

Exegetical Notes – 2 Samuel 10:1-19

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2 Samuel 10:1-19

Verses 1-5

¹ 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 commanders said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think David is honoring your father by sending envoys to you to express sympathy? Hasn't David sent them to you only to explore the city and spy it out and overthrow it?" ⁴ So Hanun seized David's envoys, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their garments 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."

- Nahash, King of the Ammonites died. Because Nahash had shown some kindness to David, David decided to send a delegation to Hanun, Nahash's son and the new king of the Ammonites to honor Nahash. There is no Biblical reference that documents the kindness that Nahash showed to David. Therefore, we are uncertain as to what kindness Nahash did for David.
- Hanun's advisors were distrustful of David and convinced the new king that David's intention was to spy out their land so that he could conquer their kingdom. Therefore, Hanun treated David's delegation with extreme dishonor. He cut off half of the beard of each of David's delegates and had their garments cut off at their buttocks to expose their genitals. Hanun humiliated the delegates which David had sent to honor his father.
- When the delegation returned to David and David learned how they had been treated, he sent the delegates into seclusion until their beards had grown back.

Verse 6

⁶ When the Ammonites realized that they had become obnoxious to David, they hired twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers from Beth Rehob and Zobah, as well as the king of Maakah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob.

- When the Ammonites realized that David was offended by the way they treated his delegation, they hired mercenaries from Beth Rehob and Zobah, and from the king of Maakah, and from Tob to reinforce their army to fight David.

Verse 7

⁷ On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men.

- Learning of the mobilization of the Ammonites, David sent Joab out with Israel's army but David himself did not go with the army.

Verses 8-12

⁸ The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance of their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maakah 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."

- When the day of battle came, Israel's army was surrounded. The Ammonites were in front of Israel and the mercenaries were behind them. So, Joab divided his army into two forces. One group would confront the Ammonites and the other, the mercenaries.
- Joab recognized that Israel was in a bad situation. Defeat was likely under the circumstances. He charged the men of Israel to be strong and to fight bravely and then he put his army and the outcome of the battle in the hands of YHWH.

Verses 13-14

¹³ Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him. ¹⁴ When the Ammonites realized 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.

- First, the mercenaries fled. Then the Ammonites fled. Israel won the battle and Joab returned to Jerusalem.

Verses 15-16

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

- When the Arameans realized that Joab had not pursued them, a strategic failure on Joab's part, they regrouped and attacked Israel.

Verses 17-19

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 Shobak the commander of their army, and he died there. ¹⁹ When all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been routed by Israel, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.

- When David learned that the Arameans were moving into Israel, he, himself, led the army of Israel out against them. David's taking charge of Israel's army personally may have signified that he was disappointed with Joab.
- When the Arameans saw David's army, they again fled. David pursued them and killed Shobak, the commander of their army.
- The Arameans became subjects of David. They were no longer willing to aid Israel's enemies.

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