

# 2 Samuel 10 Commentary

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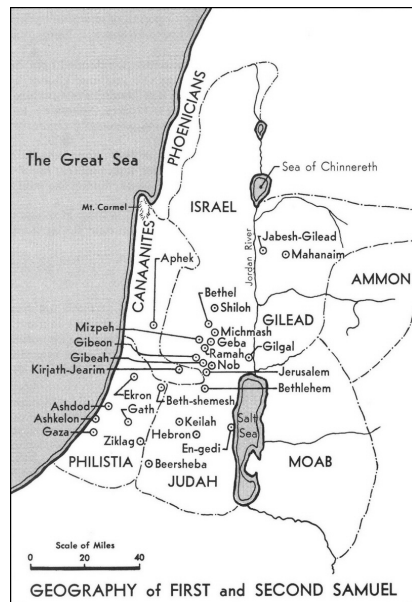
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Chart from recommended resource Jensen's Survey of the OT - used by permission  
2 Samuel Chart from Charles Swindoll

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1Chr 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931 BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931 BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.



Map of David's Kingdom-ESV Global

Map of Cities in 2 Samuel

**2 Samuel 10:1** Now it happened afterwards that the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son became king in his place.

NET 2 Samuel 10:1 Later the king of the Ammonites died and his son Hanun succeeded him.

CSB 2 Samuel 10:1 Some time later the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun became king in his place.

ESV 2 Samuel 10:1 After this the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place.

NIV 2 Samuel 10:1 In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king.

NLT 2 Samuel 10:1 Some time after this, King Nahash of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun became king.

NRS 2 Samuel 10:1 Some time afterward, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him.

NJB 2 Samuel 10:1 After this, when the king of the Ammonites died and his son Hanun succeeded him,

NAB 2 Samuel 10:1 Some time later the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king.

YLT 2 Samuel 10:1 And it cometh to pass afterwards, that the king of the Bene-Ammon dieth, and Hanun his son reigneth in his stead,

GWN 2 Samuel 10:1 Later the king of Ammon died, and his son Hanun became king in his place.

BBE 2 Samuel 10:1 Now after this, death came to the king of the children of Ammon, and Hanun, his son, became king in his place.

RSV 2 Samuel 10:1 After this the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.

- king: Jdg 10:7-9 11:12-28 1Sa 11:1-3 1Ch 19:1-3

**Related Passage:**

1 Chronicles 19:1-3 Now it came about after this, that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon died, and his son became king in his place.

**NEW KING OF  
AMMONITES**

This chapter contains the account of David's wars against potential invaders of his territory. It further illustrates the fact that David was a man of war and thus disqualified from building the temple. But once again just as he had been successful in campaigns against the Philistines, Moab, Aram, and Edom, Yahweh also helped him (cf 2Sa 8:6, 14+) and granted him success in his war against Ammon.

**Bergen** - The present story serves as a significant foil to the previous episode. In both narratives David is shown expressing compassion and generosity toward individuals from the region of Gilead whose royal forebears had recently died. David's desire to bless both sons of the covenant, exemplified by Mephibosheth, as well as those outside the covenant circle, exemplified by Hanun, is evident here. (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**Now it happened afterwards** - CSB = "Some time after this" After David had shown lovingkindness to Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9.

**That the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son became king in his place** (Heb "reigned in his place.") - Recall that Ammon came from one of Lot's daughters (Ge 19:30-38).

**2 Samuel 10:2 Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent some of his servants to console him concerning his father. But when David's servants came to the land of the Ammonites,**

- **show kindness:** De 23:3-6 Ne 4:3-7 13:1-3 1Sa 30:26 2Sa 9:1,7 2Ki 4:13 Es 6:3 Ec 9:15
- **Nahash:** 1Sa 11:1
- as his father: 1Sa 22:3,4

#### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 11:1 Now Nahash the Ammonite came up and besieged Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us and we will serve you."

1 Samuel 30:26 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Behold, a gift for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD:

2 Samuel 9:1,7 Then David said, "Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may **show him kindness** for Jonathan's sake?" (COVENANT KINDNESS)...7 David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will **surely show kindness** to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly."

1 Chronicles 19:2 Then David said, "**I will show kindness** to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." So David sent messengers to console him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the sons of Ammon to Hanun to console him.

### DAVID'S DESIRE TO DEMONSTRATE HESED

**Then David said, "I will show kindness ([hesed](#); Heb "do loyalty") to Hanun the son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness ([hesed](#); Heb "did loyalty.") to me."** - [Hanun](#) means "gracious" or "favored." [Nahash](#) was defeated by Saul earlier (1 Samuel 11:1-15+). This **kindness** is not recorded but most likely is when David was fleeing as a fugitive from Saul. To repay **kindness** is a characteristic of a man after God's own heart! And he was extending an olive branch (so to speak) to Ammon.

**So** - For this reason. What reason? To demonstrate kindness tangibly to Hanun. David is showing us that ultimately kindness is (like agape love) is an "action verb," not simply an emotional response!

**David sent some of his servants to console him concerning his father** - Hebrew literally - "and David sent to console him by the hand of his servants concerning his father." What David meant for good (console) evil men saw as bad (conflict).

**Guzik** - David's kindness to Mephibosheth in the previous chapter didn't end his kind works. Here he showed kindness towards a pagan king because he sympathized with the loss of his father. David wasn't content to *feel* kindness towards Hanun. He *did* something to bring the grieving man comfort.

**But when** - This is a costly term of contrast for the Ammonites. It marks a change of direction, for the kind reception of David's

ambassadors of kindness is falsely interpreted with malicious suspicion to signify evil intent in David.

**David's servants came to the land of the Ammonites** - Ammon is just to the East of the City of David.

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**Kindness** (02617) [hesed/chesed/heced](#) is the idea of faithful love in action and often in the OT refers to God's lovingkindness expressed in His covenant relationship with Israel (His "loyal love" to His "Wife" Israel [cp Hos 2:18, 19, 20-see **note**, Is 54:5, Je 31:32] = His "loyalty to covenant"). God's **hesed** His denotes persistent and unconditional tenderness, kindness, and mercy, a relationship in which He seeks after man with love and mercy (cp God immediately seeking man Ge 3:9, who was immediately hiding Ge 3:8 trying to cover their shame Ge 3:7 - contrast God's lovingkindness manifest by spilling blood to provide skins to cover their shame! Ge 3:21). **Hesed** expresses both God's loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep His promises. **Vine** writes that...In general, one may identify three basic meanings of **hesed**, and these 3 meanings always interact -- **strength**, **steadfastness**, and **love**. Any understanding of **hesed** that fails to suggest all three inevitably loses some of its richness. **Love** by itself easily becomes sentimentalized or universalized apart from the covenant. Yet **strength** or **steadfastness** suggests only the fulfillment of a legal (or similar) obligation. **Hesed** refers primarily to mutual and reciprocal rights and obligations between the parties of a relationship (especially Jehovah and Israel). But hesed is not only a matter of obligation but is also of generosity. It is not only a matter of loyalty, but also of mercy. **Hesed** implies personal involvement and commitment in a relationship beyond the rule of law.

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**Bob Utley on [LOVINGKINDNESS \(hesed\)](#). This term *hesed* (BDB 338 I, KB 336 II) has a wide semantic field.**

1. Used in connection to human beings
  1. kindness to fellow men (e.g., 1 Sam. 20:14; 2 Sam. 16:17; 2 Chr. 24:22; Job 6:14; Ps. 141:5; Pro. 19:22; 20:6)
  2. kindness toward the poor and needy (e.g., Micah 6:8)
  3. affection of Israel toward YHWH (cf. Jer. 2:2; Hos. 6:4,6)
  4. the temporary beauty of a wild flower (cf. Isa. 40:6)
2. Used in connection to God
  1. covenant loyalty and love
    1. "in redemption from enemies and troubles" (e.g., Gen. 19:19; 39:21; Exod. 15:13; Ps. 31:16; 32:10; 33:18,22; 36:7,10; 42:8; 44:26; 66:20; 85:7; 90:14; 94:18; 107:8,15,21,31; 109:21-22; 143:8,12; Jer. 31:3; Ezra 7:28; 9:9)
    2. "in preservation of life from death" (e.g., Job 10:12; Ps. 6:4-5; 86:13)
    3. "in quickening of spiritual life" (e.g., Ps. 119:41,76,88,124,149,159)
    4. "in redemption from sin" (cf. Ps. 25:7; 51:1; 130:7-8)
    5. "in keeping the covenants" (e.g., Deut. 7:9,12; 2 Chr. 6:14; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; Dan. 9:4; Mic. 7:20)
  2. describes a divine attribute (e.g., Exod. 34:6; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Neh. 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Micah 7:20; see [SPECIAL TOPIC: CHARACTERISTICS OF ISRAEL'S GOD. OT](#))
  3. kindness of God
    1. "abundant" (e.g., Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:5; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jer. 4:2)
    2. "great in extent" (e.g., Exod. 20:6; Deut. 5:10; 7:9)
    3. "everlasting" (e.g., 1 Chr. 16:34,41; 2 Chr. 5:13; 7:3,6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11; Ps. 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1,2,3,4,29; 136:1-26; 138:8; Jer. 33:11)
    4. like a stronghold (e.g., Ps. 59:17)
    5. related to God's power (e.g., Ps. 62:11c-12a)
  4. deeds of kindness (e.g., 2 Chr. 6:42; Ps. 89:2; Isa. 55:3; 63:7; Lam. 3:22)

This word is translated many ways in English translations. I think the best summary definition would be "God's no-strings-attached covenant loyalty." In this sense, it is parallel to the NT term "love" (*agapaō*). God is faithful and loving because of who He is!

**2 Samuel 10:3** the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David is honoring your father because he has sent consolers to you? Has David not sent his servants to you in order to search the city, to spy it out and overthrow it?"

- **not:** Ge 42:9,16 1Co 13:5,7
- **search:** Ge 42:9-18 Jos 2:1-3 Jdg 1:23,24 Jdg 18:2,8-10

**Related Passage:**

1 Chronicles 19:3 But the princes of the sons of Ammon said to Hanun, "Do you think that David is honoring your father, in that he has sent comforters to you? Have not his servants come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?"

2 Samuel 8:12 from Aram and Moab and the sons of Ammon and the Philistines and Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

## DAVID'S KINDNESS QUESTIONED BY MALEFACTORS

Malicious malefactors rose up to oppose David's desire to be a benefactor!

**The princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David is honoring your father because he has sent consolers to you? Has David not sent his servants to you in order to search the city, to spy it out and overthrow it?"** - The **princes** would be leading men in Ammon who would naturally be counselors to the king. It is ironic that the king's counselors were questioning the other king's consolers! This is a sad passage because it shows that sometimes fallen men cannot even receive kindness from another and even put an evil spin on what was meant for good! In a fallen world acts of kindness were sometimes used as a cover for treachery and that was the approach Hanun's counselor's took. The foolish counselors put doubt in King Hanun's mind.

**THOUGHT** - How you think determines how you act. Be careful from whom you seek counsel! Unwise thoughts they put in your mind can result in foolish acts!

[David Guzik](#) quips that "It is common for liars to suspect others of lying."

**2 Samuel 10:4 So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle as far as their hips, and sent them away.**

BGT 2 Samuel 10:4 καὶ λαβὼν Ἀννῶν τοὺς παῖδας Δαυὶδ καὶ ἐρῆσεν τοὺς πηγῶνας αὐτῶν καὶ πκοψεν τοὺς μανθῶρας αὐτῶν ὡς τὴν σκῶν αὐτῶν καὶ ἔπεμψεν αὐτοὺς

LXE 2 Samuel 10:4 And Annon took the servants of David, and shaved their beards, and cut off their garments in the midst as far as their haunches, and sent them away.

KJV 2 Samuel 10:4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.

NET 2 Samuel 10:4 So Hanun seized David's servants and shaved off half of each one's beard. He cut the lower part of their robes off so that their buttocks were exposed, and then sent them away.

CSB 2 Samuel 10:4 So Hanun took David's emissaries, shaved off half their beards, cut their clothes in half at the hips, and sent them away.

ESV 2 Samuel 10:4 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.

NIV 2 Samuel 10:4 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.

NLT 2 Samuel 10:4 So Hanun seized David's ambassadors and shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their robes at the buttocks, and sent them back to David in shame.

NRS 2 Samuel 10:4 So Hanun seized David's envoys, shaved off half the beard of each, cut off their garments in the middle at their hips, and sent them away.

NJB 2 Samuel 10:4 Whereupon Hanun seized David's representatives, shaved off half their beards, cut their clothes off halfway up, at their buttocks, and sent them away.

NAB 2 Samuel 10:4 Hanun, therefore, seized David's servants and, after shaving off half their beards and cutting away the lower halves of their garments at the buttocks, sent them away.

YLT 2 Samuel 10:4 And Hanun taketh the servants of David, and shaveth off the half of their beard, and

cutteth off their long robes in the midst -- unto their buttocks, and sendeth them away;

GWN 2 Samuel 10:4 So Hanun took David's men, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their clothes from the waist down, and sent them away.

BBE 2 Samuel 10:4 So Hanun took David's servants, and after cutting off half the hair on their chins, and cutting off the skirts of their robes up to the middle, he sent them away.

RSV 2 Samuel 10:4 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.

NKJ 2 Samuel 10:4 Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away.

ASV 2 Samuel 10:4 So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.

DBY 2 Samuel 10:4 And Hanun took David's servants, and had the one half of their beards shaved off, and their raiment cut off in the midst, as far as their buttocks, and sent them away.

BHT 2 Samuel 10:4 wayyiqqaH Hānûn ´et-`abdê dāwid wayÿgallaH ´et-Hácî zûqānām wayyikrôt ´et-madwêhem BaHê°cî `ad šütô|têhem walÿšallûHēm

NIRV 2 Samuel 10:4 So Hanun grabbed hold of David's men. He shaved off half of each man's beard. He cut their clothes off just below the waist and left them half naked. Then he sent them away.

RWB 2 Samuel 10:4 Therefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.

WEB 2 Samuel 10:4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, {even} to their buttocks, and sent them away.

- **and shaved:** Lev 19:27 1Ch 19:3-4 Ps 109:4,5 Isa 15:2
- **cut off:** Isa 20:4 47:2,3 Jer 41:5

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 19:3-4 But the princes of the sons of Ammon said to Hanun, "Do you think that David is honoring your father, in that he has sent comforters to you? Have not his servants come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?" 4 So Hanun took David's servants and shaved them and cut off their garments in the middle as far as their hips, and sent them away.

Leviticus 19:27+ 'You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard.

Isaiah 20:4 so the king of Assyria will lead away the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Cush, young and old, **naked and barefoot with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.**

### HANUN'S COSTLY HUMILIATION

**So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle as far as their hips, and sent them away** - Hebrew literally - "and he cut their robes in the middle unto their buttocks." How embarrassing! It is notable that even today in the middle east to shave off a person's beard is regarded as a great indignity and insult. It is meant to humiliate the person who is shorn! This shaving by Hanun would end up costing him far more than he could have imagined! Sin makes fools out of all of us and Hanun certainly played the fool in listening to his unwise (foolish) counselors!

**THOUGHT** - Let me repeat it as this principle is so important - Be careful who you make your closest counselors!

**Walton** - Beards were a symbol of virility (compare the Assyrian king Shamshi Adad's taunting of his son Yasmah-Addu, saying "Are you not a man—have you no beard?" in the Mari letters). The physical message conveyed by Hanun's act is that Israel would be deprived of its strength and thrown into mourning, with garments torn and heads and beards shaved (see Is 15:2). As representatives of the king, these ambassadors were personally embarrassed by their treatment. However, by extension, David was also shamed, and thus he kept them from public view until the "damage" was no longer visible.(See page 336 in [IVP Bible Background Commentary Old Testament](#))

**Believer's Study Bible** - The shameful treatment of David's envoys by Hanun may represent an act of revenge for Saul's victory over the Ammonites in the days of Hanun's father Nahash (cf. 1Sa 11:1-10). More likely, Hanun was trying to provoke an occasion for war early in David's reign, when he thought his chances of success were better.

**Brian Bell** - Their beard was the badge of the dignity of manhood. Thus to tamper with a man's beard was the greatest insult....This was a declaration of war!...Years later Solomon's son Rehoboam would make a similar mistake & follow unwise counsel. See 1 Kings 12:6-14.

**Bergen** - Except for the performance of certain religious rituals (cf. Lev 14:9; Num 6:18; Ezek 5:1) or to express profound emotional distress (cf. Ezra 9:3), Israelite men always wore beards. To remove an Israelite male's beard forcibly was to force him to violate the Torah (cf. Lev 19:27) and to show contempt for him personally (cf. Isa 50:6). Likewise, the removal of the extremities of a garment made that garment unacceptable by Torah standards (cf. Num 15:38; Deut 22:12) and had the effect of symbolically desecrating the law itself (cf. Num 15:39). Of course, the Ammonites' actions also dishonored the Israelite men by forcibly exposing their genitals to public view, a humiliating experience to men of that culture.

(Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

**David Guzik** - In that culture, many men would rather die than have their beards shaved off. This was because a clean-shaven face was the mark of a slave and free men wore beards. To insult the ambassador is to insult the king. It was just as if they had done this to David himself. The same principle is true with King Jesus and His ambassadors. Jesus reminded His disciples: *If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.* (John 15:18)

**Keil and Delitzsch** "With the value universally set upon the beard by the Hebrews and other Oriental nations, as being man's greatest ornament, the cutting off of one-half of it was the greatest insult that could have been offered to the ambassadors, and through them to David their king."

**Adam Clarke** - The *beard* is held in high respect in the East: the possessor considers it his greatest ornament; often swears by it; and, in matters of great importance, *pledges* it. Nothing can be more secure than a pledge of this kind; its owner will redeem it at the hazard of his life.

**Cut off their garments in the middle as far as their hips** is a bit too soft of a translation. The **NET** is more accurate = "He cut the lower part of their robes off so that their buttocks were exposed." As Adam Clarke says the pagans did this so that "That the shame of their nakedness might appear, and especially that of their circumcision, so derided by the heathen."

**TSK** - The beard is held in high respect and greatly valued in the East: the possessor considers it as his greatest ornament; often swears by it; and, in matters of great importance, pledges it; and nothing can be more secure than such a pledge; for its owner will redeem it at the hazard of his life. The beard was never cut off but in mourning, or as a sign of slavery. It is customary to shave the Ottoman princes, as a mark of their subjection to the reigning emperor. The beard is a mark of authority and liberty among the Mohammedans. The Persians who clip the beard, and shave above the jaw, are reputed heretics. They who serve in the {seraglios} have their beards shaven, as a sign of servitude; nor do they suffer them to grow till the sultan has set them at liberty. Among the Arabians, it is more infamous for anyone to appear with his beard cut off, than among us to be publicly whipped or branded; and many would prefer death to such a punishment.

**Walton - Hanun's treatment of David's men.** David's messengers have half their beards shaved (symbolically emasculating them and by extension David) and "their garments [were cut] in the middle at their hips," leaving them naked like slaves or captives (see Is 20:4). These men were ambassadors and as such were entitled to both respect and diplomatic immunity. What may seem like a "prank" was in fact a direct challenge to David's power and authority, and precipitated a war between the two nations. David could not allow such an obvious "rape" or symbolic castration of his representatives to go unavenged. A review of Assyrian royal annals (Sargon II, Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal) contains justifications for a declaration of war based on a violation of a sworn agreement or the physical challenging of Assyrian authority. Although the annals are not as graphic as this example, they also serve as a "dropping of the gauntlet" in political terms. (See page 335 in [IVP Bible Background Commentary Old Testament](#))

**2 Samuel 10:5** When they told it to David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly humiliated. And the king said, "Stay at Jericho until your beards grow, and then return."

- Jericho: Jos 6:24-26 1Ki 16:34 1Ch 19:5

**DAVID'S MEN GIVEN  
LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN JERICHO**

**When they told it to David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly humiliated. And the king said, "Stay at Jericho until your beards grow, and then return** - David did not bring them back to the palace in their humiliated condition but showed compassion and concern for their personal dignity and honor by allowing them to wait in an out of the way city before returning to Jerusalem. This is another mark of a man after God's own heart!

**Utley on why Jericho** - It is one of the most ancient cities in all the ANE. It was rebuilt and destroyed many times. It was not a large city during this period and it was on the border of Israel and Ammon, but on the western side of Jordan. It was a good, quiet, insignificant place for these men to regrow their beards.

**2 Samuel 10:6 Now when the sons of Ammon saw that they had become odious to David, the sons of Ammon sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob and the Arameans of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob with 12,000 men.**

BGT 2 Samuel 10:6 κα ε δαν ο υ ο Αμμων τι κατ σχ νθησαν λα ς Δαυιδ κα π στειλαν ο υ ο Αμμων κα μισθ σαντο τ ν Συρ αν Βαιθρωβ ε κοσι χιλι δας πεζ ν κα τ ν βασιλ α Μααχα χιλ ους νδρας κα Ιστωβ δ δεκα χιλι δας νδρ ν

LXE 2 Samuel 10:6 And the children of Ammon saw that the people of David were ashamed; and the children of Ammon sent, and hired the Syrians of Baethraam, and the Syrians of Suba, and Roob, twenty thousand footmen, and the king of Amalec with a thousand men, and Istob with twelve thousand men.

KJV 2 Samuel 10:6 And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Bethrehab, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men.

NET 2 Samuel 10:6 When the Ammonites realized that David was disgusted with them, they sent and hired 20,000 foot soldiers from Aram Beth Rehob and Aram Zobah, in addition to 1,000 men from the king of Maacah and 12,000 men from Ish-tob.

CSB 2 Samuel 10:6 When the Ammonites realized they had become repulsive to David, they hired 20,000 foot soldiers from the Arameans of Beth-rehob and Zobah, 1,000 men from the king of Maacah, and 12,000 men from Tob.

ESV 2 Samuel 10:6 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.

NIV 2 Samuel 10:6 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.

NLT 2 Samuel 10:6 When the people of Ammon realized how seriously they had angered David, they sent and hired 20,000 Aramean foot soldiers from the lands of Beth-rehob and Zobah, 1,000 from the king of Maacah, and 12,000 from the land of Tob.

- **they had become odious:** Ge 34:30 Ex 5:21 1Sa 13:4 27:12 1Ch 19:6-7
- **hired the Arameans:** 2Sa 8:3,5,12, Zobah, Pr 25:8 Isa 8:9,10
- **Maacah:** Jos 13:11-13
- **the men of Tob** Jdg 11:3,5

#### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 8:3; 5; 12 (DAVID HAD PREVIOUSLY DEFEATED THE ARAMEANS AND ZOBAH) Then David defeated Hadadezer, the son of Rehob king of Zobah, as he went to restore his rule at the River....5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David killed 22,000 Arameans.

1 Chronicles 19:6 When the sons of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the sons of Ammon sent **1,000 talents of silver** (ED: SOME ESTIMATE THIS IS > \$1 BILLION) **to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen** from Mesopotamia, from Aram-maacah and from Zobah. 7 So they hired for themselves 32,000 **chariots** ([rekeb](#)), and the king of Maacah and his people, who came and camped



before Medeba. And the sons of Ammon gathered together from their cities and came to battle.

Map of David's Kingdom-ESV Global

## AMMONITES HIRE MERCENARIES

Now when the sons of Ammon saw that they had become odious to David, the sons of Ammon sent and hired the Arameans (Syrians) of Beth-rehob and the Arameans (Syrians) of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of [Maacah](#) with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob with 12,000 men - Note on the Map above the location of Ammon, which is the center of the conflict and is located just east of the City of David (Jerusalem). Then note to the north of Ammon are the states of Syria (aka Arameans) and north to them Zobah, nations from which Ammon hired mercenaries paying "1,000 talents of silver to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen." (1Ch 19:6).

One is reminded of David's words in Ps 20:7<sup>±</sup> "Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God."

**Bob Utley** on **become odious** - This VERB (Niphal PERFECT) denotes a bad smell from something rotting (i.e., Qal, Exod. 7:18,21; 8:10; 16:20; Isa. 50:2). The Niphal is also used in (1) Israel odious to the Philistines (2) Ammonites to David (3) Absalom to David What they did to David's representatives would elicit a military response.

**Walton** - coalition. Very often small states or kingdoms would ally together against a common enemy. In this case, Ammon, feeling the need to strengthen its position against David, enlisted the help of the Arameans. Twenty divisions of troops came from Beth Rehob on the border between Syria and Israel (in the vicinity of the Huleh Valley near Tel Dan—see Jdg 18:28), and from Zobah in the northern Beqa Valley. The former city is also mentioned in Egyptian records from the time of Thutmose III. See the comment on 2 Samuel 8:3 for other conflicts between Israel and the Aramean king Hadadezer. Maacah also lies southeast of Beth Rehob, south of Mount Hermon and east of the Jordan. The last group of soldiers (twelve divisions) come from Tob (et-Tayibeh, twelve miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee in Gilead). The list of allies thus names the regions from north to south, covering the territory from the Orontes to the territory of Ammon. (See page 336 in [IVP Bible Background Commentary Old Testament](#))

**Bob Utley** on **hired** - Ammon tried to bolster their military with mercenaries (Josephus, Antiq. 7.1.1, says he sent one thousand talents). (1) Syrians from the city of Beth-rehob (2) Syrians from the city of Zobah, from both #1 and #2 about 20,000 foot soldiers (3) from Maacah (Syrian Kingdom south of Mt. Hermon, but in the trans-Jordan, east, 1,000 men. Remember, "thousand" has a wide semantic field. It can refer to a military unit. [THOUSAND \(eleph\)](#)

We get additional details in 1 Chronicles 19:6-7 -

"When the sons of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the sons of Ammon sent 1,000 talents of silver to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen from Mesopotamia, from Aram-maacah and from Zobah. 7 So they hired for themselves 32,000 chariots ([rekeb](#)), and the king of Maacah and his people, who came and camped before Medeba. And the sons of Ammon gathered together from their cities and came to battle."

**Comment** - 32,000 soldiers, exclusive of the thousand sent by the Maacah, are mentioned in the parallel passage (1Ch 19:7) but of chariots or cavalry there is no mention; and the number of chariots stated here is prodigious, and beyond all credibility. But as the word {raichev} denotes not only a chariot, but a rider, (see Isa 21:7,) it ought most probably to be rendered here, in a collective sense, cavalry; and then the number of troops will exactly agree with the passage in Samuel. It is probable that they were a kind of auxiliary troops who were usually mounted on horses, or in chariots, but who occasionally served as foot-soldiers

**TECHNICAL NOTE ON TOB** - Or perhaps "the men of Tob." The ancient versions (the LXX, the Syriac Peshitta, and Vulgate) understand the name to be "Ish-tob." It is possible that "Ish" is dittographic and that we should read simply "Tob," a reading adopted by a number of recent English versions.

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**Odious** (grow foul, stink)([0887](#)) [baash](#) means to have a bad smell or to stink. To be repulsive. It denotes a bad physical smell (blood in the Nile - Ex 7:21) or odor of spoiled manna (Ex 16:20). In a figurative sense, it speaks of a person who becomes strongly revolting to another, a metaphorical "stench in the nostrils."

**Louis Goldberg** - When Moses struck the water of the Nile, the fish died and the river became foul

(Ex 7:18, 21). After the plague of the frogs, the land was foul (stank). When some tried to save their allotted share of manna, it bred worms and emitted a stink (Ex 16:20). But the double portion gathered on the sixth day did not become foul (Exodus 16:24). This term, stink, is also used by the Hebrew foremen of the Israelite slave force who complained to Moses and Aaron that they had made Israel's savour odious in Pharaoh's presence (Ex 5:21). Other usages for stink or foul: David cried out because his wounds were foul and festering on account of his folly (Ps 38:5). Jacob exclaimed to Levi and Simeon that their actions caused him to be odious to the people of Canaan with drastic consequences (Ge 34:30). Qohelet says that dead flies ferment and make perfumed oil stink (Eccl 10:1). The idea of abhorrence is seen in David's decision to fight for the Philistines. They thought that David had made himself odious to the Israelites (1 Sa 27:12). The affair of Absalom and his father's concubines was calculated to make Absalom abhorrent to David and to bring about misunderstanding between father and son (2 Sa 16:21). Other shades of meaning are seen in the actions of wicked men who are loathsome (or act disgustingly, Pr 13:5). Thus this word either describes objects that have a foul odor, bad relationships between people creating abhorrence, and the general principle that evil deeds are so rotten that they have a bad smell in God's nostrils. (See [Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

**Baash** - acts disgustingly(1), became foul(3), become foul(2), become odious(2), grow foul(1), made(1), made themselves odious(1), made yourself odious(1), making me odious(1), odious\*(1), stink(2), surely made(1), surely made himself odious(1). Ge 34:30; Ex 5:21; Ex 7:18; Ex 7:21; Ex 8:14; Ex 16:20; Ex 16:24; 1 Sa 13:4; 1 Sa 27:12; 2 Sa 10:6; 2 Sa 16:21; 1 Chr. 19:6; Ps 38:5; Pr 13:5; Eccl 10:1; Isa 50:2

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**ISBE - Maacah** - ma'-a-ka (ma`akhah; Septuagint: Codex Vaticanus Mocha; Codex Alexandrinus Maacha): A small Syrian kingdom adjoining that of Geshur on the western border of Bashan, the inhabitants of which are called Maacathites (the Revised Version (British and American) "Maacathites"), whose territory was taken by Jair (Dt 3:14; Josh 12:5). The border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites and all Mt. Hermon were given to the half-tribe of Manasseh (Josh 13:11). The inhabitants of these kingdoms, however, were not driven out by Israel (Josh 13:13), and at a later day the children of Ammon hired mercenaries from Maacah for their encounter with David. The armies met near Medeba when the "Syrians" from Maacah found themselves opposed to Joab. That famous captain completely routed them (2 Sam 10:6 ff the Septuagint has "Amalek"). In 1 Ch 19:6 it is called Aram-maacah, Syria-maacah (the King James Version); and in 1 Ch 2:23 "Aram" appears instead of "Maacah."

It evidently lay between Geshur on the South and Hermon on the North, being probably bounded by Jordan on the West, although no certain indication of boundaries is now possible. They would thus be hemmed in by Israel, which accounts for `Geshur and Maacath dwell in the midst of Israel" (Josh 13:13). It is possible that Abel-beth-maacah may have been a colony founded by men from Maacah.

## 2 Samuel 10:7 When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men.

BGT 2 Samuel 10:7 κα̅ κ̅ου̅σ̅ε̅ν Δ̅α̅υ̅ι̅δ̅ κα̅ π̅ σ̅τ̅ε̅ι̅λ̅ε̅ν τ̅ ν̅ Ι̅ω̅α̅β̅ κα̅ π̅ σ̅α̅ν τ̅ ν̅ ὄ̅ν̅α̅μ̅ι̅ν τ̅ ο̅ς δ̅υ̅ν̅α̅τ̅ ο̅ς

LXE 2 Samuel 10:7 And David heard, and sent Joab and all his host, even the mighty men.

KJV 2 Samuel 10:7 And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

NET 2 Samuel 10:7 When David heard the news, he sent Joab and the entire army to meet them.

CSB 2 Samuel 10:7 David heard about it and sent Joab and all the fighting men.

ESV 2 Samuel 10:7 And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men.

NIV 2 Samuel 10:7 On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men.

NLT 2 Samuel 10:7 When David heard about this, he sent Joab and all his warriors to fight them.

NRS 2 Samuel 10:7 When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army with the warriors.

NJB 2 Samuel 10:7 When David heard this, he sent Joab with the whole army, the champions.

NAB 2 Samuel 10:7 On learning this, David sent out Joab with the entire levy of trained soldiers.

- **all the army:** 2Sa 23:8-39 1Ch 19:8-19

**Related Passage:**

1 Chronicles 19:8 When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men.

## DAVID RETALIATES WITH FORCE

**When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men**- NLT = "the entire Israelite army to fight them." NRSV = "the warriors"; TEV = "the whole army"; NJB = "the champions." REB = "all the fighting men." JPSOA = "[including] the professional fighters". This is the first time David's **mighty men** were actually referred to as the **army**.

Notice that David sent Joab his commander but did not go into the battle himself. Was this a pattern that would soon set him up for his greatest failure (2Sa 11:1)? Perhaps.

**Guzik** comments "It's important to understand that David was nothing without his mighty men, and they were nothing without him. He was their leader, but a leader is nothing without followers – and David had an **army of the mighty men** to follow him. These men didn't necessarily *start* as mighty men; many were the distressed, indebted, and discontented people who followed David at Adullam Cave (1 Samuel 22:1-2+) (**ED**: THIS IS ANOTHER MARKER OF DAVID A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART WHO COULD TAKE DISCARDS AND MAKE THEM INTO MIGHTY MEN!). One of these mighty men was Adino the Eznite – famous for killing 800 men at one time (2 Samuel 23:8). Another was Jashobeam who killed 300 men at one time (1 Chronicles 11:11). Another was Benaiah who killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day and killed a huge Egyptian warrior with his own spear (1 Chronicles 11:22-23).

**2 Samuel 10:8 The sons of Ammon came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city, while the Arameans of Zobah and of Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the field.**

- **at the entrance of the city** 1Ch 19:7
- **Rehob and the men of Tob:** 2Sa 10:6 Nu 13:21 Jos 19:28 Jdg 1:31

### Related Resources:

1 Chronicles 19:7 So they hired for themselves 32,000 chariots, and the king of Maacah and his people, who came and camped before Medeba. And the sons of Ammon gathered together from their cities and came to battle. 8 When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men. 9 The sons of Ammon came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city, and the kings who had come were by themselves in the field.

## THE ENEMY FORCES SURROUND ISRAELITES

**The sons of Ammon came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city**- this was at the city of Medeba, a city upon the borders of the Ammonites, and in their possession and about 20 miles SW of Amman (present capital of Jordan). They intended to trap David's armies with a two-flank attack and pin his army between the Ammonites on one side and their allies on the other.

**while the Arameans of Zobah and of Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the field**- While the specific location of the forces in the field is not described, from the context it is clearly meant to set a surprise trap and enclose David's forces from the front and the rear.

**Bell** - Joab faced 2 armies who were using the famed military maneuver called The Pincer Movement. [Pincer: like pliers or lobster claw. 1 coming from the north, the other from the south]

**Morgan** - It is interesting to observe that in his arrangements he made no allowance for the possibility of ultimate defeat in his conflict with Ammon.... It does not seem to have occurred to him that the combination might have been too much for both of them."

**2 Samuel 10:9 Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him in front and in the rear, he selected from all the choice men of Israel, and arrayed them against the Arameans.**

- Jos 8:21,22 Jdg 20:42,43

## JOAB FACES THE ARAMEANS IN FIELD

Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him in front and in the rear, he selected from all the choice men of Israel, and arrayed them against the Arameans - Hebrew literally - "and Joab saw that the face of the battle was to him before and behind and he chose from all the best in Israel and arranged to meet Aram." Joab trapped by enemy forces front and behind. Note he uses wisdom in dividing forces but he leaves it in the hand of the LORD (v12), a good pattern for all of us when we feel the enemy has us essentially surrounded!

**2 Samuel 10:10 But the remainder of the people he placed in the hand of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the sons of Ammon.**

## ABISHAI COMMANDS THE SECOND BATTALION

But the remainder of the people he placed in the hand of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the sons of Ammon - Joab is preparing to take the tactic of "divide and conquer" and giving one division into the hands of his brother. Joab was wise because he knew that battle on two fronts would best be won by each of his armies being commanded by different commanders.

**2 Samuel 10:11 He said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come to help you.**

- 1Ch 19:9-12 Ne 4:20 Lu 22:32 Ro 15:1 Ga 6:2 Php 1:27,28

### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 19:9-12 The sons of Ammon came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city, and the kings who had come were by themselves in the field. 10 Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him in front and in the rear, he selected from all the choice men of Israel and they arrayed themselves against the Arameans. 11 But the remainder of the people he placed in the hand of Abshai his brother; and they arrayed themselves against the sons of Ammon. 12 He said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you.

## WE WILL BE READY TO HELP THE ONE IN TROUBLE

He said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come to help you - Joab's forces would meet the mercenaries in the field who are seeking to trap him in a two-flank attack. Abishai's forces would attack the Ammonite forces in the city. Joab realized that a smaller force could fight a two-front battle to its own advantage if both commanders kept their heads and supplied reinforcements to the other front as needed.

**2 Samuel 10:12 "Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what is good in His sight."**

BGT 2 Samuel 10:12 νδρ ζου κα κραταιωθ μεν π ρ το λαο μ ν κα περ τ ν π λεων το θεο μ ν κα κ ριος ποι σει τ γαθ ν ν φθαλμο ς α το

LXE 2 Samuel 10:12 Be thou courageous, and let us be strong for our people, and for the sake of the cities of our God, and the Lord shall do that which is good in his eyes.

KJV 2 Samuel 10:12 Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our

God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good.

NET 2 Samuel 10:12 Be strong! Let's fight bravely for the sake of our people and the cities of our God! The LORD will do what he decides is best!"

CSB 2 Samuel 10:12 Be strong! We must prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God. May the LORD's will be done."

ESV 2 Samuel 10:12 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."

NIV 2 Samuel 10:12 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."

NLT 2 Samuel 10:12 Be courageous! Let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. May the LORD's will be done."

NRS 2 Samuel 10:12 Be strong, and let us be courageous for the sake of our people, and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what seems good to him."

NJB 2 Samuel 10:12 Be brave! Let us acquit ourselves like men for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God. And let Yahweh do as he thinks right!"

NAB 2 Samuel 10:12 Be brave; let us prove our valor for the sake of our people and the cities of our God; the LORD will do what he judges best."

YLT 2 Samuel 10:12 be strong and strengthen thyself for our people, and for the cities of our God, and Jehovah doth that which is good in His eyes.'

GWN 2 Samuel 10:12 Be strong! Let's prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God, and the LORD will do what he considers right."

BBE 2 Samuel 10:12 Take heart, and let us be strong for our people and for the towns of our God, and may the Lord do what seems good to him.

RSV 2 Samuel 10:12 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."

- **Be strong:** Nu 13:20 De 31:6 Jos 1:6,7,9,18 1Sa 14:6,12 17:32 2Ch 32:7 Ne 4:14 Heb 13:6
- **let us show ourselves courageous:** 1Sa 4:9 1Ch 19:13 1Co 16:13
- **may the LORD do what is good:** 2Sa 16:10,11 Jdg 10:15 1Sa 3:18 Job 1:21

#### Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 19:13 "Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what is good in His sight."

1 Samuel 3:18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him."

### JOAB'S KEY TO VICTORY COMMIT THE OUTCOME TO YAHWEH

**Be strong** ([chazaq](#); Lxx - [krataioo](#)), **and let us show ourselves courageous** ([chazaq](#); Lxx - [andrizo](#) - see 1Co 16:13 [below](#) - NJB = Let us acquit ourselves like men) **for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what is good in His sight.**" - Hebrew literally = "and the LORD will do what is good in his eyes." Notice the oft repeated "mysterious" (but very real) juxtaposition of Joab and Abishai doing their part (man's responsibility) while at the same time trusting in Yahweh's goodness (God's sovereignty).

**May the LORD do what is good in His sight**- **NET** = "The LORD will do what he decides is best!" **CSB** = "May the LORD's will be done." **ESV** "may the LORD do what seems good to him." **NIV** = "The LORD will do what is good in his sight." **NLT** = "May the LORD's will be done." Most of these modern translations make Joab's words a prayer for the LORD'S will to be done ("May the..."). The NET and NIV see it as a declarative statement. Both translations show Joab's trust is in the LORD. Of course the fact that they are fighting for **the cities of our God** would certainly support that the good the LORD would do would be to support those fighting for His cities and His people Israel and not to support those who are fighting against them. One is reminded of Paul's wonderful

words "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?" (Ro 8:31+).

**Uitley** makes a good point - This passage shows the sense of national duty felt by the Israeli soldiers (**for the sake of our people**), but also the deep conviction that YHWH was with them (and He needed to be, since the Israelite army was vastly outnumbered). He was the key to victory in battle. However, this theological worldview (cf. 1Sa 3:18; 2Ch 19:11; 1Ch 32:7-8) did not keep them from strategizing (vv. 9-11). Somehow in the mystery of life both parts are important.

**David Guzik** on **Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous** - Courage and strength are not matters of feeling and circumstance. They are matters of choice, especially when God makes His strength available to us. We can *be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might* (Ephesians 6:10).

**THOUGHT** - Paul gives saints a parallel exhortation for we are all in warfare against strong invisible forces...1 Corinthians 16:13-14+ **Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong Let all that you do be done in love.** (Note there are five [present imperatives](#) all of which require us [to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey.](#)) The verb **act like men** ([andrizo](#)) is the same verb used in the Septuagint for **let us show ourselves courageous.**

**David Guzik** on **for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God** Joab called them to remember *all they had to lose*. If they lost this battle they would lose both their **people** and their **cities**. This was a battle bigger than themselves, and the army of the mighty men had to remember that.

**TSK** - This is a very animating address, and equal to any thing of the kind in ancient or modern times. Ye fight {pro aris et focus;} for every good, sacred and civil; for God, for your families, and for your countries. Such harangues, especially in very trying circumstances, are very natural, and may perhaps be found in the records of every nation. Several instances might be quoted from Roman and Grecian history; but few are more remarkable than that of Tyrtaeus, the lame Athenian poet, to whom the command of the army was given in one of the Messenian wars. The Spartans had at that time suffered great losses, and all their stratagems proved ineffectual, so that they began to despair of success; when the poet, by his lectures on honour and courage, delivered in moving verse to the army, ravished them to such a degree with the thoughts of dying for their country, that, rushing on with a furious transport to meet their enemies, they gave them an entire overthrow, and by one decisive battle brought the war to a happy conclusion.

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**Be strong** (Harden, encourage, hold fast, prevail, repair, seize) [02388](#) **chazaq** conveys the basic meaning of to be or become strong, to make strong or strengthen, in the Hiphil to take hold of or seize ("retain His anger" - Mic 7:18+), in the Hithpael to strengthen oneself (to take courage 1 Sa 30:6). To be courageous. To overpower. Chazaq describes strength - severity of a famine (a "strong" famine) (2 Ki 25:3, Jer 52:6), strength of humans to overpower (David and Goliath 1 Sa 17:50, cf 1 Sa 17:35 = seized; Amnon and Tamar = 2 Sa 13:14), in a battle, to capture (2 Chr 8:3), Samson's last demonstration of supernatural strength he prays "please strengthen me" (Jdg 16:28). Used in the charge "Be strong and courageous" (Josh 1:6, 7, 9, 18, Josh 10:25, "be firm" = Josh 23:6; "Be strong and courageous" = Dt 31:6-7, 23). Chazaq used 12 times in Ex 4-14 of hardening Pharaoh's heart (cf similar use in Josh 11:20). In a great passage in Da 11:32+ we read ""By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength (chazaq) and take action.""

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### **F B Meyer - 2 Samuel 10:12 The Lord do that which seemeth Him good.**

Israel was arrayed against overwhelming odds. To human sight it must have appeared very improbable that Joab would be able to hold his own. However, he made the best arrangements he could; exhorted his men to be of good courage and do their utmost; and then piously left the issue to the God of battles.

There are times in all lives when the case seems desperate. How can we meet with ten thousand him who cometh against us with twenty thousand! Heart and flesh fail. What resource is there, then, save in the flight of the lonely man to the only God? It is for God to act, since the help of man is vain.

In your personal straits.— When patience is exhausted; when the last handful is taken from the barrel; when complicated trials meet and hem you in; when the iron gate and the keepers before the door appear to render escape impossible— then look up, God is marching with reinforcements to your aid.

In your work and war for God in the world.— We too often act and speak as if success were to be won by the forces that we may be able to bring into the field, whereas God asks us for nothing more than fidelity and the right disposition of such forces as we can command; He will do all the rest.

In your outlook on the conflict between good and evil.— It is quite true that there appears to be an infinite disparity between the one and the other. But there are other forces in the field than appear. There is another host of which God Himself is captain. When the

enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up the standard. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven to thy help."

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**G Campbell Morgan -Be of good courage**, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth Him good. -2 Sam. 10.12

This was the language of the highest patriotism. The difficulties had arisen as the result of another action of David which had been prompted by goodwill. He had sent to comfort Hanun, the new king of Ammon, upon the death of his father. The action had been replied to insultingly, with the result that Israel was forced into war with these children of Ammon, and the Syrians. As the battle was prepared for, Joab uttered these words to his brother Abishai. Observe the elements of patriot-ism as revealed in them. The first matter was personal to those called upon to fight. They were to be of good courage, and to play the men. All the arrangements for the conflict, and its issue, show how these men fulfilled this responsibility. But a deeper note is struck in what follows. They were to do all this for their people and for the cities of their God. There was to be nothing of the passion for personal aggrandisement in what they did. They were to act for the high purposes represented in the people of God, and the cities of God. Personal courage was to be inspired by relative considerations. Then came the deepest note of all. When, in view of the interests of the nation they had done all that was possible, then "Jehovah do what seemeth Him good." Men who thus prepare themselves for high enterprise, and then commit themselves wholly to the will of God are invincible. (Borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#))

**2 Samuel 10:13 So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to the battle against the Arameans, and they fled before him.**

- **fled:** 1Ki 20:13-21,28-30 1Ch 19:14,15 2Ch 13:5-16

### **ARAMEANS FLED**

**So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to the battle against the Arameans, and they fled before him-** This is an amazing passage for it does not even state that Joab (who surely was outnumbered) even lifted a sword or a spear against them. Once again is this not evidence that God was with David (his help - cf 2Sa 8:6, 14+) and with David's armies, so that the battle was the LORD'S. Had all of David's army (note verse 7 says "Joab and all the army, the mighty men") been annihilated here, the fate of David's reign (which God had promised by covenant would last) would not have endured!

**2 Samuel 10:14 When the sons of Ammon saw that the Arameans fled, they also fled before Abishai and entered the city. Then Joab returned from fighting against the sons of Ammon and came to Jerusalem.**

### **AMMON ALSO FLED ISRAEL**

**When the sons of Ammon saw that the Arameans fled, they also fled before Abishai and entered the city.** Indeed, is not 2 Samuel 10:13-14 not a perfect fulfillment of God's promise in Deuteronomy 28:7+ - "The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways."

**Then Joab returned from fighting against the sons of Ammon and came to Jerusalem-** The victors return from the battle but the war was not over as the following passages describe.

**2 Samuel 10:15 When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together.**

- **gathered:** Ps 2:1 Isa 8:9,10 Mic 4:11,12 Zec 14:2,3 Rev 19:19-21

### **ARAMEANS REGATHER THEIR FORCES**

**When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together.** In the second campaign, Hadadezer enlisted the support of the Arameans beyond the Euphrates.

**2 Samuel 10:16 And Hadadezer sent and brought out the Arameans who were beyond the River, and they came to Helam; and Shobach the commander of the army of Hadadezer led them.**

- Hadarezer: 2Sa 8:3-8 1Ch 18:3,5

**Related Passage:**

1 Chronicles 19:16 When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers and brought out the Arameans who were beyond the River, with Shophach the commander of the army of Hadadezer leading them.

### **THE ARAMEANS ATTEMPT A SECOND TIME TO DEFEAT DAVID**

**And Hadadezer sent and brought out the Arameans who were beyond the River**(Euphrates), **and they came to Helam; and Shobach the commander of the army of Hadadezer led them** - Israel's enemies were defeated but not demolished and here they persist in their attempts to defeat David's forces by calling for troops beyond or north of the Euphrates.

**2 Samuel 10:17 Now when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Arameans arrayed themselves to meet David and fought against him.**

**KJV** - And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.

**NLT** - When David heard what was happening, he mobilized all Israel, crossed the Jordan River, and led the army to Helam. The Arameans positioned themselves there in battle formation and then attacked David.

**Related Passage:**

1 Chronicles 19:17 When it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan, and came upon them and drew up in formation against them. And when David drew up in battle array against the Arameans, they fought against him.

### **DAVID LEADS THE FORCES IN THE SECOND BATTLE**

**Now when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan, and came to Helam and the Arameans arrayed themselves to meet David and fought against him** - Notice this time David leads his forces to the battle at **Helam**. **Helam** ("place of abundance," or "stronghold") cannot be identified with certainty, other than that it is east of Jordan and west of the Euphrates.

**2 Samuel 10:18 But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed 700 charioteers of the Arameans and 40,000 horsemen and struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there.**

- **fled**: 2Sa 8:4 Ps 18:38 46:11
- **Shobach**: Jdg 4:2,22 5:26

**Related Passage:**

1 Chronicles 19:18 The Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed of the Arameans 7,000 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers, and put to death Shophach the commander of the army.



## DAVID'S VICTORY OVER THE ARAMEANS

**But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed 700 charioteers of the Arameans and 40,000 horsemen and struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there** - Observe again that the **Arameans fled**. (4x in 3v - v10, 13, 18) The parallel passage has "David killed of the Arameans 7,000 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers" so there is almost certainly a copyist's error because the Hebrew characters for "700" and "7000" are very easy to interchange. The discrepancy of 40,000 horsemen (2Sa 10:18) and 40,000 foot soldiers is explained by the fact that the same men could fight either on horseback or on foot, as needed.

**Walton** - Military formations were designed to take advantage of terrain and the weaponry employed by the army. The text indicates that Shobach, the Aramean commander, had both chariots and infantry. The ranks of infantry, deployed in mass formations led by "commanders of fifty," included spearmen with shields in the front rank and bowmen and slingers placed immediately behind them. When the armies came together, hand-to-hand combat would have employed flat-bladed axes and daggers. The chariots were often placed on the flanks for easier maneuverability. (See page 337 in [IVP Bible Background Commentary Old Testament](#))

**TECHNICAL NOTE on horsemen** - Heb "horsemen" (so KJV, NASB, NCV, NRSV, NLT) but the Lucianic recension of the LXX reads "foot soldiers," as does the parallel text in 1 Chr 19:18. Cf. NAB, NIV.

**Utley** adds this note on the parallel passage ""**1 Chr. 19:18-19** The Jewish Study Bible (p. 1750) makes the comment that the Chronicler expands the numbers in 2 Samuel 10 to glorify David's victory. The NASB Study Bible (p. 577) says it was a copyist's mistake in Samuel. This shows the two ways of viewing these number differences (i.e., literary or scribal error). See [Hard Sayings in the Bible](#), which supports the numbers in Chronicles. The best book on the number differences involved in the OT historical books is Edwin R. Thiele, [The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings](#)."

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**Walter Kaiser** on [page 195 in Hard Sayings in the Bible](#) - **How Many Charioteers?**

The Chronicles account says that David killed **seven thousand charioteers**, but 2 Samuel 10:18 gives the number as **seven hundred**. Some claim that this illustrates a tendency for the chronicler to somewhat magnify David's stature and character. Is this an accurate assessment of the habits of the chronicler, or is there some adequate explanation for this discrepancy?

1 Chronicles 18:4-5 is the fullest and best statement of what took place at this encounter. If this is true, the Chronicles figure of seven thousand charioteers, or horsemen, is no doubt the correct figure and the one that lies behind the transcriptional error of seven hundred in 2 Samuel 10:18. Note that some Septuagintal texts of 2 Samuel 10:18 agree with Chronicles. Furthermore, the forty thousand "foot soldiers" of Chronicles is the correct reading, not "horsemen" as in Samuel, for the figure matches closely, as a rounded number, the twenty thousand plus twenty-two thousand foot soldiers given in 1 Chronicles 18:4-5. This seems to be the best solution to the problem.

The present Hebrew manuscripts for the books of 1 and 2 Samuel have more transcriptional errors in them than any other book or combination of books in the Old Testament. From the preliminary checks seen in the Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts of Samuel, the Greek translation of the Septuagint appears to reflect a much better Hebrew manuscript. (NOTE: Some preliminary but as yet unpublished reports from the Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran do indicate that at least some readings of the Dead Sea Scroll copies of Samuel are in agreement with readings previously found only in Chronicles. See Frank M. Cross Jr., [The Ancient Library of Qumran](#), rev. ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961), pp. 188-91, and Ralph W. Klein, [Textual Criticism of the Old Testament](#) (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), pp. 42-50.)

Another attempt to resolve this problem suggests that when Samuel talked about the "[men of] chariots" or "[men of the] chariot divisions" (to which the seven hundred presumably belonged), he was speaking of a separate group of personnel from the (seven thousand) "charioteers," but no evidence exists to support this distinction.

**The discrepancy is a problem of the correct text of Samuel and does not support the thesis that the chronicler had a tendency to magnify numbers in order to glorify David.**

**2 Samuel 10:19** When all the kings, servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Arameans feared to help the sons of Ammon anymore.

- **servant:** Ge 14:1-5 Jos 11:10 Jdg 1:7 1Ki 20:1 Da 2:37
- **feared:** 2Sa 8:6 1Ch 19:19 Ps 18:37,38 48:4,5 Isa 26:11 Rev 18:10

#### Related Passage:

1 Chronicles 19:19 So when the servants of Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and served him. Thus the Arameans were not willing to help the sons of Ammon anymore.

### ARAMEANS MAKE PEACE WITH DAVID

**When all the kings, servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Arameans feared to help the sons of Ammon anymore** - Although there is a chapter break, clearly the Ammonites are not completely defeated, for 2 Samuel 11:1 says "Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem." 2 Samuel 12 tells us David and Israel finally defeated the Ammonites (after David confessed his sin which he had covered up almost 12 months!)

Now Joab fought against [Rabbah](#) of the sons of Ammon and captured the royal city. 27 Joab sent messengers to David and said, "I have fought against [Rabbah](#), I have even captured the city of waters. 28 "Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together and camp against the city and capture it, or I will capture the city myself and it will be named after me." 29 So David gathered all the people and went to [Rabbah](#), fought against it and captured it. (2 Samuel 12:26-29+)

**David Guzik points out that** " The chapter ends with unfinished business at [Rabbah](#). The offending Ammonites were still in their city and Joab returned to Jerusalem. In the spring King David sent Joab and the army out again to deal with Rabbah as he waited in Jerusalem. While he waited comfortably in Jerusalem he fell into sin with Bathsheba. Many know about David's sin with Bathsheba, and how it happened when David waited in Jerusalem when he should have led the battle at Rabbah. 2 Samuel 10 shows that God gave David a warning by showing it was necessary for him to come out against the Syrians. David tried to leave the battle with Joab in 2 Samuel 10, but his army needed him; and God endeavored to show him that by blessing Israel when David did go out to battle. 2 Samuel 10 was God's gracious warning that David sadly wasted.

**Walton - served** David - It was not uncommon in the ancient Near East for the fortunes of war to lead to political shifts of allegiance. With the defeat of the Aramean army, many of the villages and towns that had formerly sworn allegiance to Hadadezer now offered their support and tribute to David. Parallels to this practice can be found in the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon as well as in the campaign lists of most of the Assyrian monarchs. It should not be assumed, however, that David was able to take total, structural command of this region of northern Transjordan. Coerced support, won one day in battle, may disappear at the first sign of weakness. (See page 337 in [IVP Bible Background Commentary Old Testament](#))