

Crooked Sticks Make Straight Lines

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[0:00] After this, the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun, his son, reigned in his place.

And David said, I will deal loyally with Hanun, the son of Nahash, as his father dealt loyally with me. So David sent by his servants to console him concerning his father.

And David's servants came into the land of the Ammonites, but the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, Do you think because David has sent comforters to you that he is honoring your father?

Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city and spy it out and to overthrow it? 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.

When it was told David, he sent to meet them. For the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return.

[1:22] When the Ammonites saw that they had become a stench to David, the Ammonites sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-Rahab and the Syrians of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Machah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob, 12,000 men.

And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men. And the Ammonites came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the gate.

And the Syrians of Zobah and of Rehob And the men of Tob and Machah were there, or by themselves, in the open country. When Joab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in rear, he chose some of the best men of Israel and arrayed them against the Syrians.

The rest of these men he put in charge of Abishai, his brother, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites. And he said, If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me.

But if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. 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.

[2:42] So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. And when the Ammonites saw that the Syrians fled, they likewise fled before Abishai and entered the city.

Then Joab returned from fighting against the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem. But when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together. And Hadadizzer sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the Euphrates.

They came to Helam with Shobach, the commander of the army of Hadadizzer, at their head. And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan and came to Helam. The Syrians arrayed themselves against David and fought with him. And the Syrians fled before Israel, and David killed of the Syrians the men of 700 chariots and 40,000 horsemen, and wounded Shobach, the commander of their army, so that he died there.

And when all the kings who were servants of Hadadizzer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became subject to them. So the Syrians were afraid to save the Ammonites anymore.

[3:59] Okay. Alright, so the title of this message, as you read up there on the screen, Crooked Sticks Make Straight Lines. And I'll talk about that a little bit later.

Another title that could be given, probably one that would be more anticipated for a message like this, The Unexpected War and Theology.

Unexpected War and Unexpected Theology. But I like Crooked Sticks Make Straight Lines pretty well when referring to a particular quote that's in here.

So anyway, so Crooked Sticks Make Straight Lines. And the fact is, this is kind of a weird story. A weird thing that's happening is there's several things that are going on in this story that happened in the last few chapters.

Last week, or I guess about three weeks ago now, we talked about chapter 9, Mephibosheth, and the covenant that was made with him. And there's another covenant that's alluded to in this passage of scripture, yet it's a little bit different situation.

[5:05] And the response is quite a bit different. And then you have wars that have been fought in chapter 8, chapter 7 as well. They're taking over of Jerusalem.

And lots of victories in battle. David becoming a very solid king. Joab becoming a very solid commander in the Near East at this time.

And so there's a lot of interesting things happening there. And they're continuing on with some of these battles as well. But there are battles that are expected and there are battles that are unexpected.

And this is definitely an unexpected battle, at least the way it started out. And so we're just going to split this up into three parts. And I gave this, just like Pastor Don, I gave this a little bit of an alliteration.

But I want to read the third one first and then get to the first one, just to let you know, because the first one is just not really a normal one. But anyway, the third one is Davidic preeminence.

[6:05] The second one is divine providence. So those two, you know, we'll get to those. But the first one, which we'll get to first, just think of this as a letter, like it's a Dear John letter or something of that nature.

Dear Puke Nose. Okay? Dear Puke Nose. I thought about saying puke face, but I like Puke Nose better. But anyway, you can laugh, that's fine. That's what it's meant to be.

But dear Puke Nose, it's an insult. And these first five verses, we find probably one of the greatest insults in the Bible, what's going on right here.

And nonetheless, it was actually kind of a dumb one at the same time, and one that did not have to happen at all. And here's what David did. He saw that there was a king of a neighboring country, neighboring nation, neighboring kingdom that passed away.

This was a king that served a long time. He was the king of the Ammonites for nearly 50 years. If you go back to 1 Samuel chapter 11, I'll talk about that, I don't know, several months ago.

[7:14] And anyway, you go back to King Saul, and the Ammonites overtook Jabesh-Gilead, which was a city on the east side of the Jordan River.

And they just kind of overtook them. And the Jabesh-Gileadites went to King Saul, who was still pretty young in the kingdom, and asked to be able to be saved.

And Saul took his men, took his army over there, and defeated the Ammonites, and won Jabesh-Gilead back over to Israel, as well as really one of King Saul's finest moments, at least in the kingdom that, well, he was not a very good king overall, as we have definitely noticed.

But that was a fine moment. And because of that, the Jabesh-Gileadite people, when King Saul died in battle, they went behind enemy lines to gather King Saul's body and to bury it, bury his body right there in Jabesh-Gilead, and protect it from being taken by enemies, being abused and such. So they definitely reciprocated as well. So that was the king of Ammon, and that was a guy named Nahash, Nahash, sorry.

[8:41] And Nahash, anyway, there's not a lot that's said beyond that, but nonetheless, Nahash obviously didn't care much for Saul because of what happened, as you might imagine.

And as they say, an enemy of the enemy is a friend. And as David was running over, running all over the place, away from Saul, who knows, he may have gone to Ammon and to be able to hide from King Saul.

But there was a covenant that was alluded to between Nahash and David, as it says in verse 1, his father dealt loyally with me.

And so he's going to go and console the new king, the young king that's taking the place of Nahash. And so that's really what he happened to do.

He was meaning to deal kindness, very similar to what he did with Mephibosheth. What did Mephibosheth do for David? Well, nothing. His father did something wonderful with David.

[9:49] There was a covenant relationship between David and Jonathan, a loyal one. And so just like there is a loyal one between David and Jonathan, there is, at least in some respects, a loyal

relationship between David and Nahash at the same time.

Let's think about what this loyalty is about. A loyalty to a great friend in Jonathan, so he helps out Mephibosheth and restores him back with his land and such.

But then, really, to another nation, to another nation in order to gain an ally, perhaps. I mean, there's a... But someone that is not an Israelite, someone else completely different that he is restoring a relationship to or having a relationship with.

And that's something we'll need to remember as we get into subsequent chapters. You know, he's able to have a relationship and loyalty with his...

Really, what turned out to be his best friend, Jonathan, and then even someone from another country as well. And so it's an important thing to see.

[10:59] Okay, so he's dealing loyally with Nahash, and he wants to do the same thing with Hanun. So what does he do? He takes a group of people, emissaries, and they go to Ammon.

They go to their capital, Rabbah. And he just says, just go there and express kindness to them and express loyalty to them and also console them, comfort.

Comfort the new king and such. And the new king has another plan in mind. He listens to certain people, people that are counseling him and saying, what in the world is this enemy king doing, coming over, you know, past the Jordan River up to us?

What are they trying to do? They're trying to scour out the place. They're trying to look at the kingdom, and they're trying to figure out, you know, it's vulnerable points so they can go in and attack and do something of that nature.

And why are they thinking along these lines? Well, it's because that's generally what happens. And when people come in, they, you know, friendships, kindness that's being done in this way or some kind of camaraderie that's being set up has strings attached during these times.

[12:15] During our times too, quite often, when one country goes to another country and tries to befriend, there are usually some, you know, with benefits and that kind of thing that happens, some strings attached that are going there.

So, so they, they were giving him some, some advice that really wasn't true, but many times has been true at the same time. So, you know, it might remind us of a story that happened long time after this point, after Solomon died and his son came into power and, and, and there were people that were asking him to, to be kind to them, Israelites, asking them to lower taxes and to lower the burden on them and, and he went to his counselors and the old guy said, listen to them, be kind with them, deal with them kindly.

You know, the men that counseled Solomon said that to them and then his young friends and buddies over here said, ah, they, they just, they're asking for it, why don't you just, you know, give them and whip them good?

And, and, and guess what he did? He, he whipped them good and then they whipped him good by 10 of the, 10 of the, you know, clans going off into making their own other kingdom, the northern kingdom and then southern kingdom.

That's when that happened. So, so this is something that's going on right here but going on with the Ammonites and, and so what do they do? What is the insult that's made?

[13:44] What's the deer puke nose that's made here? Well, they take their beards, these guys that are the emissaries and take their beards and shave half of them off. You know, pretty much cut right in half and if you think just down the middle, take one side, shave it off and the other side, keep it there.

Okay, that's pretty much what the picture is that's being displayed there. Now, you have to think about the culture a little bit. You're like, what's, what's the big deal about that other than the fact that it's just ugly?

You know, they can just shave it off, that kind of thing. It's, you don't think it's really that, that big of a deal. Well, I have a beard and I don't have a beard because, you know, of any, any cultural reason I have a beard because when I don't have a beard I look like I'm about 14 and I like looking like I'm 14.

So, I may not be as true now with gray hair. I might look more like 21 or something. Now, that might be better. Who knows, maybe I should shave my beard off. But, but nonetheless, I wouldn't shave half of my beard and, nonetheless, but there's the cultural reality there as well.

You know, that, of course, beards are a very common thing for the Israelites to have, really, for all of the, the men of that area for very logical and reasonable reasons being in the desert and such as that.

[15:03] But, but if you're going to shave your beard off, that is generally a sign of mourning. You know, people will shave their beards off as a sign of mourning. But, if the beard is forced off, you know, someone else shaves it off for you in a way that is by force, you know, certainly not your consent at all.

That is a sign of oppression and that is a sign of enslavement. You know, that you are the servant or you are the slave of the person who is taking that beard off of you.

And so, it really is a sign of saying, you all are nothing to us. You all are dogs and you all are about as worth, you know, you're about as low as low can get.

Now, you got to remember most of chapter 8, if not all of chapter 8, happened prior to that. And chapter 8, if you remember, was the time when David went north and south and east and west and conquered all kinds of places all around Israel and taking their land and making servants out of people.

So, these guys were pretty tough, tough people and the kingdom was running quite well and yet, the Ammonites were just simply saying, no, you all are pretty much dogs and you all are just as worthless as worthless gets.

[16:30] and we're going to show it by that, but not only with the beards, but even more so. And I can see how any of us can see this as definitely being shameful.

They took their garments and they cut them up at the waist, at the hips. And so, that reveals some, you know, very private areas and during that time there was no undergarments of any kind.

So, yes, they were, you know, they were exposing everything down there and that was a shameful act as well. Also, something that happened whenever there were people taken for war purposes as prisoners, they were captured as prisoners of war, oftentimes, you would find that they would do that to their garments and basically make them shameful.

And yeah, when you are exposing yourself, especially in that culture, but, well, maybe not as much in today's culture as it should be, but that is a shameful thing.

That was very much, anytime nakedness happened, it was shame. I mean, that was pretty much from the Garden of Eden. I mean, they were naked and they felt no shame but after the sin happened, after the sin came into the world, they realized what?

[17:48] They were naked and they were ashamed and that's just what was, that's what nakedness is, shameful. And so, they were very much, as it says in this passage, they were ashamed.

And so, and so David allows them to remain at Jericho until their beards grow back and they were able to obviously get another, get another outfit to wear and then, and then they can return at that point because yeah, they didn't have to, they shouldn't have been, I mean, these are guys that are not just, you know, just nobodies in Israel, obviously they were sent as ambassadors, they were sent on behalf of David, and we have to think of that, that's something I just thought of.

When someone is sent as an ambassador to another nation, who are they representing? They're representing the head of state and so, if they're doing all this stuff to the ambassador, they are doing all this stuff to the head of state, they're doing all this stuff to King David and then that's important to understand as well.

And so yes, that's why I put the term dear Pukinos, it's more than just starting at D and P, it really is what was happening right here. That's the terrible, horrible insult.

I know Pukinos is really kind of a seven-year-old insult, but that's kind of how this guy was acting in many ways. But then we get to this other part in verse six and following and we find that he realizes that the king of Ammon realizes that they kind of made a mistake, had become a stench to David and so he's got a saved face and this saving face is quite costly.

[19:32] There's a parallel passage to 2 Samuel 10, it's 1 Chronicles chapter 19, I've turned to that, but there's a piece of information in this particular passage that's important here that's not in this one.

It's that all of these people that were hired, they hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and Zobah and it says all these numbers, 20,000 foot soldiers, 1,000 men, 12,000 men, there's some chariots and other things that are in there as well.

The other passage actually has a couple different numbers but there's ways to talk about the discrepancies there. But anyway, a lot of people, a lot of men that they were hiring, so not only with the Ammonite army but with all these other people from the north, the Syrians and Arameans that are coming from northern territories, north of Israel, north of Ammon as well.

Ammon is just right over the river, right over the Jordan River from Israel. They're neighbors. And so, hiring all these people, but they're hired for a steep price, 1,000 talents of silver.

If you can imagine 75,000 pounds of silver in that vicinity, that's pretty much what was given for this purpose. I mean, I can't even imagine that.

[20 : 58] And so, but nonetheless, it was the steep price that was given for this purpose. But there was a, but God had a plan in this situation.

It was not expected. This was an unexpected event that happened. You know, David was just simply going to do something nice, a nice gesture for the Ammonites.

They were definitely in mourning, mourning over their king that had died, this new king's father, and just making a calm and nice gesture and, you know, loving gesture to them.

And yet, they definitely decided to do something different and began this war, this major battle that happened. And yet, all these nations coming in as mercenaries and ready to fight because they're being paid to fight.

It's not their fight, but they're being paid to fight. So, why not come in and handle the situation? And so, they have quite a mighty army going on here.

[22 : 05] And so, what does it say? David heard of it in verse 7 and realized that this was quite an ordeal. He sent Joab and all the hosts of the mighty men.

And so, this is a big deal that's going on and this is all of the hosts, all of his finest warriors, finest battle.

You know, these are, I mean, notice back in chapter 7, chapter 8, the taking of Jerusalem. A lot of these men were on his side whenever he was running from Saul.

A lot of these men were, you know, have been with him almost from the beginning. Especially Joab and Abishai and some of the commanders as well. So, you know, these were some mighty men.

These were valiant and people valiant in war and also battle-hardened at the same time. These guys have fought. a lot and such.

[23 : 08] And so, he brought all these people up here and they realized something that was going to, that maybe they didn't quite expect. Maybe all of the, how large it was.

In verse 9, he sees, Joab sees, that the battle was set against him both in the front and in the rear. And so, here he is right here.

I almost picture this. How I kind of picture this is if you've ever seen Lord of the Rings, the third movie, The Lord of the Rings, Return of the King, and they're at the gate of Mordor and there are, there are orcs and all kinds of enemies all around them and they're just kind of circled all around them and they're pretty much fighting from all ends.

This is kind of how I see this. This may not be quite that way. But nonetheless, the Ammonites are over right in front of a vulnerable spot, their gate, of their great city, Rabah.

And so, there they are, the Ammonites. And on the other side are the Syrians that have come down from the north to fight. And so, here's the battle front. And yeah, here are the Israelites.

[24 : 19] They're ready. They have a good, solid, strong front and then they find out the rear has to also be a front as well. So, what do they do? Well, they just, they have to do what they have to do at this situation.

So, they take some of the best men of this group, the strongest of the men and put them against the rear, I guess we want to call the Ammonites the front.

I guess on the rear end they put the, they put the best to fight the Arameans as they acceptably could see that the Arameans were a stronger crew of people. And then the Ammonites were fought by the rest of them as well.

So, Abishai was control of the, of the Ammonites. And Abishai, by the way, you know he's number two in command. He's, he's, you know, he's no sissy at all.

You know, just, you have to go back chapter eight. You don't have to go any further than chapter eight to figure out that, that Abishai had done some amazing things. Well, I guess my translation doesn't say it this way, but, but the second, the second, or not second, first Chronicles passage that's parallel to this, chapter 18 will actually say that, that, that Abishai was the one that actually led

the Israelites to go down to Edom, or at least a group of the Israelites to go to Edom and to attack the, the Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

[25 : 48] So, the victory in the south happened with Abishai's command. So that, so Abishai knows what he's doing as well. So these, but what does Joab tell Abishai?

Well, he basically says the, the men are going to, some of the men are going to fight the Arameans and the Syrians, some of the men are going to fight the Ammonites, and if I need help over with the Arameans, I can ask you to help and, you know, bring them along.

If you need help with the Ammonites, then I can, I can send some people along. So, again, another picture there are the commanders are kind of right here in the center, and, you know, one's looking this way, the other team's looking that way, and the, and there are men that are fighting on this side, there are men fighting on this side, and, and, yeah, they're able to do that.

They're able to help each other out. Now, there's a lot of things that are not in this passage of scripture. If you really want to read a good war chronicle or anything of that nature for any battle that's going on, whatever battle it might be, American battle or a battle from Europe or wherever, you like to hear details, and you like to hear people that are eyewitnesses, maybe they're generals or they're people on the battlefield, and they're going to write out all kinds of details that happened, and you like to get, you know, that, you just, just the feel for what's going on, and this doesn't really do that for you very much.

It just, just has the basic things, so, so it's like, oh, so how, how often do they have to, to go back and forth or, or what's going on, and then it says that the Arameans fled.

[27 : 25] Well, that was a pretty strong group of people. How in the world, you know, could the, could the Israelites far outnumbered, able to take the Arameans out that way, and, and then, of course, the Ammonites went back into their, their city.

Now, that one is fairly believable right there, but, but nonetheless, it's, it, it's kind of strange, you know, there's not, not a whole lot that's being said here, and I think, this is my suggestion, it's, the reason it's not there is because that's not really the point.

The point is, is right here, what, what Joab says in verses 11 and 12. If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you.

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.

Now, this is some unexpected words that are said by a guy that, well, he's really not the best of people in the world. I mean, if you remember when Abner came and pledged his allegiance to David after Saul died, after Abner had tried to make Ish-bosheth the king, and basically Abner would be the ruler right behind Ish-bosheth, and that all didn't work out, but Abner had changed his ways, at least that's what's believed, and nonetheless, he was actually coming, and he was going to side with David, and he was going to bring the people of Benjamin and other tribes that followed Saul's family in line with David.

[29 : 11] It really was a major work that was being done there, and it's going to be quite a help in order for all of the tribes to follow David, and Joab takes Abner over to the side to come and talk with him, you know, an old commander versus another commander and such, and then just stabs him right there and kills him, and he dies right there on the spot, and so this is pretty much Joab for you.

It's kind of the kind of person Joab is. He holds grudges, and those grudges are held for a long, long time. Of course, Abner killed Joab's brother, you know, in self-defense.

That doesn't matter. It was still killing his brother, but nonetheless, that's the grudge, the kind of thing that Joab, the kind of person that Joab is, and so, you know, why would you think that he would, you know, make a response such as that, and of course, a lot of people have asked this kind of question, you know, can we take words that are said by people that are not necessarily the best of people and learn from them?

Well, that's what this title's about. Crooked sticks make straight lines, and of course, we can just go all over the place and talk about how many people that have been flawed have also been people of great change as well at the same time, and this is one of these sections, and this is one of these phrases that is being said from someone that, no, is definitely flawed individual, and even to the point that David told Solomon, do not let his gray head go down in peace.

I mean, he told Solomon to take Joab out, and he did that. He sent his commander to do that, but nonetheless, just let us, but he says here in verse 12, be of good courage and be courageous for our people.

[31:18] Be of good courage and courageous for our people, and there's so much that we can learn from this idea. Actually, Brother Willard brought some of this up this morning, the idea of being of good courage with Joshua, you know, telling his people, be strong and courageous when they're going into this land that God has given them.

Well, in many ways, this is kind of the same way. You know, the land of the Ammonites is land that God originally gave the Israelites to Abram, so in some ways, this can apply there too, but nonetheless, when, you know, even facing such a formidable foe, even facing unexpected war, not only in the front, but also in the back, and being severely outnumbered, and this war being something that, you know, happened because of some stupid thing that was being done, that was done, you know, nonetheless, be of good courage and be of good strength as well, and this is a, and this is something we can come to realize in fact that life, our lives, our human lives, are, it's constant warfare in our lives.

I mean, there's, it's unavoidable, it is enduring, it's arduous, it's very, it's formidable, it's in your face at all the times, I mean, we're faced, constantly faced with all kinds of battles, and spiritually speaking, it's just as much so.

I mean, you know, we are, we are not on a, I'm trying to think who said this or how many times it's been said, but, you know, we're not on a cruise ship or on a battleship when it comes to a Christian life.

You know, this is a battleship, we are fighting a battle, and we need to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might, we need to put on the full armor of God, and that is, that is something that we as believers are, are, are, are directed to do, are commanded to do, and, and to understand that when we go out and when we go into all the nations and, and make disciples of all the nations, it is not doing it, you know, as like, as just having fun and, and, and, and being on a cruise ship, that kind of thing, but we are to do it as it is.

[33:50] It is our battle, I mean, we are talking to people who are headed to hell, and we don't want them to head to hell, so we tell them about Jesus, and that's really, uh, one of the realities of, of, uh, of our life.

It is a battle. It is a constant, uh, battle. It's also a constant battle of faith and, and trusting in the Lord through all times and purposes, no matter, uh, what is happening with our, our lives, physically, or, uh, with family difficulties, or with financial difficulties or whatever it might be.

Uh, we are to, you know, we are to trust in the Lord as well, and that's definitely not an easy thing to do at all, um, many times. And so that's something we have to realize as well, and that we have to be of good courage at all times.

And so, you know, and also they're saying, let us be courageous for our people. They're saying to, uh, to Abishai, to let us be courageous for our people and to, and to, to lead courageously and to fight courageously in, in this way.

Because why are they doing this? They're doing it for a purpose that is more so than just their lives. They're doing it, as it says in verse 12, for the cities of our God. They're doing it for their people.

[35:09] They're doing it for their families, for their land, and for the Lord's purposes as well. And, uh, and, and the best thing about this.

They're not just fighting for this purpose. They're not just, uh, but they are also trusting in the Lord. And they're also recognizing that it's the Lord who, you know, gives, uh, gives the victory.

And so, the Lord will do what is good. If the Lord wants to wipe out the Israelites that day, well, the Lord can do what the Lord, uh, it pleases at this point.

And, and that's our lives as well. You know, as we pray, whatever the prayer is, whatever the, uh, the need is, whatever the concern is, it's, we're directed in James, the book of James, to, to pray if it be the Lord's will.

If it be the Lord's will. So, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We are to pray in God's will and to be thankful for his sovereignty over our lives and over the lives of the world that we live in.

[36:17] And so, this is, this is an interesting, uh, thing that, that Joab brings up. You know, the Lord will do what is good to him as well. And that's an interesting thought.

Good. I know, Brother Willard brought this up. Um, the idea of God's goodness in courage and God's goodness in, in, in, you know, warfare in life or, or the, the battles of our lives.

Um, God's goodness in, in these things. And, and it says in scripture, all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose. So, what things work together?

Well, just stay in Romans chapter 8 where that scripture verse is. It says, that we are to walk in the spirit and we are to live in the spirit. That is, that we are not to walk according to the flesh, we are to walk according to the spirit.

It says right there in Romans 8 verse 1, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but according to the spirit.

[37 : 20] And so, we are to live our lives in the spirit. And the Holy Spirit is a wonderful gift that, that reveals, that points directly to Christ and helps us to realize the Lord's will in our lives as he illuminates God's word for us.

And, and also, as we pray, it says right there in Romans chapter 8 verse 26 that, that the spirit will bring the words to the Lord in a, in a language that we do not comprehend.

And so the, so the, the prayer that we're praying is, is, is brought to, to God by the Holy Spirit. And, and that's a wonderful, wonderful promise that we have as well.

And not only do all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose, but then we see all this great things that are happening even after in that verse. That we are called, we are predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.

And if we're called and predestined in this way, we are justified and we are glorified. And so there is a good that is going on.

[38 : 25] There are good going on all over in, in our lives in that way. And that's a great promise that, that, that we can hold. The fact that, that if we are believers, that if we are loved the Lord and are called according to his purpose, there will come a day where, you know, we will be in heaven and we will be glorified and we will be made whole and made perfect.

And, and that's a, and that's a wonderful truth as well. And so what is, you know, what good is there in this way? Well, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said something is good.

They're being thrown in a fiery furnace. Is that good? Not really. I won't want, I don't want to be thrown in a fiery furnace. And what happens when most people get thrown in a fiery furnace? You fry. Just what happens?

And what, and so if, if they were going to die, well, that's the Lord's will. If they were going to be saved, well, that's the Lord's will. Whatever it is, that's the Lord's will.

So that was good, and whatever, whatever seems good to the Lord will be good for them. And, and this is an interesting thought, just, especially from somebody that didn't quite seem to follow God all the time.

[39 : 35] That really didn't quite seem to follow God much at all. that he was someone that even was allowed, would have been allowed to say such a thing. And, but nonetheless, as the commander, he, he, I guess he realized at that point, that, yeah, whatever seems good for God will happen.

So it's really out of our hands. We don't, it's really out of our hands. Whatever seems to the Lord will happen. And if he wants us to win this battle, we'll win. But if he doesn't want us to win the battle, we won't win.

We've got to continue to do it nonetheless. We've got to continue to fight. Okay. All right. So, what happened? Verse 13. Joab and the people who were with him drew near the battle against the Syrians and fled before him.

And so, they were fighting that battle. Who knows what happened in between all of that? How often they had to help each other? But the Syrians fled and then, you know, fled and they were grouped as we see later on in this passage.

And then the Ammonites went back into their city as well, hiding behind their walls, which is a common thing to do. That's why those walls are there. And so, the Ammonites, we'll come back to them in chapters 11 and 12, but then the Syrians, the Israelites, you're going to have to face them once again when we start in verse 15 as well.

[41 : 00] And this is the, and this is the Davidic preeminence section right here starting in verse 15. And so, the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel.

What happened? They gathered themselves together. And some people that we have seen before in chapter 8, Hadadizzer, who was king, one of the Aramean kings, he sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the Euphrates River.

they came to Helam with Shobach, the commander of the army of Hadadizzer at their head. So, a very strong and formidable commander of that day.

And when it was told David, what happened? He didn't just gather the mighty men, he gathered all of Israel. He gathered the entire army and he brought them together and it wasn't Joab that went up there, it was David the king who went up there and led them to battle as well.

And gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan and came to Helam. And all these people came together, Syrians arrayed themselves against David and fought with him.

[42:15] And of course, it says that they died, they were defeated as well. Lots of chariots that were defeated, lots of horsemen that were defeated, and even Shobak the commander was defeated and he died there on the battlefield.

And they realized they could not help out the Ammonites anymore and chose not to help out the Ammonites anymore. And we learned that from chapters 11 and 12 when the Ammonites had to face the Israelites once again.

They didn't get any help in that time anymore. So anyway, this is an interesting thing. Now this is really kind of an expected battle that happened because, yeah, the Syrians, they were paid to fight and they were paid to expand the army and, you know, why would they give a thousand talents of silver to a formidable army to come and fight?

Well, they would do that to win. They would do that because they understand that they're going to have all kinds of men and all kinds of chariots that are going to surround the army that the Ammonites are going to fight.

You know, the Ammonites and Israelites, that would be a pretty good battle going on right there, but you bring in the Syrians and you make this enemy much larger and they're going to overpower you because there's no way the Israelites can hold on to that.

[43:38] But nonetheless, they did. They certainly did and, of course, that was God's will for that to happen. So, yeah, they got defeated. They didn't see they're going to lose.

So what'd they do? Well, go after them again. Like, we're embarrassed, so we want to not be embarrassed anymore, so we're going to go ahead and go on to war again.

So that wasn't really unexpected at this point and the Syrians are the ones this time that are actually going to battle with the Israelites. And so the entire Israelite army came and defeated them in a great way.

And so wonderful victory that's going on, just like it is back in chapter 8, just like it is back in chapter 7. I mean, lots of great victories going on. You would think that Israel is about as strong as Israel could get at this point.

I'm sure they could get stronger than this, but nonetheless, I mean, look where God has brought this little people from slavery to Egypt all the way to having this formidable army, having this great kingdom going on, having a wonderful king, and understanding that even some great sons at this time, that one of them was going to become the king, as they thought.

[45:01] And so, a great line that's going to be handled there as well. And the Lord is on their side. I mean, that's probably the greatest thought there as well.

The Lord was on their side. So, these are great days for Israel. Wonderful days. And now we see also David, all this great, these great, brought up the word hesed a few weeks ago.

the covenant with Jonathan and then bringing it to Mephibosheth and now to, well, he tried to at least to an enemy commander or at least the Ammonite king as well.

And that's why we have this war because that didn't go very well. But this also points to something even greater as well. It doesn't just point to some battle that happened, but this, as well as lots of other battles in Scripture, point to a psalm.

Psalms chapter 2. And this is why I've titled this section Davidic Preeminence because this is kind of something that's happening in at least a more regional situation, not globally like the psalm is displaying.

[46:22] But it says in Psalm 2, Why do the nations rage and the people's plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed saying, Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.

And he who sits in heaven laughs and the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury saying, As for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill. I will tell of the decree. The Lord said to me, You are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Now therefore, O kings, be wise, be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the sun lest he be angry and you perish in the way. For his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. And this is just like it's happening with the Syrians and the Ammonites and these nations that are coming together to take battle against the Israelites.

[47:40] Yeah, why do the nations rage? Why do they do this vain thing, this, you know, get in the way of what is actually going to happen because God is the ruler of all things, God is in control of all things and whatever he wants to have happen is going to happen and this is something he wants to have happen, this kingdom, this kingdom come, come about with this one, at first, the Davidic rule with David and his line reigning in Israel and then pointing to something even greater, the greater David, Jesus Christ.

lost and so this is something that the Lord wants to have happen and yet these guys are plotting and they're scheming in vain. It's going to come out to be pretty meaningless all in the end and so, and that's why, yeah, the Lord is in heaven laughing at all of this.

This is funny, these guys think they can get in my way but he has a plan and he has a purpose and just like what Joab said, whatever is good for the Lord, he will do and what is good for him, he's going to set his king on Zion, his holy hill.

So as he's brought David into power and the line down, all the way down the line, Solomon and down the line in power and then now, well, and then, and then to the greater David in Jesus Christ bringing them to the point of being the head of that kingdom and they have a purpose and they have a plan and the Lord's purposes will come about and so, I think from this passage of scripture, I think we can take from it and understand that, you know, things come up in life that are unexpected but we should be praying and be thankful for the Lord's sovereign work in our lives and the Lord's sovereign will to be done in our lives as well and just like what's happened here.

Now, as you probably know, the tide's going to turn a lot and I think something we need to remember going into next week is this idea of hesed, of covenant.

[50:07] That David is willing to have a great covenant with Jonathan and extend it to his family, whatever the family was. I mean, it started out, it turned out to be David's son Mephibosheth but was there anybody in Saul's family line that was alive?

Turns out it was Jonathan's son but if it was anybody he was going to be sharing hesed with them. And then even over here in Ammon, an enemy who has been an enemy to Israel not long before, you know, Saul.

And yet David is willing to have a covenant loyalty with them as well. But then we bring up the mighty men and his people who were with him, the men who were with him, many from the beginning were loyal to him who fought valiantly on his behalf.

In formidable situations, in overpowering situations, a lot like Ammonites in the Syrian battle we just talked about tonight. Is there loyalty with them? Is there hesed with them?

That's something to think about, especially when we get into next week. Thank you.