

**14. Saw that the Syrians.** News of the defeat or victory spreads rapidly on great battlefields. **Then fled they also.** News of the Syrian defeat broke the spirit of the Ammonites, and they retired at once within the walls of the city. **Joab returned.** He did not attempt a siege. This battle was fought late in the year, and fall and winter made campaigning in Palestine impossible.

**15. When the Syrians saw.** When their generals had succeeded in reorganizing their force, and the extent of the damage inflicted by Joab's onset could be measured. **They gathered themselves together.** Their soldierly habits enabled them to re-form quickly after defeat. As Joab had returned to Jerusalem in triumph the broken force could be united without fear of molestation. (3) *When we contend against wrong we should never think it useless to try again.*

**16. Hadarezer.** The name is spelled Hadarezer in 2 Sam. 8. 3. His kingdom included not only the principality of Zobah, but extended across the river into Mesopotamia. **Brought out the Syrians.** The defeat of the soldiers whom he had rented out to the King of Ammon forced him to declare a Syrian war against David. **Beyond the river.** Euphrates. These were doubtless his vassals and tributaries. **Shobach the captain.**

He was to Hadarezer's army what Joab was to David's.

**17. When it was told David.** The movements of the Ammonites and Syrians would be closely watched at such a time. **Gathered all Israel together.** His action implies no reflection on Joab. When the two great military forces of the time were preparing for a final duel and Israel's existence was at stake it would have been unbecoming for the king to stay at home.

**18. Seven hundred chariots.** The numbers vary in Chronicles, but any number higher than four hundred was represented by a system of markings so involved that errors frequently resulted.

**19. Kings that were servants.** The vassal kings. **And served them.** They transferred their allegiance to David. This was the chief link in the chain that led to the subjection of all Syria to David and the extension of his kingdom to the Euphrates. About the same time the Edomites invaded Judah in southern Palestine. Joab and Abishai, with a portion of the army, were dispatched to meet them. In the Valley of Salt near the Dead Sea Edom was defeated, garrisons placed in the conquered district, and David's empire extended south as far as the desert.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

David was now firmly established on his throne, the ark had been successfully removed into the new tabernacle, and all the tribes of Israel had been united into a strong, harmonious, central government. There was nothing to be feared now from any internal enemy. This quiet state of peace was not to endure long, for it seems that the sweet singer of Israel, who never appears to have engaged in an aggressive war, was not to enjoy peace for any length of time; for, no sooner had harmony been established at home than foreign envy and jealousy brought on several wars in rapid succession. The exact order of these conflicts cannot be given, for it is evident that no reliable chronology is to be looked for in the Books of Samuel. From the eighth chapter of this book, which every scholar should read, we find that David defeated the Philistines and Moabites (1-2); the people of Zobah and Damascus (3-8); Hamath and Edom (9-14); and in to-day's lesson we learn he was also victorious in the fierce war with the Ammonites, who had hired a large force of mercenary troops to help them. Besides these wars, we must not forget his conflicts with the Philistines soon after his accession to the throne (2 Sam. 5. 17-25).

The army of David consisted of about 300,000 men, almost all infantry. (See, however, 2 Sam. 8. 4.) This was divided into twelve divisions of 24,000 each, which served one month at a time. (See 1 Chron. 27. 1-15.) In case of war all were

liable to be called out together. When David took a census, some years later, the number was much higher, namely, 800,000 in Israel and 500,000 in Judah, or all males capable of bearing arms (2 Sam. 24. 9).

**Verse 8. The children of Ammon.** (For parallel account see 1 Chron. 19.) These were the descendants of Lot (Gen. 19. 38). They lived on the east side of Jordan between Moab and Bashan, or between the Arnon and Jabbok. Their capital was Rabbah ("great city"), known in the Greek period by the name of Philadelphia. **Came out.** Started on their war expedition. They were a warlike people, much more so than the kindred tribe Moab. They had made war upon Israel twice before (Judg. 3. 12, ff. and 10. 7, ff.). **At the entering in of the gate.** It seems that they did advance far, but prepared for battle at the very gate of Rabbah. **The Syrians.** This is the Aram of the Hebrew Bible. The word is vaguely used for a large territory or a number of countries between Phœnicia and the Euphrates, or even beyond. The word is generally limited or defined, as in this verse, by some other, as Zobah, Damascus (8. 5), etc. **Zobah.** This was northeast of Damascus and south of Hamath, or between the Orontes and Euphrates. **Rehob.** Not Beth-rehob in Asher, but Ruhaibeh, about twenty-five miles north of Damascus. Others identify it with Rehoboth, not far from the junction of the Chaboras with the Eu-

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