

2 Samuel 10
October 1, 2023

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Have you ever misunderstood someone's intentions? And if yes, what are the consequences of making decisions based on suspicion rather than fact? [Let people engage]

Transition: In today's text, we see King David beginning his reign, and David has an intention to "*show kindness to Hanun,*" which should remind us of David's showing kindness to Mephibosheth. His kindness to people didn't end with what he'd done for Mephibosheth. Here we learn that David showed kindness towards a pagan king because he genuinely sympathized with the man's loss of his father. However, advisors of this newly installed king give him some bad counsel. They assured him that David's intentions weren't honorable because he'd sent these men as spies to obtain intelligence to help with a future attack. Let's see what the consequences were when Hanun makes a decision based on suspicion. Let's begin.

BOOK:

David Defeats the Ammonites

10 In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king. ² David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father.

When David's men came to the land of the Ammonites, ³ the Ammonite nobles said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think David is honoring your father by sending men to you to express sympathy? Hasn't David sent them to you to explore the city and spy it out and overthrow it?" ⁴ So Hanun seized David's men, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away.

⁵ When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, "Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back."

⁶ When the Ammonites realized that they had become a stench in David's nostrils, they hired twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers from Beth Rehob and Zobah, as well as the king of Maacah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob.

⁷ On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men. ⁸ The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance to their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the open country.

⁹ Joab saw that there were battle lines in front of him and behind him; so he selected some of the best troops in Israel and deployed them against the Arameans. ¹⁰ He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother and deployed them against the Ammonites. ¹¹ Joab said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you are to come to my rescue; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come to rescue you. ¹² Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The LORD will do what is good in his sight."

¹³ Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him. ¹⁴ When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans were fleeing, they fled before Abishai and went inside the city. So Joab returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem.

¹⁵ After the Arameans saw that they had been routed by Israel, they regrouped. ¹⁶ Hadadezer had Arameans brought from beyond the River (the Euphrates); they went to Helam, with Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them.

¹⁷ When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan and went to Helam. The Arameans formed their battle lines to meet David and fought against him. ¹⁸ But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there. ¹⁹ When all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them.

So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn't understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

“Be strong and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The LORD will do what is good in his sight.” (v.12) May we be courageous with faith, with trust in God and His leadership of our lives, ultimately knowing that whatever happens is in His hand, and knowing that we can choose to be courageous.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Henry, M., & Scott, T. (1997). *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary (2 Sa 10:1-15)*. Logos Research Systems.

Chapter 10

David's messengers ill-treated by Hanun 1-5

The Ammonites defeated 6-14

The Syrians defeated 15-19

Verses 1-5

Nahash had been an enemy to Israel, yet had showed kindness to David. David therefore resolves gratefully to return it. If a Pharisee gives alms in pride, though God will not reward it, yet he that receives the alms ought to return thanks for it. Those who bear ill-will to their neighbours, are resolved not to believe that their neighbours bear any good-will to them. There is nothing so well meant, but it may be ill interpreted, and is wont to be so, by men who love nobody but themselves. The best men must not think it strange if they are thus misrepresented. Charity thinketh no evil. According to the usages of those days and countries, Hanun treated David's ambassadors in the most contemptuous manner. David showed much concern for his servants. Let us learn not to lay unjust reproaches to heart; they will wear off, and turn only to the shame of those who utter or do them; while the reputation wrongfully hurt in a little time grows again, as these beards did. God will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, therefore wait patiently for him, Ps 37:6, 7.

Verses 6-14

They that are at war with the Son of David, not only give the provocation, but begin the war. God has forces to send against those that set his wrath at defiance, Isa 5:19, which will convince them that none ever hardened his heart against God, and prospered. Christ's soldiers should strengthen one another's hands in their spiritual warfare. Let nothing be wanting in us, whatever the success be. When we make conscience of doing our duty, we may, with satisfaction, leave the event with God, assuredly hoping for his salvation in his own way and time.

Verses 15-19

Here is a new attempt of the Syrians. Even the baffled cause will make head as long as there is any life in it; the enemies of the Son of David do so. But now the promise made to Abraham, Ge 15:18, and repeated to Joshua, Jos 1:4, that the borders of Israel should extend to the river Euphrates, was performed. Learn hence, that it is dangerous to help those who have God against them; for when they fall, their helpers will fall with them.

Merrill, E. H. (1985). *2 Samuel*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 466-467) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

F. *David's ambassadors to Ammon abused (chap. 10)*

10:1–5. Another aspect of David's succession was his international relationships. **David** had brought many of the surrounding nations under tribute to Israel (8:12). Included in these nations was Ammon, a kingdom directly east of the Jordan River. Since Saul's early years Ammon had been ruled by **Nahash**. In fact it was he who had attacked Jabesh Gilead in the beginning of Saul's tenure and was defeated by Saul (1 Sam. 11:1–11).

At last Nahash **died** and was succeeded by **his son Hanun**. Because Nahash had shown **David** some unspecified **kindness**, **David** sent an envoy to Ammon **to express his sympathy to Hanun** regarding **his father**. This, **David** no doubt hoped, would enable him to have a friendly ally on his eastern flank. But Hanun's advisers, perhaps recalling Saul's victory over Ammon 50 years before, counseled Hanun not to accept David's overtures but rather to view the Israelites as espionage agents. **David's** messengers were not only turned back but their beards were **half shaved off** and **their garments** cut away to an immodest length which, to those sensitive Semites, was an unbearable ignominy (cf. Isa. 15:2; 20:4).

10:6–14. Recognizing that his insult to David was, in effect, a declaration of war, Hanun engaged 33,000 mercenary troops from the three Aramean kingdoms of **Beth Rehob** (in northern Galilee), **Zobah** (see comment on 8:3), and **Maacah** (east of upper Galilee), and **from Tob**, a small kingdom on the western fringes of the Syro-Arabian desert. **David sent** his forces, led by **Joab** and **Abishai**, to encounter Hanun's own **army** and his mercenaries at Medeba (1 Chron. 19:7), 12 miles due east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. **Joab** directed his attention to the Aramean divisions and Abishai's troops to **the Ammonites**, with the understanding that one would help the other as circumstances required. The result was a smashing victory for Israel.

10:15–19. Though the Ammonites apparently learned their lesson, **the Arameans** determined to avenge the disaster of Medeba by recalling their occupation forces from **beyond the Euphrates River** and employing them against **Israel**. Under the command of **Shobach**, general of the **army** of Hadadezer of Zobah, they took up positions at **Helam**, a desert place 40 miles straight east of the Sea of Kinnereth. There **David** met them, and again the Lord gave **Israel** victory. David's men **killed 700 ... charioteers and 40,000 ... foot soldiers** and **struck down Shobach**. (Though the Heb. has 700 charioteers, the parallel passage in 1 Chron. 19:18 indicates that 7,000 charioteers were slain. The larger number is preferable since the Chron. account on the whole seems fuller and more comprehensive.) This broke the back of Aramean resistance and brought the Aramean confederates under Israel's domination. Never again did they side with Ammon against the people of Israel.

This is the second account of a subjugation of Hadadezer by David (cf. 2 Sam. 8:3–8). Apparently chapter 8 records an initial reduction of **the Arameans** of Zobah to Israelite vassaldom, while chapter 10 assumes an Aramean rebellion against David's overlordship, a rebellion which was squashed and which resulted in continued Aramean submission.

Mathews, K. A. (1998). *The Historical Books*. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman Concise Bible Commentary* (pp. 125). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Ammonites and Arameans (10:1–19). David also desired to be generous to the son of his deceased ally King Nahash and sent a delegation to express his sympathies. But David's delegation was charged with espionage and was humiliated by Nahash's son, Hanun. The Ammonites hired Aramean mercenaries and prepared for David's advance. The armies of Joab

and Abishai prevailed by outmaneuvering them. But the Arameans under Hadadezer gathered more troops from beyond the Euphrates. David subjugated them, expanding his realm to the east.

The author also recorded this rout of the Arameans in the summary of David's victories in 8:3–8. These two battles, which the author describes in more detail, took place before David's final victory over the Arameans.

Tatum, S. L. (1972). 2 Samuel. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (p. 184). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

The War with the Ammonites (2 Sam. 10:1–19)

The passage—The king of the Ammonites died. David sent his servants to console the new king who had begun to reign in the stead of his father. He affirmed his loyalty to the Ammonites because of the friendship he had had with the deceased king.

The Ammonites insulted the Israelites who had come to them by shaving off half of the beard of each one. They also cut off their garments at their hips and sent them away in ridicule and disgrace.

David let his servants stay at Jericho until their beards had grown out. In the meantime he prepared to punish the Ammonites.

The Syrians were hired by the Ammonites to join in fighting Israel. Joab, David's general, realized that he was faced with a battle on two fronts. He divided his forces and prepared for battle. He chose to lead the battle against the Syrians and put Abishai in charge of the battle against the Ammonites. First the Syrians were defeated and then the Ammonites fled.

After this battle, the Syrians regrouped and came against Israel again. David led in a decisive victory over them. The Syrians decided it was not a good idea to help the Ammonites against Israel anymore.

Truth for today—One of the most inspiring texts of the Bible is found in verses 11 and 12. Joab said to Abishai, his brother, "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. Be of good courage, and let us play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God; and may the Lord do what seems good to him."

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (2 Samuel 10). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.