

# The Ideal United Kingdom (1 Chronicles 9:35 – 2 Chronicles 9:31)

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## David Prepares for the Temple, part 4: David Secures the Nation and Collects Temple Materials, part 2 (1 Chronicles 19:1-19)

### *David's Victory against Ammon and Aram (19:1-20:3)*

Having focused on David's general victories, the Chronicler turned next to a specific victory over the Ammonites and their Aramean allies. This passage connects directly to the larger context through 18:11b. There the Ammonites appear among those whose plunder David dedicated to the temple. In this light, we can see that the Chronicler used this account of David's victory over the Ammonites to illustrate further how he prepared for the temple of Solomon.

### *Comparison of 19:1-20:3 with 2 Sam 10:1-12:31*

In general terms we should be reminded that this portion of the Chronicler's history (19:1-20:3) is selectively based on 2 Sam 10:1-12:31 (see figure 17). 19:1-20:1a follows 2 Sam 10:1-11:1a rather closely, but 2 Sam 11:1b-12:25 (David's sin with Bathsheba and Nathan's rebuke) is omitted. The closing verses of this material (20:1-3) are taken from 2 Sam 12:26 and 2 Sam 12:30-31 (see figure 18).

Several minor differences due to style and problems in textual transmission occur (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*). Yet, seven variations deserve special mention.

First, on several occasions, the names of some places are updated (see 19:6,7 // 2 Sam 10:6). These changes indicate the Chronicler's keen sensitivity to his post-exilic readers' knowledge (see 2 Chr 3:3).

Second, at the end of 19:2 (// 2 Sam 10:2) the Chronicler added **to express sympathy to him** (Hanun) a second time to emphasize the honorable intentions of David and his delegation.

Third, 19:6 (// 2 Sam 10:6) adds **a thousand talents of silver to hire chariots and charioteers**. This additional information focuses on the high quality of the enemy David defeated.

<b>1 Chr</b>		<b>2 Sam</b>
19:1-19	Ammonite-Aramean Coalition (closely parallel)	10:1-19
20:1a	Introduction (closely parallel)	11:1a
-----	David's Adultery and Rebuke (omitted)	11:1b-12:25
20:1b	Joab's Leadership (closely parallel)	12:26
-----	Joab Gives Victory to David (omitted)	12:27-29
20:2-3	Plunder from Battle (closely parallel)	12:30-31

*Comparison of 1 Chr 20:1-3 with 2 Sam 11:1-12:31 (figure 18)*

Fourth, 19:7 reads **thirty-two thousand chariots and charioteers** where 2 Sam 10:6 reads **twenty thousand ... foot soldiers**. This variation also emphasizes the strength of David's enemy.

Fifth, in 19:17 (// 2 Sam 10:17) the Chronicler increased attention to David's aggressive role by adding that **David** (Hebrew = "he" [NAS NRS NKJ]) **formed his lines to meet the Arameans in battle**.

Sixth, the change from "seven hundred of their charioteers" (2 Sam 10:18) to **seven thousand of their charioteers** (19:18) is probably the result of a problem in transmission of one or both texts (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*).

Seventh, 19:19 calls more attention to the centrality of David's leadership by shifting the language from "they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them" (2 Sam 10:19) to **they made peace with David and became subject to him** (19:19).

Eighth, the Chronicler omitted 2 Sam 12:27-29. These verses report that David received credit for defeating Rabbah only because Joab was generous enough to include him

in the victory. These facts did not fit well with the Chronicler's desire to exalt David for using his military accomplishments to prepare for the building of the Temple.

### *Structure of 19:1-20:3*

The Chronicler's new arrangement of materials from Samuel shaped his account into a three step narrative (see figure 16). This passage begins with the Ammonite king insulting David (19:1-5). David then faced an Ammonite-Aramean coalition (19:6-19). Finally, David conquered and punished the Ammonite king and repaid the initial insult (20:1-3).

### *David Insulted by the King of Ammon (19:1-5)*

This material begins with a story of sincere sympathy, distrust, embarrassment and comfort. David's good intentions were misread and this mistake eventually led to war.

### *Structure of 19:1-5*

David's defeat of the Ammonites begins with a five step symmetrical narrative (see figure 16). This segment opens as David sends a delegation to the Ammonites (19:1-2a) and ends when he comforts them upon their return (19:5). The action rises as the delegation arrives among the Ammonites (19:2b) and falls toward the end as the Ammonites reject the delegation (19:4). The turning point in the narrative is the advice of the nobles against the Israelite delegation (19:3).

The Ammonites were not indigenous to the promised land and therefore not under the ban of holy war (see Deut 20:17). Moreover, as Moses recounted in Deuteronomy 2, he reminded Israel of how God prevented them from provoking Ammon because he had given their land as a possession to the sons of Lot (see Deut 2:19). Joshua gave Gad "half the land of the sons of Ammon," but they were to stop short of Rabbah (see Josh 13:25). Therefore, while Joshua had taken some of Ammon, David's conquest of Ammon in 1 Chronicles 19-20 went well beyond Joshua's efforts.

At the beginning of this episode, **Nahash**, an Ammonite king who **showed kindness to David** had just died (19:1-2a). David extended **kindness to Hanun son of Nahash** (19:1). David was more than eager to continue the peaceful relationship he enjoyed with Hanun's father. For this reason, **David sent a delegation ... to Hanun** (19:2). The Chronicler made David's motivations clear by adding that the king wanted **to express his sympathy to Hanun** a second time (19:2). David had no ulterior motivations for sending his delegation to Hanun.

The tension of this episode grows as David's delegation arrived (19:2b). David's men came before the Ammonite king with every good intention.

The turning point of this episode consists of Hanun's nobles falsely accusing David. They argued that David wanted **to explore and spy out the country and overthrow it** (19:3).

Hanun followed the counsel of his nobles and insulted David. His men shaved the beards of David's delegation and cut their garments short, exposing their **buttocks** (19:4). These insults were not trifling matters (see Ezk 5:1-4; Isa 7:20; 50:6; Jer 13:22,26; Nah 3:5). They caused profound personal embarrassment for the delegates (see 19:5), and they seriously rebuffed David's attempt to maintain peace with the Ammonites.

This episode ends with David dealing with his delegates (19:5). The king gave them permission to remain outside Jerusalem until their beards grew (19:5). Once again, the passage emphasizes David's sympathetic spirit; it is his chief characteristic in this portion of the narrative. Nevertheless, dramatic tension rises because a question remains. What will David do to the Ammonite king? He showed kindness to the delegates, but how did he respond to Hanun? This portion of the narrative remains unresolved until the closing phase (see 20:1-3).

### *David Destroys Ammonite-Aramean Coalition (19:6-19)*

The second major portion of this material focuses on the formation and destruction of a coalition between the Ammonites and the Arameans. Before David can punish Hanun for his insult, he must destroy the coalition formed to resist him.

#### *Structure of 19:6-19*

This section divides into four symmetrical steps (see figure 16). The beginning focuses on the formation of an Ammonite-Aramean coalition (19:6-7) and the ending describes its dissolution (19:19b). The two middle portions (19:8-15,16-19a) amount to parallel episodes of David's victories over the coalition.

#### *Ammonite-Aramean Coalition Formed (19:6-7)*

The first clue of David's attitude toward the Ammonites is indirect. The Ammonites realized they had **become a stench in David's nostrils** (19:6). This expression appears elsewhere in Scripture to indicate a deep disgust and bitter hatred for someone (see 1 Sam 13:4; 27:12; 2 Sam 16:21). David was very angry with the Ammonites.

Even so, the Ammonite reaction was not to seek reconciliation with David. Instead they formed an alliance with the Arameans (19:6-7). The Chronicler added descriptions of this coalition to heighten the threat against David. He mentioned the large amounts of money paid for the Arameans (**a thousand talents of silver to hire chariots and charioteers** [19:6 // 2 Sam 10:6]). He also shifted from attention to foot soldiers to **thirty-two thousand chariots and charioteers** (19:6 // 2 Sam 10:6). These variations reveal how aggressively the Ammonites came against David. They were not interested merely in defending themselves, but in defeating David. Beyond this, these descriptions of David's enemies highlight a theme that appears many times in Chronicles. As this narrative will show, David conquered a great foe with the help of God (see *Introduction: 23) Victory and Defeat*).

### *Israel's First Victory (19:8-15)*

Israel's first victory (19:8-15) focuses on Joab's successful handling of a battle outside the Ammonite city of Rabah. It begins with David sending Joab to do battle (19:8). The Ammonite forces stood **at the entrance to their city** and the Aramean forces lined up for battle **in the open country** (19:9). Joab saw that he was in a precarious position with enemies **in front of him and behind him** and sent his troops in both directions (19:10-13). He encouraged **Abishai, his brother to be strong** (see 22:13; 28:10,20; 2 Chr 15:7; 32:7) and to **fight bravely for [their] people and the cities of [their] God** (19:13). Despite the strength of the coalition, Joab's strategy worked; the Arameans fled and the Ammonites retreated **inside the city** (19:14-15a). The victory was so decisive that Joab returned home to Jerusalem (19:15b).

### *Israel's Second Victory (19:16-19a)*

A second battle immediately followed (19:16-19a). This time the Arameans called for help from other Aramean groups (19:16). In response, **Shophach the commander of Hadadezer's army** (19:16) readied himself for battle. David aggressively advanced against these enemies; he **crossed the Jordan** (19:17a) before they could enter the land of Israel.

The Chronicler focused attention on David's personal involvement in the campaign. He added that **David** (Hebrew = "he" [NAS NRS NKJ]) **formed his lines to meet the Arameans in battle** (19:17). The numbers of the dead indicate how great David's victory was on that day (19:18). He even killed the Aramean commander **Shophach** (19:18). Although various groups of Arameans had joined against David, they sued for peace after this battle. In fact, the Chronicler changed the language of Samuel (//2 Sam 10:19) to put David in the center of the action once again; he wrote that the Arameans **made peace with David and became subject to him** (19:19a). Here the Chronicler described the blessing of peace in

David's day which he hoped the post-exilic community could experience as well (see *Introduction: 23) Victory and Defeat*).

*Ammonite-Aramean Coalition Broken (19:19b)*

In balance with the formation of an Ammonite-Aramean coalition (19:6-7), 19:19b makes it plain that David utterly destroyed the alliance. Eventually, the Arameans **were not willing to help** (19:19b).