

1Chronicles 19:1 ¶ Now it came to pass after this, that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his stead.

1Chronicles 19:2 And David said, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father shewed kindness to me. And David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. So the servants of David came into the land of the children of Ammon to Hanun, to comfort him.

1Chronicles 19:3 But the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? are not his servants come unto thee for to search, and to overthrow, and to spy out the land?

1Chronicles 19:4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved them, and cut off their garments in the midst hard by their buttocks, and sent them away.

The account of these events basically mirrors the account in 2Samuel 10.

One day David got word that the king of Ammon had died and Hanun his son had become king. David wanted to show kindness to the son because the father had been kind to him. I would assume that would be a reference to the time that he was running from Saul.

David sent a delegation of some of his top men to Ammon to share David's condolences for the death of the king. When the leaders to Ammon saw them, they poisoned Hanun's thoughts toward the delegation. They basically made him believe that David's intentions were evil, to spy and gain information in preparation for overthrowing the government and making the people subjects of Israel.

So Hanun took hold of David's servants and shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments so as to leave them exposed from the waist down and sent them away.

1Chronicles 19:5 Then there went *certain*, and told David how the men were served. And he sent to meet them: for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

When David heard what had happened, he sent messengers to meet them and tell them to stay at Jericho until their beards had grown back. David didn't want them to suffer any more shame than they already had.

The IVP OT Commentary offers this insight: "David's messengers have half their beards shaved (symbolically emasculating them and by extension David) and "their garments [were cut] in the middle at their hips," leaving them naked like slaves or captives (see Is 20:4). These men were ambassadors and as such were entitled to both respect and diplomatic immunity. What may seem like a "prank" was in fact a direct challenge to David's power and authority, and precipitated a war between the two nations."

Adam Clarke adds this information: "The beard is held in high respect in the

East: the possessor considers it his greatest ornament; often swears by it; and, in matters of great importance, pledges it. Nothing can be more secure than a pledge of this kind; its owner will redeem it at the hazard of his life. The beard was never cut off but in mourning, or as a sign of slavery."

1Chronicles 19:6 ¶ And when the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the children of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia, and out of Syriamaachah, and out of Zobah.

1Chronicles 19:7 So they hired thirty and two thousand chariots, and the king of Maachah and his people; who came and pitched before Medeba. And the children of Ammon gathered themselves together from their cities, and came to battle.

1Chronicles 19:8 And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

In some way, the word got back to Ammon that their actions had greatly offended David. Expecting him to attack, they immediately sent 1000 talents of silver to hire chariots and horsemen from the Syrians to help them. They hired a total of 32,000 chariots, and the armies of Maachah came to reinforce the men of Ammon.

The NIV Commentary notes that the 1000 talents of silver weighed over 37 tons.

When David heard that they were preparing for war, he sent Joab in command of all his mighty men out to meet them in battle.

1Chronicles 19:9 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array before the gate of the city: and the kings that were come *were* by themselves in the field.

1Chronicles 19:10 Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind, he chose out of all the choice of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians.

1Chronicles 19:11 And the rest of the people he delivered unto the hand of Abishai his brother, and they set *themselves* in array against the children of Ammon.

1Chronicles 19:12 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 help thee.

1Chronicles 19:13 Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God: and let the LORD do *that which is good* in his sight.

The troops of Ammon gathered at the entrance of the gate to the kingdom, and the Syrians positioned themselves out in the fields. When Joab realized that he faced attack both ahead and behind, he chose his best men to go with him and face the Syrians. Because he chose the best of the mighty men, he must have considered the Syrians to be the stronger fighters. The rest of the men he put under his brother Abishai's command to face the troops of Ammon. It was

agreed that if either group needed help, the other would come to their rescue.

Before leading them into battle, Joab urged the men to be courageous and strong and remember that they were fighting for Israel and the cities of “our” God. He then called for the LORD’s will to be done. Joab didn’t just assume that the LORD would give them the victory. He was willing to lead his men into battle with their lives dependent upon the LORD’s will.

That’s pretty inspiring. I am sure that Joab thought their cause was just, but he still didn’t presume upon the LORD’s blessing. That is pretty much my mindset when I pray. I never doubt that God is able to answer my prayers or that my prayers are for the good (at least from my perspective). My only doubt is whether God has a higher purpose that would make it better for Him not to answer my prayers in accordance with what seems right to me.

I liked Guzik’s observation on verse 13: “Courage and strength are not matters of feeling and circumstance. They are matters of choice, especially when God makes His strength available to us.”

1Chronicles 19:14 So Joab and the people that *were* with him drew nigh before the Syrians unto the battle; and they fled before him.

1Chronicles 19:15 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, they likewise fled before Abishai his brother, and entered into the city. Then Joab came to Jerusalem.

1Chronicles 19:16 And when the Syrians saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they sent messengers, and drew forth the Syrians that *were* beyond the river: and Shophach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them.

As Joab and his troops went against the Syrians, they fled before him. When the troops of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they fled back into the city before the troops led by Abishai.

Joab then led all the troops of Israel back to Jerusalem.

When the Syrians realized that they had been defeated by the troops of Israel, they regrouped; they weren’t ready to accept defeat. Hadarezer sent reinforcements under the command of Shobach, his chief military commander, to join them on the other side of the Euphrates River.

1Chronicles 19:17 And it was told David; and he gathered all Israel, and passed over Jordan, and came upon them, and set *the battle* in array against them. So when David had put the battle in array against the Syrians, they fought with him.

1Chronicles 19:18 But the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians seven thousand *men which fought in* chariots, and forty thousand footmen, and killed Shophach the captain of the host.

1Chronicles 19:19 And when the servants of Hadarezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with David, and became his servants: neither would the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more.

When David was informed of this, he gathered all the troops of Israel and led them across Jordan to meet them in battle. Once again the Syrians were put to rout before David and the troops of Israel. David killed 7000 charioteers, 40,000 footmen and Shobach, the captain of the Syrian host.

When the kings that were subject to Hadarezer learned what had happened, they made peace with Israel and became their subjects. Ammon could no longer count on help from the Syrians who now feared Israel.