2 Samuel 10: 1-19

**David Defeats the Ammonites**

**(I will show kindness)**

2 Samuel 10:2 “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.”

Today’s title is David defeats the Ammonites. This title gives a little misunderstanding. It makes us presume that David defeated Ammonites and subjugated them. However, Israel did not inflict any loss on the Ammonite army at this time. The Ammonites had very strong and invincible cities and an alliance with the Arameans. In today’s passage, what David’s army did was to break down the alliance between the Ammonite and Arameans. Still, today’s victory would be a very important bolster for conquering the Ammonites in chapter 12.

We studied David’s victory in Chapter 8. “The Lord gave David victory wherever he went.” So David defeated the Philistines, Moabites, Arameans, and Edomites. We might have thought, “Didn't Israel already defeat the Ammonites?” since there are so many tribes and wars. By the way, “Who are the Ammonites?” “Why did David not fight the Ammonites in Chapter 8?” (Map#1)

There were seven Canaanite nations that Israel must conquer when Joshua had entered the land. Moab and Ammon were not one of them. They were descendants of Lot, Israel’s collective relatives along with Edom. So, God granted them their own territory and commanded Israel not to invade them. Also God forbade the Moabites and Ammonites to enter the assembly of the Lord. The two nations served detestable idols. In the Old Testament, the word “detestable” most likely refers to Moab and Ammonite idols. And they exasperated and negatively influenced Israel through their idol worship and being an adversary of Israel.

Look at verse 1 and 2. “In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king.”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.”

Here, we have a hint as to why David did not fight the Ammonites in chapter 8. David received kindness from King Nahash. Unfortunately the Bible did not record it. So we do not know what kind of kindness Nahash gave to David. We could assume that it might have taken place when David had been a fugitive from King Saul. If it was pivotal, the Bible would have recorded it. Therefore, it might have been less important. But David remembered his kindness no matter how small it was. After Nahash’s death David wanted to pay back Nahash’s kindness to his son Hanun. This statement implies that David and Nahash had a peaceful relationship during Nahash’s reign, and David wanted to extend this peaceful relationship with the new King Hanun. So, David sent a delegation to reaffirm the peace treaty with new King Hanun while showing sympathy about Nahash’s death.

As a matter of fact, Nahash was cruel to Israel during Saul’s reign, but he was able to show his kindness to David. As a result, the Ammonite kingdom had been preserved with a peaceful and prosperous time while many nations were in turmoil with one another in chapter 8.

This incident reminds us of [Matthew 10:42](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2010%3A42&version=NIV), “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

People may fail to recognize what we have done for Jesus or any of his disciples because it was too small. Yet, God’s attention will not fail to recognize it and certainly give them their reward.  Nahash’s kindness changed his kingdom’s fate. One small kindness for Jesus and his ministry would be powerful enough to change our destiny.

Then what was Hanun’s response to David’s delegation. Look at verse 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?” Here we see that the army commanders incited the new king Hanun, not his adviser or officers. Maybe the long period of peace made them worry about losing their jobs. Also, the Ammonite city, named Rabbah, was an invincible and fortified city. They accumulated great wealth, causing them to become proud. Look at verse 4: “So the new king Hanun listened to his commander’s advice. Hanun seized David’s envoys, shaved off half of each man’s beard, cut off their garments at the buttocks, and sent them away.”

At that time people did not have their beard or hair shaved off. The beard was a symbol of dignity. So, shaving and cutting off the garments meant great humiliation and insult. Hanun and his commander acted like scoundrels, not like a king or sensible commanders of a legitimate kingdom. Especially right now as they were in his father’s funeral procedure and the delegation had come in King David’s sake. The insulting of the delegation means that King Hanun and his commanders did not show any respect to either his father king Nahash nor King David. Their mistreatment was an unofficial declaration of the war against Israel.

Look at verse 6a. “When the Ammonites realized that they had become obnoxious to David”

This verse shows that Ammonite’s misbehavior was not intentional or pre-arranged but reckless impulsive action. So, when they realized that what they had done wrong, they should have tried to remedy it and reconcile with David. Was it too late? Is it no use crying over spilt milk? Look at Abigail who remedied Nabal’s mistreatment of David’s men. Abigail quickly reconciled with David, and David willingly accepted. If Hanun had repented and reconciled with David, David would have accepted him too. In God, there is no such thing as being too late. The blood of Jesus has enough power to cover all our sins anytime. Look at the thief on the cross. Even though the thief was in the last moment of his execution and Jesus was in the most painful time, Jesus willingly accepted and reconciled him with God.  Jesus answered him, “**Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise. (Luke 23:43)”**

Unfortunately, Hanun did not turn away. The Ammonites pushed themselves to the dead end. They hired 33,000 mercenaries from their Arameans allies for 1000 silver talents (1 Chronicles 19:6). It was around 35 to 50 tons of silver. In their futility, the Ammonites poured out their financial resources to fight David.

Here is one common and one difference in chapter 9 and 10.

One similar thing is that David wanted to show his kindness to the next generation. In chapter 9, David showed his kindness to Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, for Jonathan’s sake. “Don’t be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan (2 Sam 9:7a).”  In today’s passage, David also showed his kindness to Hanun, the son of Nahash, for Nahash’s sake, though Nahash was a Gentile. Both Mephibosheth and Hanun did not know who David was personally. They did not seek David’s favor either. It was David who initiated to look for them and invited them to give his kindness.

 David is a man of God’s own heart. David’s kingdom is shadow of God’s kingdom. Just like David, God wants to show his kindness to our next generation. Our God is a God of multiple generations. God’s kindness does not end only within one generation. He extends his kindness to the generation to come.  Even if the new generation did not have any encounter with God, God will first seek them and find them.

 “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love **to a thousand generations** **of those who love him and keep his commandments** (Deut 7:9).”

God’s multi-generational blessing is real. Jonathan Edwards' family is a well known example. Jonathan Edwards served God during the First Great Awakening in American history as a great preacher and pastor. God extended his kindness to his descendants. A researcher traced the Edwards family line through 150 years.  He had 1,394 descendants. Among them were 130 pastors and missionaries, 1 vice president, 3 senators, 3 governors, 3 mayors, 13 college deans, 30 judges, 60 doctors, 65 professors, 100 lawyers, 75 business men,  75 military officers, 80 public officers, etc.

I do not want our second generation to feel the burden of becoming a vice president or senator. Yet one thing is clear. God wants to show his kindness to all our growing generations and the next. God had already shown his kindness and goodness through us all. So trust in God and courageously pursue that God grants the good desires in our hearts. I pray that among our children many God’s servants, congressmen, judges, professors, doctors, PA, nurses, teachers, lawyers, businessmen etc. be raised. God will enable us to overcome all the difficulties in any way and make us live victoriously more than we can be.

When we receive God’s kindness, we should remember that this has come from God.

 Due 8:17 “You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” 18 But remember the Lord your God, for it is **he** who **gives you the ability** to produce wealth, and so **confirms his covenant**, **which he swore to your ancestors**, as it is today.”

Therefore we received, so we are to regenerate God’s kindness to the next generation serving God and his people with all our heart. If we stop serving God, we would degenerate the multi-generational blessing and making stop flowing the kindness of God.

King Hanun is a good example of degeneration of God’s multi-generational blessing. Hanun did not accept David’s kindness, slandered David’s good intention, insulted and rejected him. King Hanun made himself an enemy of David. As a result, even though the King Hanun inherited a great wealth and the throne of his father, he lost everything including his kingdom and his kingship in Chapter 12.

God loves us. We cannot add up additional love no matter how many good things we do. We also cannot subtract any love no matter how many bad things we do. God’s love is unconditional, unrelenting and absolute. With this love, God wants to have a peaceful relationship with his people. So, God sent many prophets to show his kindness with his people throughout the Old Testament. But his people rejected and even killed some of them. Lastly, God sent his one and only son Jesus as the last delegation (Matthew 21:39). Through Jesus, God wants to show his kindness, asking us to establish a peaceful relationship with God. If we accept Jesus, He will be our father, the Lord, the shepherd, the vine, and the bridegroom and we will be his children, his people, his sheep, his branch and his bride.

If we accept Jesus, God would restore identity and lift us up to eat and drink at the king's table as a prince and princes so that we may sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel in his kingdom (Luke 22:30).

If we reject Jesus, nothing will be changed. We would remain in condemnation as we have been, being a sheep without shepherd, broken branches on the ground, and sinners without saviors.

God has plans for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11) May God bless us to accept Jesus and we may have peace with God and people. So, our lives may be fully alive in Jesus and fulfill his plans through his grace.

 Verse 7 through 19 explains the development of the battle (Map#2). At that time Aram was divided into a few nations. Yet Aram had many vassals and grew to be a powerful nation. David had known their power. As soon as David heard that the Ammonites bought the Arameans army, David quickly sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men. When Joab arrived at the Ammonite city, the Israelite army was besieged by the enemies. The Israel army was in great danger. Joab could have panicked and retreated; but instead, Joab did what he could do and encouraged his army.

**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.”**

As a result, both of the Arameans and the Ammonites fled away.

After that, the King of Arameans, Hadadezer, had Shobak, the commander of army, mobilize their full forces to invade Israel (Map #2). When David heard this news he gathered all Israel and crossed the Jordan and fought against them. At this time King David himself went to the battlefield. It means that he fought this war at the risk of the Israel’s fate. Both countries’ fate would be determined by this war. By God’s grace the Israelite army struck down Shobak. All the vassals of Arameans made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. So the Arameans were too afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.

Here, we see David’s nimbleness and confidence in carrying out his wars. David had never ever allowed his enemies to come close to the city of David. He never fought defensive war at his home ground. No matter how powerful, strong, and big his enemy was, it did not matter to David.  Since his young age, David dared to attack bears or lions. Facing the giant Goliath, David ran to Goliath and shot a sling first before Goliath swung his spear. One shot and one kill.

In some sense, he was recklessly courageous. Where did his courage and self-confidence come from? His confidence came from his peaceful relationship with God. He confessed:

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He is my Salvation, my Lord, my Father, and Almighty God, and so on. He experienced so much about God in his life and confessed it in Psalms

We are too engaging in spiritual battles every day of life. The devil our enemy prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1Peter 5:8). But, 2000 years ago, Jesus already crushed the devil’s head on the cross. If we submit ourselves to God and resist the devil, the devil will flee from us (James 4:7). Therefore, before the devils are roaring around near me, we have to identify and resist them from the far away and strike them down through words of God. In this process, our spirits, souls, and physical body grow stronger and powerful and we are able to live victorious lives like David.

In conclusion, God is inviting us to show us his kindness through his son Jesus Christ. I pray that we may accept his son Jesus Christ as our Lord and establish a peaceful relationship with God. In Jesus, we have freedom to search for who my God is and who I am. May God bless us and strengthen us to be able to find Him and confess that God is my father and I am his child, the Lord is my shepherd and I am his sheep, Jesus is my vine and I am his branch, Jesus is in me, and I am in him and finally Jesus is my Christ and my Savior. Amen.