

**Title:** Ambassadors for Christ

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 10

**Series:** The Promise of the Messianic Kingdom

1. Introduction:

- a. As we continue with 2 Samuel, we read about the ever-expanding kingdom of David, which is prophetic of the Kingdom of Christ yet to be established on earth.

2. Verses 1-2: Proclaiming the King's Goodwill: After this the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. (2) And David said, "I will deal loyally with Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father dealt loyally with me." So David sent by his servants to console him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the Ammonites.

- a. Our passage opens with the passing of Nahash, the king of the Ammonites. His son, Hanun, is his successor.
  - i. Apparently, Nahash had been kind to David, perhaps even allowing some of David's family members to find refuge in the Ammonite Kingdom when David was fleeing from Saul.
  - ii. Whatever the details, David never forgot this kindness (*Chessed*) and now needs to repay it to Hanun.
  - iii. So, because of unpaid kindness (*Chessed*), David sends diplomats (ambassadors) to convey his condolences to Hanun over His father's death. The

ambassadors bring the king's words and are his visible representatives as if David made the trip himself. The ambassadors bring grace-filled words to devastated and grieving people.

- i. What we have in the opening verses is a picture of how God (the true king) sends us (His ambassadors) to a kingdom of grief and mourning (the world) with a message of goodwill and consolation (the Gospel).

1. **2 Corinthians 5:18-20** All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

- ii. Unfortunately, Hanun's adverse reaction to the King's ambassadors is the typical reaction that we, as ambassadors of God, receive in this world.

### 3. Verses 3-4: The Shameful Treatment of God's

Ambassadors: But 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? Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city and to spy it out and to overthrow it?" (4) So 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.

- a. Defying decency, Hanun and his men disgracefully treat David's ambassadors. They do this because, in their hearts, they cannot believe and won't believe that the king is good and wants to treat them with grace. They would rather fight against the king than be on friendly terms with him.
- b. Let us consider the vile treatment of David's ambassadors:
  - i. The Ammonites shave off half (one side) of their beards and cut their garments up to their buttocks. Then they run David's ambassadors out of town. We can only imagine them leaving through the jeering Ammonite mob. They must have felt incredible shame as they were taunted and shamefully exposed in the eyes of the people, both men and women.
- c. Our lesson here is apparent. The ambassadors of Christ will most often be spitefully treated by the same people to whom we bring the good news of the king's grace.
  - i. The people of God have always suffered for the sake of Gospel proclamation. This was true in the Old Testament, New Testament, and throughout church history. We read in **Hebrews 11:36-38** Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. (37) They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted,

mistreated— (38) of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

d. History teaches us that this sinful world hates the king, and therefore it hates those that are His representatives:

- i. Jesus taught us this truth in **John 15:18-20** “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. (19) If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (20) Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.
- ii. Our Lord’s prophetic word was quickly fulfilled in the early church. We read in **Acts 5:40-41** and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. (41) Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.
- iii. And such has been the church's story throughout the ages and continues to be the story today.
  1. As ambassadors of Christ, Christians suffer for the sake of gospel grace. This is part of our ambassadorship.
  2. **1 Peter 2:20B-21** ...But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a

gracious thing in the sight of God. (21) For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

4. Verse 5: God Comforts His Ambassadors: When it was told David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, “Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown and then return.”
- a. The Bible tells us that David’s ambassadors felt great shame. They contacted David from Jericho, too ashamed to come home with half-shaven beards.
  - b. The reason for contacting David was to inform him of how his gracious actions and words were received. It was understood that how you treated an ambassador is how you thought of the king who sent him. The Ammonite’s ill-treatment of David’s ambassadors was an attack on the majesty of David. David’s ambassadors had not gone to Hanun on their own authority but as representatives of the king.
  - c. We have another lesson to contemplate in these verses. Beloved, we must understand that the world’s hatred of God’s people is hatred of God who sent them. Any evil treatment of God’s ambassadors is ill-treatment of God himself. Because God identifies with His people, rejecting or ill-treating one of His ambassadors is a grave sin against His majesty.
    - i. Do you remember Saul’s evil treatment of the Christian Church? We read in **Acts 9:1-4** But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against

the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest (2) and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. (3) Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. (4) And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

- d. There is an undeniable fact listed for us here. God loves his people, and as we do his work in preaching Christ, as ambassadors, He will hold to account anyone that rejects the message or mistreats His sent ones.
  - i. **Matthew 10:14-15** And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. (15) Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.
    - 1. Not because they rejected us but because in rejecting God’s ambassadors, they reject God Himself.
  - ii. Do you see it, Beloved? Do you grasp the magnitude of what is being said?
    - 1. The cry of God’s ambassadors, as they have been treated shamefully throughout the ages, has been the same.
      - a. **Revelation 6:10** They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will

judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

2. So, ambassadors, we should not take the world’s vile treatment personally. God will comfort us one day.

5. Verse 6-8 and 13-19: The World’s Resistance to the King:  
When the Ammonites saw that they had become a stench to David, the Ammonites sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, 20,000-foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob, 12,000 men. (7) And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men. (8) And 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...(13) So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. (14) And 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. (15) But when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together. (16) And 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. (17) And 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. (18) And 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. (19) And 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.

- a. Hunan prepares for war after completely refusing King David and utterly humiliating David's ambassadors. He gathers the surrounding nation, and they band together to resist David and His kingdom. They hope there will be victory in numbers because David was a mighty king.
  - i. 2 Samuel 10 is a prophetic utterance of the nations' actions before the coming of Christ Jesus as king. We read **Psalms 2:1-3** Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, (3) "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."
  - ii. Our passage proclaims that God's kingdom will triumph despite the world's resistance and hostility. The greatest Son of David will rule. The world can band together and make their stand against God's anointed, but the outcome will always be the same. Jesus Christ wins. You cannot fight God and win.
    1. **Revelation 17:14** They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them,



for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”

2. We also learn that the world’s vile treatment of God’s ambassadors will ultimately destroy them.

6. Verses 9-12: Soldiers constantly battling: When Joab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in the rear, he chose some of the best men of Israel and arrayed them against the Syrians. (10) The rest of his men he put in the charge of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites. (11) And 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. (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.”

a. As we have studied, those that wage war with God will always lose. There is no fighting the King of kings. But before the day of the final battle, when our Lord will quash all resistance to His Kingdom rule, the people of God will always be engaged in Kingdom battles. These battles will be fought throughout the entirety of our Christian lives. So in one sense, we are ambassadors with the message of salvation, but in another, we are soldiers fighting for the salvation of souls.

i. That all Christians are soldiers in these battles is evident in **2 Timothy 2:3** Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

- ii. That the battles we face are ultimately spiritual is evident in **Ephesians 6:12-13** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.  
(13) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.
- b. So, how are we to engage in this holy war? Our passage gives us divine direction from the most unlikely source. Joab is often portrayed as a scoundrel. He was violent, egotistical, ruthless, and generally someone to avoid. However, in this portion of Scripture, his lips drip with spiritual wisdom that can only come from God. Let us listen to Joab, our teacher (for even the rocks can speak of God's glory), as he shares godly principles for engaging in kingdom battles.
  - i. Principles:
    - 1. Be strategic.
      - a. **When Joab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in the rear, he chose some of the best men of Israel and arrayed them against the Syrians. The rest of his men he put in the charge of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites.**
      - b. Joab recognized that Israel was surrounded. Wisdom recognizes the

circumstances and happenings in the battle. It takes into account the truth of the matter as it is. It proceeds with all the information, and it does not ignore the seriousness of the situation.

- i. Beloved, we cannot bury our heads in the sand. We cannot pretend that we do not see what is happening.
  - ii. **Proverbs 22:3** The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.
2. Commit to mutual help. The enemy is often stronger than any individual Christian.
- a. **And 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.**
  - b. There is an incredible beauty in this section. There is a hidden “I love you, and I know you love me.” A brotherly commitment is especially evident amid trials because we understand that one Christian’s failure is the whole church’s failure. Are we not all part of the body of Christ?
    - i. **Galatians 6:2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

- ii. **1 John 3:18** Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.
  - c. There is no such thing as a Lone Ranger Christian.
- 3. Remember what we are fighting for, what is at stake.
  - a. **Be of good courage, and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God,**
  - b. As Christians, we fight for more than personal glory or human pride. Usually, the welfare of our church, families, and God's glory (His honor and reputation) is at stake.
- 4. Submit to God's sovereignty.
  - a. **...and may the LORD do what seems good to him.**
  - b. Having recognized the danger, committed to helping one another, and remembered the cause for which we fight, the Christian commits to engaging in the battle while submitting to the sovereignty of God. In other words, if we live, we live and if we die, we die. Blessed be the name of the Lord!
    - i. **Daniel 3:17-18** If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out

of your hand, O king. (18) But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

5. Be valiant and go.

a. Having done all, the Christian is then to engage. He swallows fear, doubt, and human nature. His faith is a greater driving force than his thoughts of doubt.

i. **Joshua 1:9** Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

7. Benediction:

a. **2 Corinthians 5:20** Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

## Public Reading of Scripture 2 Corinthians 5:18-21