

**2Samuel 3:1 ¶** Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

**2Samuel 3:2** And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;

**2Samuel 3:3** And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;

**2Samuel 3:4** And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

**2Samuel 3:5** And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

The war between the house of Saul and the house of David dragged on and on. David's troops continued to gain in strength while the troops fighting for the house of Saul got weaker.

During David's 7.5 years in Hebron, his wives gave him six sons, listed by birth order below.

Amnon – by Aninoam the Jezreelitess

Chileab or Daniel – by Abigail the Carmelite

*1Chronicles 3:1 ¶ Now these were the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron; the firstborn Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; **the second Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess:***

Absalom – by Maacah, daughter of Talmai the king of Geshur (in Syria)

Adonijah – by Haggith

Shephatiah – by Abital

Ithream – by Eglah

Sadly, we see that David took five more wives after moving to Hebron. This was in direct disobedience to God's command.

*Deuteronomy 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. (Referencing a future king of Israel in context.)*

Because this is not in accordance with God's will, he will suffer the consequences of this sin—e.g., rape and murder among siblings, sons that try to usurp his throne, etc.

**2Samuel 3:6** And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul.

**2Samuel 3:7 ¶** And Saul had a concubine, whose name *was* Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Ishbosheth* said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

**2Samuel 3:8** Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ishbosheth, and said, *Am I a dog's head, which against Judah do shew kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not*

delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to day with a fault concerning this woman?

**2Samuel 3:9** So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him;

**2Samuel 3:10** To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba.

During this period of war between the two factions, Abner gained in strength and influence over the house of Saul. He became so confident of his authority that he took Rizpah, Saul's concubine, as his own. In that culture, this was the same as making a claim to the throne. When Ishbosheth found out, he confronted Abner. Abner got really angry and lashed out at Ishbosheth. He berated the king for questioning his right to do as he pleased in this regard considering all he had done to protect Ishbosheth's position as king. He then basically cursed himself if he did not help David gain the throne of Israel that God had sworn to give him—to make him king over the whole of Israel.

This shows that Abner had quite a sense of pride. He thought that he had succeeded in usurping God's will by making Ishbosheth king over Israel, and now he thought he could help God out by making David the king over the whole nation. God did not need his help. Why he chose to allow Abner to succeed in making Ishbosheth king in the first place and making David wait another 7.5 years after Saul's death is another question.

**2Samuel 3:11** And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him.

Ishbosheth didn't say another word because he feared Abner would do just what he said.

**2Samuel 3:12** And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose *is* the land? saying *also*, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand *shall be* with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee.

**2Samuel 3:13** And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.

Abner didn't waste any time proceeding with his plan. He sent messengers to David essentially asking him to make peace and offering David his allegiance if he was willing to make a covenant of peace with him.

David agreed to Abner's proposal with one stipulation—that he bring David's wife Michal, Saul's daughter, back to him when they met face to face. Did David still love her? Was he using her as a pawn to his own purposes? Was he making a statement that since the two families were joined in marriage so too should the kingdoms of Israel and Judah be joined as one nation?

**2Samuel 3:14** And David sent messengers to Ishbosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins

of the Philistines.

**2Samuel 3:15** And Ishbosheth sent, and took her from *her* husband, *even* from Phaltiel the son of Laish.

**2Samuel 3:16** And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.

David, in turn, sent messengers to Ishbosheth asking him to return his wife Michal to him and reminded him that Saul had given Michal to him for a bride price of 100 Philistine foreskins. Ishbosheth immediately had Michal taken from her present husband, Phaltiel the son of Laish, to send her to David. Phaltiel followed behind her weeping with great sorrow until Abner finally sent him back home.

**2Samuel 3:17** And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past *to be* king over you:

**2Samuel 3:18** Now then do *it*: for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.

Abner communicated with the elders throughout Israel reminding them that they had wanted David to be king in times past. He then encouraged them to do just that since the LORD had declared that it was through David that He would deliver the people of Israel from the tyranny of the Philistines and any other enemy.

Abner was a chameleon. He could just as knowingly choose to support God's will as reject His will according to his own purposes. Sadly, I think there are a lot of leaders in the professing church today that do the same thing.

**2Samuel 3:19** And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

**2Samuel 3:20** So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that *were* with him a feast.

**2Samuel 3:21** And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

Naturally, Abner worked especially hard to garner the support of the elders of the tribe of Benjamin, his own and Saul's tribe. I think the fact that David wanted Michal back may have helped some in that regard since they would still be able to boast a connection to the royal house.

Abner then went to talk with David in Hebron to share the support he had gained among these leaders and the others throughout Israel, taking a delegation of twenty men with him. David welcomed them with a feast. Abner and David formally agreed to their covenant, and Abner left in peace to set things in motion.

**2Samuel 3:22** ¶ And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace. **2Samuel 3:23** When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

Shortly after Abner and his men left, Joab and his men returned from battle bringing a great bounty of the spoils of victory. He was quickly told the news that Abner had met with the king and had departed after having made a covenant of peace.

**2Samuel 3:24** Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why *is it that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone? **2Samuel 3:25** Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.

Joab wasted no time in going to David and confronting him. He basically declared it to be incredulous that David had let him go. He thought that David should have known that Abner was not to be trusted and had only come as a spy in order to use the information he gathered against David.

**2Samuel 3:26** And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not. **2Samuel 3:27** And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

After leaving David, Joab sent messengers after Abner to bring him back. Though David knew nothing about it, these messengers obviously represented themselves as coming from him—maybe Joab had deceived the messengers. When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab met him at the gate and took him aside to speak privately with him and stabbed him under the fifth rib, the same area in which Abner had struck Asahel, killing him in vengeance because he had killed his brother.

Some commentators note that Joab met Abner outside the city gate because Hebron was a city of refuge.

Some commentators conclude that Joab felt threatened by Abner. Scripture does not even hint at that, and Joab doesn't come across in scripture to me as fearing any man.

**2Samuel 3:28** And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my kingdom *are* guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: **2Samuel 3:29** Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper,

**or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.**  
**2Samuel 3:30 So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.**

When David heard what Joab had done, he immediately made it known that he had nothing to do with Abner's killing. All blame for that murder belonged to Joab and his father's house. I have to admit that I don't understand holding the rest of Joab's family accountable for his crime. David basically pronounced a curse on Joab's descendants, asking God to ensure that there was always one that suffered from skin infection, or leprosy, or disability, or death by sword or not enough food and reduced to beggary.

Verse 30 is a bit confusing—Both Joab and Abishai are named in the revenge murder of Abner. Maybe it became known that Abishai conspired with and was an accomplice to Joab.

**2Samuel 3:31 And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed the bier.**

**2Samuel 3:32 And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.**

**2Samuel 3:33 And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth?**

**2Samuel 3:34 Thy hands *were* not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him.**

It seems that David made all his pronouncements in the presence of Joab and then commanded him to join with him and all the people of Hebron in mourning Abner's death in sackcloth.

David's grief was witnessed to be genuine as he wept with the people at the grave of Abner. The man who would become known as the psalmist of Israel then sang a song in honor of Abner. The basic point was that he had died a dishonorable death at the hands of wicked men, rather than on the field of battle in honor as the warrior he was.

I can hardly imagine how David and Joab were able to maintain fellowship since David had so publicly shamed Joab, but we will find out that Joab retains his position as the commander of David's military forces.

**2Samuel 3:35 And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down.**

**2Samuel 3:36 And all the people took notice *of it*, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.**

**2Samuel 3:37 For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.**

Following the funeral, David vowed to fast until sundown with a call for God to strike him down also if he did not keep his vow. All of David's actions on behalf of Abner pleased the people; in fact, everything David did pleased the people. No one thought that David had anything to do with Abner's death.

**2Samuel 3:38 And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?**

**2Samuel 3:39 And I *am* this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruah *be* too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.**

The king declared to his servants that a great leader in Israel had died that day. He admitted that though he was king, the sons of Zeruah, Joah and Abishai, his nephews, were more cruel, hard-hearted and stubborn than he. He basically admits that they are stronger than he. He left it to the LORD to judge them according to their wicked actions.