

David's Ambassadors

2 Samuel 10

1 Chronicles 19

Psalm 20

by Don Falkos

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David sent ambassadors to the Ammonites to express sympathy after the death of their king. But the leaders of Ammon said to their new king, the deceased king's son, "Do you really think these men are here to honor your father? David has sent them to spy on us."

The king seized David's men, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their robes at the buttocks, and sent them away greatly humiliated. David told them, "Stay at Jericho until your beards grow out, then come home."

When the Ammonites realized how angry David was, they hired mercenaries for protection. David said, "Some nations trust in the strength of their armies, but we trust in the name of the Lord." He sent Joab to conquer Ammon.

Joab found himself between the Ammonites on one side and the mercenaries on the other. He chose some of Israel's elite troops for himself; they would fight the mercenaries. He left the rest of the army under the command of his brother Abishai, who was to attack the Ammonites. Joab said, "If I need help, come to my aide. If you need help, I'll come to yours. Be strong. Fight bravely for our people and may the Lord's will be done."

Joab and his troops advanced; the mercenaries turned and ran. When the Ammonites saw what was happening, they turned and ran, retreating into their walled city. After the battle was over, Joab took his army back to Jerusalem, planning to return in the spring to finish off the Ammonites. David defeated the mercenaries who had run away from the battle, so the Ammonites hired other mercenaries to take their place.