

**2Samuel 10:1 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.**

**2Samuel 10:2 Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed 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.**

**2Samuel 10:3 And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour 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?**

**2Samuel 10:4 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.**

One day David got word that the king of Ammon had died and Hanun his son had succeeded him to the throne. David wanted to show kindness to the son because the father had been kind to him. I would assume during 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. The basically made him believe that their intentions were evil, to spy and gain information in preparation to overthrow the government and make the people subjects of Israel.

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.

**2Samuel 10:5 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.**

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.”

**2Samuel 10:6 ¶ And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Bethrehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men.**

**2Samuel 10:7 And when David heard of *it*, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.**

In some way, the word got to Ammon that their actions had greatly offended David. Expecting him to attack, they immediately hired the Syrians to help them—20,000 footmen from Bethrehob and Zoba, 1,000 men from king Maacah and 12,000 men from Ishtob.

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

**2Samuel 10:8 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.**

**2Samuel 10:9 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:**

**2Samuel 10:10 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.**

**2Samuel 10:11 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.**

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.

**2Samuel 10:12 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.**

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 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. My only doubt is whether God has a higher purpose that would cause Him not to answer my prayers in accordance with what seems right to me.

**2Samuel 10:13** And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him.

**2Samuel 10:14** 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.

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.

**2Samuel 10:15** ¶ And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together.

**2Samuel 10:16** 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.

**2Samuel 10:17** 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.

**2Samuel 10:18** 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.

**2Samuel 10:19** 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.

When the Syrians realized that they had been defeated by the troops of Israel, they regathered; 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 at Helam.

When David was informed of this, he gathered all the troops of Israel and led them across Jordan to Helam to meet them in battle. Once again the Syrians were put to rout before David and the troops of Israel. They killed 700 charioteers, 40,000 horsemen 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.