

2 Samuel 10  
Richard Cimino  
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Related Topics: Shame; Ambassadors of Christ; Joab; Courage in Battle; Transformed by Jesus; Being Men

REMEMBER, we noted at the beginning of our study of 2 Samuel that the book falls into TWO main divisions. Those divisions flow around the themes of FAITH and TRIUMPH, and FAILURE and TRAGEDY

David's infamous sin of adultery with Bathsheba, recorded in [Chapter 11](#), marks the sad divide of David's reign. This event happens right in the middle of the book, right in the middle of his 40 year reign.

In [Chapter 10](#) we find the origins of a war against the Ammonites that would also involve the Syrians.

### KEY INSIGHT:

This war against the Ammonites is the backdrop of the next three chapters. This conflict would lead to Israel's domination of the Syrian kingdoms under David's rule. MOST IMPORTANTLY, this conflict is the backdrop for [2 Samuel 11:1](#),

*In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.*

which is the PRELUDE to the TRAGEDY and FAILURE of David's live which involved his adulterous affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah.

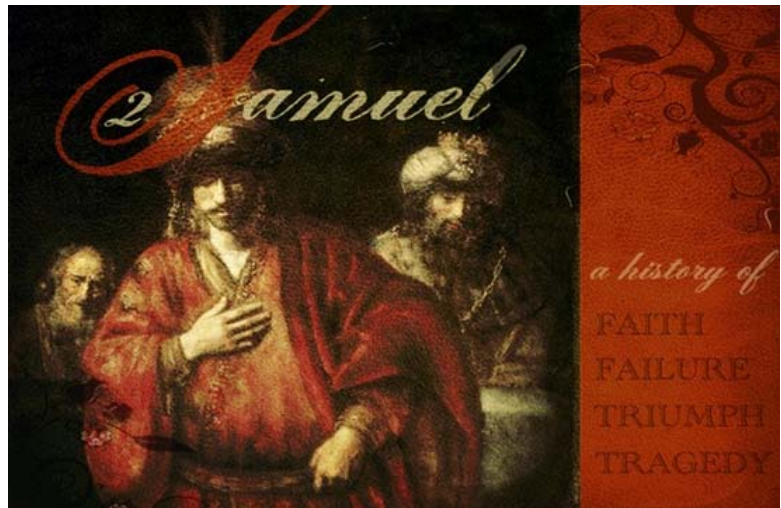
### CHAPTER 10

[2 Samuel 10:1-2](#) *1After this the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. 2And David said, "I will deal loyally with Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father dealt loyally with me."*

Last week we saw David's amazing kindness towards Mephibosheth. THAT kindness was born out of loyalty to Jonathan.

[2 Samuel 9:1](#) *...that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?*

This "kindness" was based in loyalty and diplomatic concerns.



## LOYALTY:

The text says it was because of Hanun's father, Nahash

QUOTE: - Adam Clarke

*"It is likely that the Nahash here mentioned was the same who had attacked Jabesh-gilead, and whom Saul defeated: as David had taken refuge with the Moabites, (1 Samuel 22:3) and this was contiguous to the king of the Ammonites, his hatred to Saul might induce him to show particular kindness to David."*

## DIPLOMACY:

David wants to keep the Ammonites as peaceful neighbors. So David sent by his servants to console him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the Ammonites. 3But 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?"

Things haven't changed over the past 3,000 years. Aspirations to power, the need to be a part of the power of rulers makes men insincere and attracts insincere men (seats of power are magnets for sycophants.) Such men, when they gain power and position, are always insecure in their positions. Their desperation to maintain their place of power, advance their place of power, leaves them not only constantly insecure, but that insecurity makes them suspicious of everyone around. Everyone's motives and actions are under suspicion.

Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city and to spy it out and to overthrow it?"

[2 Samuel 10:4-5](#)

*4So 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. 5When it was told David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed.*

These 2 actions broke diplomatic ties and started a war! When we think of breaking off diplomatic ties and declarations of war we think of Pearl Harbor or Nuclear brinkmanship (N. Korea/Iran). In this case, this seems almost comical to us, but it was a double disgrace. The disgrace was wrapped up in the importance of the beard and the contempt that gentiles had for circumcision.

## THE BEARD

QUOTE: Adam Clarke

*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. Cutting off half of the beard and the clothes rendered the men ridiculous, and made them look like slaves: what was done to these men was an accumulation of insult.*

## The Gentiles contempt of CIRCUMCISION

[2 Samuel 10:4](#) 4...cut off their garments in the middle, at their hips...

QUOTE: John Trapp

*To cut off their garments in the middle was also an obvious insult and humiliation. "That the shame*

*of their nakedness might appear, and especially that of their circumcision, so derided by the heathen."*

#### **WE DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS:**

To insult the ambassador is to insult the king. The point of these actions was not to merely heap shame on the men sent by David, it was just as if they had done this to David himself.

#### **THERE IS A VERY RELEVANT PICTURE IN THIS:**

In 2 Corinthian, Paul says that we are ambassadors of the King of kings, sent with the message of reconciliation through the sacrifice of the Cross.

*[2 Cor 5:20-21](#) 20Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

The unbelieving world is hostile towards the ambassador. trying to cut off beards so-to-speak. Trying to ridicule anything in the Christian that stands for consecration to Christ. Jesus reminded His disciples: If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. ([John 15:18](#))

*[2 Samuel 10:5](#) 5And the king said, "Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown and then return."*

David cared about these guys. He didn't use these men as political tools to whip up anger against the Ammonites. He cared more for their own dignity and honor, and allowed them to wait before returning to Jerusalem.

#### **LESSON:**

All of us will at one time or another suffer put downs and humiliation, some self-inflicted, some inflicted by others. When we incur them we feel as though we will never survive them, never heal, never be restored, but in keeping with the picture, the beard will grow back. Time has a way of healing rebukes and embarrassments.

*[2 Samuel 10:6](#) When the Ammonites saw that they had become a stench to David,*

#### **NOTE:**

David didn't reject the Ammonites. They had made themselves repulsive to Israel.

The Ammonites sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers. This was a common practice in the ancient world.

*[1 Chronicles 19:6-7](#) The Ammonites sent 1,000 talents of silver to hire chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia, from Aram-maacah, and from Zobah. 7They hired 32,000 chariots and the king of Maacah with his army*

David was incensed that the messengers of his grace and kindness were disgraced.

*[1 Chronicles 19:8](#) 8When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men.*

Sound familiar? God sends His servants to the lost world to SHOW KINDNESS, but the world cuts off their beards and cuts up their robes. One Day, the judgment of God will be meted out on the world for it's rejection of Jesus and His Bride.

*[Revelation 19:1-2](#) After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven,*

*crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants."*

JOAB is a complicated figure. In a moment, he is going to speak some of the most inspiring words ever recorded. Later he will act in the best interests of David by challenging a course of action David had decided to take.

*[2 Samuel 24:3](#) 4But Joab said to the king, "May the Lord your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it, but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"*

But he also possessed a chilling ruthlessness, in preserving David's throne and in preserving his own position (e.g., [2 Samuel 18:14-15](#); [20:9-10, 20-22](#)).

It was that ruthless sense of self preservation that David saw in Joab that would in the end cause David to have zero confidence that Joab will treat Solomon well.

If you haven't noticed, the Kingdom of God is filled with COMPLICATED people! Some of the most, amazingly talented, amazingly gifted, amazingly courageous individuals are also amazingly tweaked.

*[1 Chronicles 19:8](#) 8When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men.*

#### KEY INSIGHT:

This is the first mention of David's mighty men. Remember, this group of men were far from mighty when we first met them. When we first meet them they are coming to David at the Cave of Adullam in [1 Samuel 22:1-12](#). The Holy Spirit described them as the distressed, indebted, and discontent.

The big lesson for us when we studied that event was that they would BECOME mighty men over TIME because of their NEARNESS to God's anointed king. One of these mighty men was Adino the Eznite, famous for killing 800 men at one time ([2 Samuel 23:8](#)). Another was Jashobeam who killed 300 men at one time ([1 Chronicles 11:11](#)). Another was Benaiah who killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day and took on a huge Egyptian warrior and killed the Egyptian with his own spear ([1 Chronicles 11:22-23](#)). Apart from David, they were distressed, indebted, and discontent. Under the RULE of David, the leadership of David, and in the COMPANY of David they were TRANSFORMED into such as these!

GREAT PICTURE of you and me. We come to Jesus distressed, indebted, and discontent. AMAZINGLY, Jesus receives us and OVER TIME, because of our NEARNESS to the King of kings, we become MIGHTY men and women. As we allow Jesus to RULE our hearts and minds, as we FOLLOW Jesus, as we stay NEAR to Jesus, WE are TRANSFORMED into victorious Christians!

*[2 Samuel 10:8-9](#) 8And 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. 9When Joab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in the rear,*

In front of them were the Ammonites in battle array at the entrance of the gate. Behind them were the Syrians in the field. Things are looking bad for the army of Israel.

*[2 Samuel 10:9-11](#) 9...he chose some of the best men of Israel and arrayed them against the Syrians. 10The rest of his men he put in the charge of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites. 11And 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."*

## TWO THINGS FOR US HERE:

1.) There are 2 companies, Joab and Abishai. Joab vs. Syrians and Abishai vs. the Ammonites. They are two very different individuals, yet they are working together and pledged to help one another.

*[Ps. 133:1](#) Behold how good and how pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity,*

POINT: We NEED each other. We might be fighting on different fronts, but we are fighting for the same cause and against the same enemy. We need to be ready to assist and stand by one another. Even if we are DIFFERENT; Outgoing or Introvert, Optimist or Pessimist.

- The OPTIMIST invented the airplane
- The PESSIMIST invented the parachute!

BOTH are needed!

2.) Joab had only one strategy in battle, attack. Many generals, when surrounded on both sides by the enemy, would consider surrender, but not Joab. He called the army to courage and faith and told them to press on.

QUOTE: G. Campbell-Morgan

*"It is interesting to observe that in his arrangements he made no allowance for the possibility of ultimate defeat in his conflict with Ammon . . . it does not seem to have occurred to him that the combination might have been too much for both of them."*

That is the kind of man and woman I want to stand with.

Then Joab speaks these amazing words to the men.

*[2 Samuel 10:12](#) 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."*

## THREE THINGS FOR US HERE

### FIRST:

*[2 Samuel 10:12 KJV](#) 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.*

- *The need of the hour (at home - in the church - in the community) is for men to stand up and BE MEN!*
- *Courage and strength are not matters of feeling and circumstance. They are matters of choice, especially when God makes His strength available to us.*
- *We can be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might ([Ephesians 6:10](#))*

### SECOND:

*"Let us be courageous/strong for our people and for the cities of our God":  
Joab reminded them of the STAKES if they FAILED to BE COURAGEOUS, FAILED to BE MEN. If they lost this battle they would lose both their people and their cities.*

#### **BIG POINT:**

*This was a battle bigger than themselves and the army of the mighty men had to remember that that is what mighty men do!*

### THIRD:

*“and may the Lord do what seems good to him”:*

*Joab was willing to face the enemy, venture his life for his king and his people, prepare for the battle to the best of his ability, and fight hard for the victory. At the same time, he knew that the outcome was ultimately in God’s hands.*

**QUOTE:** Pastor Chuck Smith

*“Do your best and commit the rest!”*

[2 Samuel 10:13-19](#) 13So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 14And 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. 15But when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together. 16And 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. 17And 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. 18And 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. 19And 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.

### CLOSING:

Reflect on the difference between the two men we have met in [Chapter 9 and Chapter 10](#), Mephibosheth and Hanun. The difference in character is what made them respond differently to the KINDNESS of king David. The man who was not broken and humble did not respond to the kindness of the king.

**REALITY** – There are two kinds of people. Those who know that they are dead dogs, fallen and lame, coming to the King of kings with a sense of unworthiness, amazed to be invited to dine at the King’s table.

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