

The Face of the Warring Christ

2 Samuel 10:13 - 19

Nutshell: Like David, Christ advances against His enemies, but even when He brings down oppressors of His people, He is still doing His enemies the best He can do for them, Ps 83:16, leading them to repentance.

We are ambassadors of Christ's unconditional surrender terms: terms that raise us rather than disgrace us.

I. Context: Ammonite King Hanun returning insult for David's show of kindness.

II. Text

2 Sam 10:13 And Joab drew near, and the people who *were* with him, to battle with Aram, and they fled from his face;

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

Summary So Far

- A. The Book of Kingdoms, our 1 & 2 Sam + 1 & 2 Kings, is the story of Israel's kings, beginning with the prophet Samuel, who anointed both of the first two kings, Saul and David
 - 1. Samuel warned Israel vs. having a king, 1 Sam 10:19, Hos 13:11
 - 2. **Saul** was apostate *man's* version of king. God previewed *His* version via **David**, 1 Sam 13:14
- ✿ B. 1 Kings 15:5 tells us that David kept God's commands *except* in the Bathsheba incident. This dramatically shapes our approach to each incident in David's life.
- C. The chronicler presents David as God's chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for all subsequent kings of Judah, e.g., 2 Kings 14:3
- D. David becoming king
 - 1. David was anointed king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2. 2 Sam 2:12-32: trouble between Judah and Israel (the 9 northern tribes) begins.

2. After Ishbosheth's assassination, **Israel**'s elders anointed David KING, 2 Sam 5:1-5
- E. David's waiting business as king
 1. David finally vanquished Jebus (Jerusalem), 2 Sam 5:6-10, where he had taken Goliath's head, 1 Sam 17:54
 - a. David rebuffed 2 Philistine invasions, 5:17-25
 - b. David retrieved the Ark from its 'wanderings', 6:1-19; first, ignoring God's instructions, leading to a death, then properly, with great joy
 2. Now David wants to build a **permanent** form for the Tabernacle. This will be the Temple, 7:1-3
 - a. God corrected David: "I'm building *you* a house, 7:4-11
 - b. Then, "Your son will build the Temple," 7:12-13
 - ★ 3. God had chosen **Abraham** to make a nation from which Redemption would come.
 - a. Now God says the Redeemer will be a king who comes through **David's** permanent kingdom, 7:14-17
 - b. 7:18-29, David's deep, beautiful prayer: God, You are doing this. Indeed, be resolved to do it!
 4. In chap 8, David battled aggressive neighbors, east, west, north, and south, dedicating the captured brass, gold, and silver to the Temple, 8:7-12.
 - a. His massive victory over Edom + the Syrians gained him a name/ reputation, 8:13-14
 - b. David was "just and moral" (word pair used of Abraham and Messiah) through his govt, 8:15-18
 5. In chap 9, David found Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, through whom he fulfilled his oath to show favor to Jonathan's heirs.
 6. And David had finished all waiting duties
- F. Last time, chap 10, David sent comfort to King Hanun over his dad's death
 1. Hanun mistreated David's messengers, then hired 4 additional forces vs. David
 2. These forces surrounded Israel's army
 3. Joab had to split his forces in both directions.
 4. Joab gave a stirring speech

Kid-speak: Remember last time we talked about David? It was an exciting battle scene, but we didn't find out what happened. Now we will!

G. 2 Sam 10:13, a very brief description

1. Joab, meeting the greater force, advanced and overcame
 - a. It says that they fled from Joab's "face." To "flee" from the "face" of the enemy is a common OT phrase.
 - b. It indicates the forward presence of his forces. Joab's 'front' (we would call it) overwhelmed the opposing front.
2. As a result, the Aramean-combo army broke ranks and fled

2 Sam 10:14 and the sons of Ammon saw that Aram had fled, and they fled from the face of Abishai, and they went into the city.

Then Joab returned from the sons of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

H. Summary: the Ammonites saw what happened to the Arameans (Syrians) and ran into the city. Joab, having averted the crisis, withdrew to Jerusalem.

1. Sounds like Abishai's attack was easier because of what Joab had done
2. Amazing, how history-changing moments can hinge on a particular moment! Here, when Joab broke the Aramean front.

Kid-speak: Both of the armies that were fighting the Israelites ran away, because David's army was too strong!

2 Sam 10:15 And Aram saw that he was driven in Israel's presence [lit., to Israel's face], and they were assembled as one. 16 And Hadadezer sent, and he brought out Aram which is beyond the River, and they came to Chelam. And Shobach, officer of the Hadadezer's army, was before them [lit. was to their faces].

- I. Once Hadadezer's men collected themselves, they regained confidence for battle, but they wanted reinforcements
 1. Hadadezer sent for his forces that were in the territory he had gone to secure last time we saw him, 8:3, beyond the Euphrates, some 400 mis. N of the original battle
 2. These troops were probably called from garrisons there
- J. They met in Chelam, some 50 mis. N. of the original battle,

east of the Sea of Galilee

1. Shobach led this new force
2. “Chelam” means “fortress,” so this was a specifically military city, designed for military advantage

2 Sam 10:17 And *this* was declared to David, and he gathered all Israel, and he passed over the Jordan. And he came to Chelam, and Aram set themselves in array to meet David. Then they fought with him;

- K. Now we’ve got the *total* Israeli military force involved, not just the elite and elite-of-the-elite, as in the initial engagement
1. Again, Aram has all the advantages, picking their place, one that was prearranged for conflict. Doubtless on higher ground, etc.

Kid-speak: One of the armies that ran away sent messengers to get *more* army men to come help them.

2. As in the last battle, we don’t have the tactical layout. We can be sure that as much thought went into tactics on both sides as in any conventionally fought battle.
3. By studying historical battle plans, you can draw valuable generalizations, but the genius of battle hinges on decisions made for the unique situation of a given setting
4. Paul says that we have spiritual battle plans, 2 Cor 10:4-5
 - a. Many other Scriptures fill in details: Prov 11:30; 21:22
 - b. Col 4:5-6

2 Sam 10:18 and Aram fled from the presence [lit. face] of Israel, and David killed 700 charioteers and 40,000 horsemen of Aram; he also struck Shobach, *the* officer of its host, and he died there.

- L. David is credited with his army’s deeds
1. When *we* walk in righteousness, *Christ* is credited, Eph 2:10; 5:26-27
 2. But *we* are actually *choosing* and *doing* the deeds, Rev 19:8; Philip 2:12
 3. Christ is more creditable for our deeds than David for his army, since Christ “works in us” His will, Philip 2:13; Heb

13:21

4. But Christ also arranges for us to be more responsible for our own actions, renewing us in His image, Jn 1:12; Col 3:10

M. So Aram's regrouping and reinforcements have failed

Kid-speak: David took all the men old enough to fight and went to fight Hadadezer's army, which was inside a fort.

2 Sam 10:19 And all the kings- servants of Hadadezer- saw that they were defeated in Israel's presence [lit *face*], so they made peace with Israel and served them. Then Aram was afraid to help the sons of Ammon anymore.

N. Note the presence of the word "face" in our verses today: an average of one occurrence per verse. It mostly signifies "presence."

1. A simple lesson can be drawn from this. It is in our *interactions* with others that we achieve anything meaningful.
 - a. We must "face" people
 - b. Fortunately, this doesn't imply anything automatically unpleasant. Yes, we have bad news about the lie they agree with, but only to tell them the Good News of escaping the lie!
2. Our warfare (2 Cor 10:4-5) requires thoughtful engagement
 - a. We can tear down unbelievers' mental constructs simply by asking the right questions. "Are you sure that that trust/pursuit will uphold you in this life and the next?"
 - b. That is an invasive question, but it's not 'itching for a fight'

O. Hadadezer's lands were not part of lands God had committed to *cherem* (devotion/destruction). Both Saul and David had pursued *cherem* in Canaanite territories.

1. David had once again subdued this northern region. Now they submitted anew to surrender terms.
2. And again, they were left to govern themselves. They "served" Israel, no doubt including tribute. Quotas of workmen might be demanded by Israel, etc.

Kid-speak: The Israelites beat Hadadezer's army again. This

time, they learned not to help the Ammonites anymore!

- P. In this age, Christianity can make peace whenever it becomes the dominant ideology (and there will be a dominant ideology)
1. This occurred notably in Europe, England especially. Now Christianity's influence in the UK is somewhere between waning and spectral.
 2. Christianity was the dominant ideology in America's founding and building
 - a. That's why we were once the best at welcoming strangers
 - b. Christianity as a country's ideology offers refuge to the "birds" that are willing to lodge in its "branches," Matt13:32
 3. Welcoming strangers *without* a Christian framework is likely to fail, as it is failing everywhere in Europe where Muslim immigrants flood in.
 - a. Being welcoming all by itself is not Christian
 - b. The default ideology in Europe has become secularism
 - c. America seems split right down the middle between the rising dominance of secularism and the old *ideology* of Christianity (not that half of us are real Christians)
- Q. When we wage our thought-wars properly, all those contesting us drop their arms
1. There simply is no mental/philosophical defense against a good Biblical construct
 - a. There is only one reality
 - b. A religion or philosophy either represents reality or not. If not, its unreality naturally testifies against it.
 2. Our thought-wars with atheism and Islam in the Middle Ages & Reformation left Christianity as the default top dog
 - a. Think of Pascal. Christian thinkers took defense of the faith seriously. Thomas Aquinas.
 - b. They delved deeply into all questions from all angles. Major apologetic works.

Kid-speak: Are Christians an army that fights? Well, you could say yes and you could say no. No, we don't take guns to fight our Christian battles. But we do use **thinking** to get God's enemies to see that they're wrong. Then maybe they'll turn to God.

3. With Hadadezer, his people learned not to fight Israel any

more. There was at least one generation of peace from that region.

- a. Pascal and Aquinas bought us philosophical peace for *more* than a generation
 - b. (the enemies remain enemies, but they've learned the counterproductivity of debate: their case is leaky)
- R. When Christianity takes its rightful place as the only worldview that aligns with reality, all peoples under its banner are *blessed*. But not all people are *saved*.
1. The proportion of the saved seems fairly constant throughout history, all the way to the Millennium, where the unbelievers eventually *surround* the believers, indicating an overwhelming majority of them, Rev 20:9.
 2. Real Christians must expect that many/most *professors* of the faith are not *possessors* of it
 - a. Our own mix of purity is up to us: With whom shall I fellowship? How shall I determine it?
 - b. It's much easier to just go with current trends and question no one
 - c. Peoples' real spiritual condition does eventually tend to shake itself out in the normal course of events- unless we purposely ignore warning signals

Kid-speak: Are Christians ever going to be able to take over the world? Not until Jesus comes back. But Jesus' way is the best, so when we can prove it, people don't believe as many bad and dumb things, so they don't do quite as many bad and dumb things.

S. Basic Observations from the Text

1. God has enemies
 - a. His overall plan included this
 - b. His dealings with His enemies will glorify Him
2. God's friends were once enemies
 - a. Except for the elect angels
 - b. May we be as good friends as we were enemies!
3. God doesn't save all His dealings with His enemies for after this life
4. God uses His friends to deal with His enemies
 - a. Through Israel- militarily, but selectively. Limited *Cherem*, then basically self-defense.
 - b. **Now**, in the idea realm. We topple anti-Christ arguments.

- c. But, Rev 19:14, Christ will lead an army of His saints militarily once again
- 5. God's friends must *mainly* do battle with the enemy remaining in themselves: indwelling sin, Col 3:5

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")
 Christ fought the battle against what disabled us. Receiving that, all our disabilities are doomed. That is a long-term solution. It is called hope. But to the degree that we hope, we also find *present* help.

V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong? How have I lost righteousness?**
 Do I have a battle mentality? On the front of putting my sin to death? Rom 8:13. On the front of casting down arguments?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):
How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?
 I will invite Christ's war into my soul on both fronts, taking up His banner.

VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**
 Lord Jesus, You have subjugated me for my good. Let me pray for, work for, and hope for the good of Your Gospel subjugation of all men.

Wrap-up: Israel's wars were real outcroppings of the world's state of enmity with God. Where God chooses a people, the rest are against them. But Israel's wars are for us mainly illustrations of the deeper battle (which Israel also fought) of IDEAS.

We love men the best when we destroy the antiGod way of life in which they trust.

Often, they are already aware of the bankruptcy- *they* think of *all* human ways. In that case, when they have given up and given in, we can tell them that the hope they lost resides in Christ, who will renew and reclaim them.