."* So David's gesture of kindness and condolence to Ammon in 2 Samuel 10 may have also included an offer of some kind of peace treaty – something that would improve the nation's status and relationship with Israel.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Reception of God's grace results in blessing.

Great blessing would have resulted if the Ammonites had accepted David's offer. Under the Law, in Deuteronomy 20, Israel was allowed to make peace treaties with foreign cities and powers outside the land if the foreigners were willing to acknowledge Israel's supremacy. Cities like Tyre enjoyed peace and blessing because they had made peace with Israel. 1 Kings 5:1 - *"Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, because he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram had always loved David."* Wherever there was a positive response to David's grace, whether from a king like Hiram, or an individual like Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9), blessing followed for that individual or nation.

David's gracious gesture to the Ammonites is an illustration of God's gracious offer of salvation in Jesus Christ to anyone who will receive Him and acknowledge Him as Lord. Reception of God's grace results in blessing! David's gracious offer is an illustration of God's gracious offer of salvation in Christ, and it's also a picture of the peace that will be offered to all the nations of the world when the Lord returns to setup His earthly kingdom.

Prophetic Scriptures teach that there will be a time of "great tribulation" on this earth before the Lord returns. Zechariah 12:3 says that all the nations will be gathered together against Jerusalem during that time of tribulation, but the Lord will return and judge the nations – *"On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make*

*Jerusalem an immoveable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will surely injure themselves.”* And in Zechariah 12:9 the Lord says, *“On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attacked Jerusalem.”*

In Matthew 25 the Lord Jesus taught that at this time there will be a judgment of the nations, called “The Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats.” We don’t know exactly how all the details fit together, but we do know that some people in these nations will have responded to God’s grace, acknowledging that Jesus Christ is Lord and acknowledging that the godly remnant of Jewish believers are God’s special people. We read of the blessing on these nations in Zechariah 14:16 - *“Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the king, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.”* So - in Old Testament times, and today, and in the future, reception of God’s grace results in blessing.

## **2. Rejection of God’s grace results in judgment.**

King Hanun of the Ammonites rejected David’s gracious offer of condolence and peace. His advisors accused David of sending spies so that he could overthrow their city. Hanun listened to his advisors, and highly insulted David’s ambassadors. The Ammonites knew that this insult would incur David’s wrath, so they hired various groups of Arameans (another name for Syrians) from the north, including some from beyond the Euphrates River (v16). But General Joab and his brother Abishai defeated the coalition forces. When the Arameans regrouped, David himself went out to battle and led Israel to victory at Helam, on the east side of the Jordan River.

David’s defeat and judgment of the Ammonites and Arameans illustrates the consequences of rejecting God’s offer of grace in Christ. The Bible teaches that those who reject Christ will suffer the wrath of God. John 3:36 - *“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”*

David’s wrath and judgment not only illustrate God’s judgment of individuals who reject his gracious offer of salvation, but they also picture the judgment that rebellious nations will receive during the earthly kingdom of our Lord. Once again, Zechariah 14:17-19: *“If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain. If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. The LORD will bring on them the plague He inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”* So, in David’s day, and today, and in the future, rejection of God’s grace results in judgment.

## **Practical Application**

### **Expect to be insulted!**

The Ammonites took David’s servants and shaved off half of their beards and cut off half their garments. This was the highest insult and greatest indignity a person could receive in that day. Today it would be like sending a well-dressed and

well-groomed diplomat home with his head half shaved, and one pant leg of his suit cut off! What an insult that was to David's men - and to David himself. It was more than mockery - it was hateful rejection.

Believers today are servants of the "greater David," the Lord Himself. 2 Samuel 10 teaches us that when we bring God's message and offer of peace to this world, we should expect to be insulted. We should expect that the insult will be more than just people laughing at us, and telling us that we believe in "fairy tales." No, their rejection of our message and us will be hateful, because unbelievers have an inner conviction that they're wrong and guilty, and that we have the truth. Romans 1:19 & 21 tell us, *"...what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them... For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him... and their foolish hearts were darkened..."*

1 John 3:13 tells us *"Don't be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you."* Expect to be insulted!