

Message #14**II Samuel 10:1-19**

Great men of God do not go around looking to pick fights with people. They are peace loving, gracious men. David was not some power crazed maniac who loved limelight. David wanted to use his power and authority to help others because he cared about people in a very God-honoring way. It is true he was a great soldier and fighter. But his fights were justified. He was not some Alexander the Great type of warrior who always wanted to get into another fight. In fact, David was a kind and compassionate man, a man after God's own heart.

We may recall in the previous chapter that David displayed tremendous grace and kindness to Mephibosheth, who was the son of Jonathan and the grandson of Saul. He is now a very powerful king and his desire is not to go around fighting with everyone in the world.

David wanted to graciously reach out to people and have good relationships with people, but things did not always turn out that way. If a person rejected his grace and demeaned his grace, he would find himself in war.

DAVID ESTABLISHES HIMSELF AS A GRACIOUS AND GREAT KING BY HIS OFFERS OF KINDNESS AND GRACE AND BY HIS FIGHTING OF WARS.

Notice **verse 1** opens with the words "it happened afterwards." After David had achieved many victories and after his kingdom was peaceful and after he had done nice things for Mephibosheth, he wanted to do the same for another leader. He wanted to demonstrate grace to someone else.

We learn from **verse 1** that the king of the Ammonites died and Hanun his son became king in his place. Now Hanun was the son of Nahash, who had been the king of the Ammonites.

Nahash had been defeated many years earlier by Israel in I Samuel 11:1-11. He was the king who said he would make a peace covenant with Israel if he could gouge out the right eye of every Israelite. When Saul got wind of that, he led a charge against the Ammonites and defeated them.

Apparently since that time the Ammonites had become allies with Israel and David desired to have peace with them. During David's fugitive years, when he was on the run from Saul, he had developed some good relationships with the Ammonites.

So according to **verse 2**, when David learned that Nahash had died, he sent some of his servants to console his son Hanun. David did this out of respect and also he wanted to maintain a good relationship with Hanun and the Ammonites. So he sent a delegation group to express his sympathy for the loss of his father. David's intentions are very honorable here.

Now what happens here are a series of responses to David's offer of grace:

RESPONSE #1 – The response of the Ammonite leaders. **10:3**

The Ammonite leaders misinterpreted this whole thing. They went to Hanun and suggested that there was some sinister motive for David sending these men to console him.

They fabricated a complete lie. They flat out deny the truth that David sent his men to honor his father and console him. They said the reason David sent these men was to search the city as some sort of spy mission and overthrow the city.

They are inventing this delusion in their own minds and they are telling Hanun that this is the reason. They invented a bunch of lies and told Hanun and he believed them.

He doesn't bother checking out the facts. He simply believes what these guys are telling him.

RESPONSE #2 – The response of Hanun. **10:4**

Hanun was an inexperienced leader, but he was about to learn a critical lesson.

Over the years, when you are in leadership, you learn to check facts. People say things that may be part true or untrue. But a wise leader checks facts. Hanun did not do that. He just listened to the lies of his leaders and he took three actions:

Action #1 - He shaved off half their beards. **10:4a**

Now a man's beard in ancient Israel was important. Every man was expected to grow and have a full beard. In fact, according to Leviticus 19:27, it was forbidden to even trim the edges of it except when it was connected to some religious vow (Num. 6:9); for a medical evaluation (Lev. 13:33) or during a time of great mourning (Ez. 9:3; Job 1:20).

It was totally humiliating to shave off a man's beard and doubly humiliating to shave off half of it.

Action #2 - He cut off their garments in the middle. **10:4b**

This would have been completely humiliating because it would have publically exposed these men in a degrading way. According to Deuteronomy 22:12, there were to be tassels that dangled down from these kinds of garments that completely covered the individual. So to cut these off, would mean not only humiliating exposure, but a violation of God's law.

Action #3 - He sent them away. **10:4c**

This was the way he treated David's kindness. This is the way they treated God's grace.

RESPONSE #3 – The response of David. **10:5**

The first response of David was to take care of his men who had been humiliated. He ordered them to stay in Jericho until their beards grew and then return back to him. Jericho was the first Israelite city west of the Jordan river and the men could stay there.

He did not want his men publicly humiliated. He cared about them. By staying in Jericho, they could minimize the humiliation before the people and their families.

RESPONSE #4 – The response of the Ammonites. **10:6**

The Ammonites learned that they had become a stench in the nostrils of David. They knew that David was not the type of guy who would just let this go. This was not just an insult to David; this was something David would view as a “declaration of war.”

So anticipating that there would be trouble, they decided to hire some Aramean (Syrian) mercenary soldiers from Beth-rehob, Zobah, Maacah and Tob.

These city states were all located about 110 miles to the north of where Ammon was located. Hanun hired 20,000 foot soldiers from Zobah, 1,000 men from Maacah and 12,000 men from Tob. So combined there were over 33,000 soldiers that were hired. We learn from I Chron. 19:6 that they paid 1,000 talents of silver which is about 75,000 pounds of silver.

Ten thousand pounds of silver is worth over 3 million dollars back at that time. So the value today would be close to 22 million dollars.

They think that they can defeat David and his offer of grace by these numbers.

RESPONSE #5 – The response of David. **10:7**

When David learned that this had happened, he immediately sent Joab and all his army with all the mighty men. They crossed the Jordan near Jericho and moved north and east toward Rabbah Ammon.

RESPONSE #6 – The response of the Ammonites and Arameans. **10:8**

The Ammonites lined up in front of their city. The Arameans (Syrians) were about 20 miles south of Rabbah Ammon camped in the open fields.

RESPONSE #7 – The response of Joab. **10:9-13**

Joab saw that he and his men were right in-between the Ammonites and the Arameans. Joab was not about to quit. There are five actions he took:

Action #1 - Joab chose his best men to fight the Arameans. **10:9**

Joab sent his best fighting men against the Syrians in the open fields. These men would go to the north.

Action #2 - Joab chose the remainder of men to fight the Ammonites. **10:10**

Joab put the remainder of them under the command of his brother, Abishai. These men would move toward the south.

Action #3 - Joab said whichever enemy is stronger we will help the other. **10:11**

By splitting the forces and staying in between, if one of the enemies were gaining victory, the other could quickly come to their aid.

Action #4 - Joab said we need to show ourselves strong and courageous. **10:12**

They needed to act this way for the sake of the people and for the sake of God. Joab says we will trust God to do what is good in His sight.

This is how we need to be as God's people. We need to make a statement for God and be strong and courageous in defending truth and not a bunch of fearful weaklings.

Action #5 - Joab and his men drew near the Arameans. **10:13a**

God's people are going to experience an amazing victory here, but they must move forward against the enemy to see that victory.

RESPONSE #8 – The response of the Arameans. **10:13b**

The response of the Aramean soldiers is "they fled." These men hired for 22 million dollars ran away. When the Syrians saw the Israelites coming at them, they took their money and took off.

RESPONSE #9 – The response of the Ammonites. **10:14a**

When the Ammonites saw the Arameans run, they also ran. The response of the Ammonite soldiers is they fled.

RESPONSE #10 – The response of Abishai and Joab. **10:14b**

Abishai and his men entered the city of the Ammonites, and Joab and his men went back to Jerusalem.

RESPONSE #11 – The response of the Arameans. **10:15-16**

When the Arameans saw that Joab had gone back to Jerusalem, they decided to regroup to fight David. They were “beyond the river” which was the Euphrates.

Hadadezer had been beaten by David earlier (II Sam. 8:3) and had taken many captive and had taken much spoils. He decided to get a group to go fight against David. This will not be one of his brighter moves.

RESPONSE #12 – The response of David. **10:17**

When David learned that they were planning an attack, he took his men across the Jordan to Helam, which was a city located about 30 miles east of the Sea of Galilee and fight them.

RESPONSE #13 – The response of the Arameans. **10:18**

The Arameans fled and David killed 700 charioteers and 40,000 horsemen and he killed Shobach, their military commander.

RESPONSE #14 – The response of all the kings. **10:19**

All kings and all kingdoms wanted to be at peace with David and with Israel. They served them.

God was giving David complete victory over everything. He was God’s king and God was blessing him in every way.

Great people of God are gracious and kind. But great people of God are also warriors. Paul told Timothy be a good soldier and before his life ended, he said, “I have fought a good fight.”