

2 Samuel 02 - David's Political Intrigues; David Appointed King of Judah; Ishbosheth Appointed King of Israel

I. David's faith (2 Sam 1:1—10:19)

(1) Political victory (1:1—5:25)

(B) Beginning of David's rule over Judah in Hebron (2:1-7)

(a) Judah coronates David (2:1-4a)

(b) David praises Jabesh-gilead for giving Saul a proper burial (2:4b-7)

(C) David's house, which is located in the South, gains an upper hand in the civil war with Saul's house which is located in Israel (2:8—3:1)

(a) Kingdom divided as Abner installs puppet Ishbosheth (2:8-11)

(b) Civil War between Abner and Joab (2:12-32)

We now begin those "political intrigues" that plagued David throughout all his life. Even though David sought the mind of God, he could not escape the plots and plans of others; and because he was indebted to these men, it was difficult for him to oppose them. David's march to the throne was a difficult one.

2 Samuel 2

(B) Beginning of David's rule over Judah in Hebron (2:1-7)

(a) Judah coronates David (2:1-4a)

1 Then it came about afterward that David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up." So David said, "Where shall I go up?" And He said, "To Hebron."

1 Then it came about afterwards that David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up." So David said, "Where shall I go up?" And He said, "To Hebron."

1 Some time later, David inquired of the LORD to ask, "Am I to move to any one of the cities of Judah?" The LORD told him, "Go." So David asked, "To which one?" He replied, "To Hebron."

1 And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

- David again expressed his dependence on God by asking for guidance
- He probably used the Urim and Thummin (Cf. 1 Sam 14:37-42; 23:9-11; 30:7-8; 2 Sam 19; 23)
- He inquired if it was the right time for him to move back into Judah (he never inquired of God on his move to Philistine territory), and if so, where God wanted him to relocate
- For the first time in 10 years, David and his men were no longer fugitives running for their lives. His men had suffered with him, and now they would reign with him (Cf. 2 Tim 2:12).
- Hebron really means brotherhood (Cf. v3, cities of Hebron, i.e., a federation of cities). It is now called El Khalil ("the friend"), a contraction for the city of the friend of God (Abraham).
- It served as the center of the league or confederation of the clans of Judah and Caleb and those associated with them. It is approximately 20 miles south of Jerusalem, in the region famed in antiquity for its fertile vineyards.

David knew his destination, but he knew also that the providence of God would pave the way. Therefore he would take no step in such a crisis of his own and the nation's history, without asking and obtaining the divine direction. He was told to go into Judah, and fix his headquarters in Hebron.

There his interests were very powerful; for he was not only within his own tribe, and near chiefs with whom he had been long in friendly relations (Cf. 1 Sam 30:26-30), but Hebron was the capital and center of Judah, and one of the Levitical cities; the inhabitants of which were strongly attached to him, both from sympathy with his cause ever since the massacre at Nob, and from the prospect of realizing in his person their promised preeminence among the tribes.

2 So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.

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2 So David went there, along with his two wives Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, widow of Nabal from Carmel.

2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite.

- Verse 1 gives the key to David's triumphs: his dependence upon God

- Verse 2 gives the key to David's tragedy: his relationships with women

3 And David brought up his men who *were* with him, each with his household; and they settled in the cities of Hebron.

3 And David brought up his men who were with him, each with his household; and they lived in the cities of Hebron.

3 David brought his army with him, each soldier accompanied by his household, and they settled in the cities of Hebron.

3 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

While not mentioned in 2 Sam, 1 Chr 12:23-40 lists the thousands of soldiers who came from all over Israel to support David in Hebron.

SOLDIERS WHO CAME TO SUPPORT DAVID IN HEBRON		
<i>Tribe</i>	<i>Number of soldiers</i>	<i>Verses</i>
Judah	6,800	24
Simeon	7,100	25
Levi	4,600	26-28
Benjamin	3,000	29
Ephraim	20,800	30
Western Manasseh	18,000	31
Issachar	200 chiefs and their brethren	32
Zebulun	50,000	33
Naphtali	38,000	34
Dan	28,600	35
Asher	40,000	36
Reuben, Gad, and Eastern Manasseh	120,000	37
Total	336,900 plus	

(b) David praises Jabesh-gilead for giving Saul a proper burial (2:4b-7)

4 Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

And they told David, saying, "It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul."

4 Then the men of Judah came and there anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, "It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul."

4 After this, the army of Judah arrived, and they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

There they informed David, "The men of Jabesh-gilead buried Saul."

4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabeshgilead were they that buried Saul.

- This was David's second anointing (in 1011 BC; Cf. 1 Sam 16:13)

- It was a formal acknowledgment that the people of Judah viewed David as the Lord's anointed
- The princes of Judah offered him the crown over their tribe, and it was accepted. More could not, with prudence, be done in the circumstances of the country (1 Chr 11:3).
- The men of Jabesh-gilead were very loyal to Saul because he had rescued them from the Ammonites (Cf. 1 Sam 11:1-13; 31:8-13)
- David took special pains to express his sorrow over Saul's death to those residents, to show that the antagonism that existed between he and Saul was one-sided
- If he could win their favor, David would gain a foothold of support in northern Israel

In his accession to the throne of Israel, David illustrates the career of Jesus Christ, the son of David. Like David the shepherd, Jesus came first as a humble servant and was anointed king privately. Like David in exile, Jesus is King today but doesn't yet reign on the throne of David. Like Saul in David's day, Satan is still free to obstruct God's work and oppose God's people. One day, Jesus will return in glory, Satan will be imprisoned, and Jesus will reign in His glorious kingdom (Rev 19:11—20:6). God's people today faithfully pray "Thy kingdom come" (Matt 6:10, KJV) and eagerly await the return of their King.

5 So David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said to them, "May you be blessed of the LORD because you have shown this kindness to Saul your lord, and have buried him.

5 David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said to them, "May you be blessed of the LORD because you have shown this kindness to Saul your lord, and have buried him.

5 So David sent messengers to the people of Jabesh-gilead and told them, "May the LORD bless you, because you showed gracious love like this to your lord Saul by burying him.

5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabeshgilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

- David sought peace and unity with those who had been loyal to Saul by taking the initiative in contacting them, compliment them, subtly reminding them that he was now the Lord's anointed (v6), and offering them a treaty of friendship (v6b-7)

— David's message of thanks for their bold and dangerous enterprise in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons was an expression of his personal and genuine feeling of satisfaction

— At the same time, it was a stroke of sound and timely policy: the announcement of his royal power in Judah, accompanied by the pledge of his protection of the men of Jabesh-

gilead, should they be exposed to danger for their adventure at Beth-shan, would be significant in all parts of the country: it held out an assurance that he would render them the same timely and energetic support that Saul had given at the beginning of his reign.

6 And now may the LORD show kindness and truth to you; and I also will show this goodness to you, because you have done this thing.

6 Now may the LORD show lovingkindness and truth to you; and I also will show this goodness to you, because you have done this thing.

6 Now may the Lord reward you with gracious love, as well as faithfulness, to you, too! And I will also reward you because you did this good thing.

6 And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

- David's base of support came mainly from the Judah

— Hostilities existed between the Israelites in the northern tribes and those in the south for many generations

— David's first recorded act as the new king of Judah was to offer friendship and comfort to a group of Israelites, to demonstrate to them that while he may have been a Judahite, his heart belonged to all Israel

7 Now then, let your hands be strong and be valiant, since Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

7 Now therefore, let your hands be strong and be valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

7 So strengthen yourselves, and be valiant in heart, because your lord Saul has died, and the household of Judah has anointed me to be king over them."

7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

(C) David's house, which is located in the South, gains an upper hand in the civil war with Saul's house which is located in Israel (2:8—3:1)

(a) Kingdom divided as Abner installs puppet Ishbosheth (2:8-11)

8 But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken **Ish-bosheth** the son of Saul and brought him over to **Mahanaim**.

8 But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim.

8 Meanwhile, Ner's son Abner, the commander of Saul's army, had taken Saul's son Ish-bosheth and brought him to Mahanaim.

8 But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; Abner, the commander of Saul's army, had made Saul's son Ishbosheth the king over the other tribes. He relocated the capital over the Jordan River in Mahanaim to protect himself and the new king from David's men.

- David's favorable overtures to the Jabesh-gileadites came at the same time that Saul's commander-in-chief and cousin, Abner, was working to install Saul's youngest son Ishbosheth as Saul's successor

— God had not ordained this; David was God's anointed. Abner was doing what was customary at the time, as well as securing his own future.

— By doing this, Abner ignited conflict between the houses of Saul and David

— During this time, David was seeking peace and unity (v4b-7) while Abner was seeking power and victory (v8-32; Cf. Ps 120:7)

- "...Ish-bosheth" - or Esh-baal (1 Chr 8:33; 9:39); the Hebrews usually changed names ending with Baal into Bosheth ("man of shame") (compare Judges 9:53 with 2 Sam 11:21)

— This prince was apparently so called because he was an imbecile

— He may have been a coward since he did not die in battle with Saul and his brothers

- "...Mahanaim" - a levitical city of refuge (Joshua 21:38), 16 miles south of Jabesh-gilead in the Transjordan; it was the center for Saul's supporters at this time (v29)

Abner was a first cousin of Saul, commander of the forces, and held in high respect throughout the country. Loyalty to the house of his late master was mixed up with opposition to David and views of personal ambition in his originating this factious movement. He, too, was sensitive to the importance of securing the eastern tribes; so, taking Ish-bosheth across the Jordan, he proclaimed him king at Mahanaim, a town on the north bank of the Jabbok, hallowed in patriarchal times by the divine presence (Gen 32:2). There he rallied the tribes around the standard of the unfortunate son of Saul.

Of course, Abner had personal interest in the household of Saul since he was Saul's cousin (1 Sam 14:50). It was to his advantage to see Ish-bosheth reign, but he was deliberately rebelling against God's Word when he crowned him. God had made it very clear that David alone was to rule Israel.

Christians today are like the Jews of that day: we permit our King to reign over only a part of our lives, and the result is conflict and sorrow.

9 And he made him king **overGilead**, over the **Ashurites**, over **Jezreel**, over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, even over all Israel.

9 He made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, even over all Israel.

9 He installed him as king over Gilead, the Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and all of the rest of Israel.

9 And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

- The "people of Judah" made David their king, but Abner single-handedly made Ish-bosheth king over "all Israel"

— Although the entire nation knew of God's promise to David (3:9-10,18), Abner installed his weak-willed cousin Ish-bosheth as Israel's king

— Even after Saul's death, Abner continued the fight against David and God's plan

— Abner put his personal preferences and cultural precedent (that a son of Saul should succeed his father) over God's will. Consequently life became very complicated and problems followed Israel, as always happens when people behave as Abner did.

- "...over Gilead" - used in a loose sense for the land beyond Jordan

- "...Ashurites" - the tribe of Asher in the extreme north

- "...Jezreel" - the extensive valley bordering on the central tribes

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10 Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he was king for two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David.

10 Ish-bosheth began to reign over Israel at the age of 40 years, and he reigned for two years, even though Judah's lineage followed David.

10 Ishbosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David.

- David neither could nor would force matters. He was content to wait God's time and studiously avoided any collision with the rival king, until, after the lapse of two years, hostilities were threatened.

11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

11 The time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

11 The period of David's kingship in Hebron lasted seven years and six months.

11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

- When David became king of all Israel and Judah, 7.5 years later, he ended Ish-bosheth's two-year reign; it took Abner over five years to establish Ish-bosheth on Israel's throne

— Probably for the first five years after the fatal battle of Gilboa, David alone reigned in the old capital of Judah, Hebron; but the rest of the country was in the Philistines' hands
— During these five years, Israel gradually regained their country, and at length Abner proclaimed Ish-bosheth at Mahanaim beyond Jordan, for security against the Philistines (v5-7 confirm this)

There's a modern touch to this scenario, for our political and religious worlds are populated by these same three kinds of people. We have weak people like Ish-Bosheth, who get where they are because they have "connections." We have strong, selfish people like Abner, who know how to manipulate others for their own personal profit. We also have people of God like David who are called, anointed, and equipped but must wait for God's time before they can serve. [Wiersbe]

(b) Civil War between Abner and Joab (2:12-32)

12 Now Abner the son of Ner, went from Mahanaim to Gibeon with the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul.

12 Now Abner the son of Ner, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon with the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul.

12 Ner's son Abner and the servants of Saul's son Ish-bosheth set out from Mahanaim for Gibeon.

12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

- Abner was the son of Ner, who was the brother of Kish, the father of Saul (1 Chr 9:36)

13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out and met them by the **pool of Gibeon**; and they sat down, *Abner's men* on the one side of the pool and Joab's men on the other side of the pool.

13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out and met them by the pool of Gibeon; and they sat down, one on the one side of the pool and the other on the other side of the pool.

13 Zeruiah's son Joab and some of David's staff went out to meet them at the pool of Gibeon. One side encamped on one side of the pool while the other encamped on the other side of the pool.

13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

- The forces of Ish-bosheth and David met for a peace conference

- "...pool of Gibeon" - six miles northwest of Jerusalem, at the el-Jib excavation site; travelers can visit this pool today
- The pool was meant to store rain water and provide access to the water table
- It is a cylindrical shaft 37ft in diameter and 35ft deep. It has a five-foot-wide spiral stairway of 79 steps, which winds downward around the inside wall of the pool (clockwise), and continues below the floor level an additional depth of 45ft.
- Recent excavations have turned up more than 20 jar handles with the name of the city, Gibeon, inscribed on them

14 Then Abner said to Joab, "Now have the young men arise and hold a martial skills match in our presence." And Joab said, "Have them arise!"

14 Then Abner said to Joab, "Now let the young men arise and hold a contest before us." And Joab said, "Let them arise."

14 Abner told Joab, "Let's have the young men get up and fight in our presence." Joab replied, "Let them come."

14 And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.

- Peace talks evidently broke down, and Abner suggested the two sides determine which of them would win a battle of hand-to-hand combat to decide the leadership of the nation
- Both parties, reluctant to commence a full-blown civil war, left the decision to a hand-to-hand contact battle to determine the victor

15 So they got up and went over by count, twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David.

15 So they arose and went over by count, twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

15 So they got up and twelve were counted to represent Benjamin and Saul's son Ish-bosheth and twelve to represent members of David's staff.

15 Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

16 And each one of them seized his opponent by the head and *thrust* his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called **Helkath-hazzurim**, which is in Gibeon.

16 Each one of them seized his opponent by the head and *thrust* his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon.

16 Each man grabbed his opponent by the head, plunged his sword into his opponent's side, and then they both fell together. That's why the place at Gibeon was named The Field of Swords.

16 And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkathhazzurim, which is in Gibeon.

- "...Helkath-hazzurim" - "the field of strong men"

17 That day the battle was very severe, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by the servants of David.

17 That day the battle was very severe, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.

17 The battle was very violent that day, with Abner and the men of Israel being defeated in the presence of David's servants.

17 And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

18 Now the three sons of **Zeruiah** were there, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel; and Asahel wasas swift-footed as one of the gazelles that is in the field.

18 Now the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab and Abishai and Asahel; and Asahel wasas swift-footed as one of the gazelles which is in the field.

18 Zeruiah's three sons Joab, Abishai, and Asahel were there. As a runner, Asahel was fast, like one of the wild gazelles.

18 And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe.

- "...Zeruiah" - David's half-sister, was the mother of the three brothers: Joab, Abishai (called so from Ishai = Jesse), and Asahel, "the sons of Zeruiah"; sister of Abigail and of the sons of Jesse (1 Chr 2:13-17; 2 Sam 17:25). Thus, they were David's nephews as well as valued men in his army.

19 Asahel pursued Abner and did not turn to the right or to the left from following Abner.

19 Asahel pursued Abner and did not turn to the right or to the left from following Abner.

19 So Asahel ran straight after Abner, following him.

19 And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.

20 Then Abner looked behind himself and said, "Is that you, Asahel?" And he said, "It is I!"

20 Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is that you, Asahel?" And he answered, "It is I."

20 When Abner looked behind him, he said, "Is that you, Asahel?"

He answered, "I am."

20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, Art thou Asahel? And he answered, I am.

21 So Abner said to him, "Turn aside for your *own good* to your right or to your left, and take hold of one of the young men for yourself, and take for yourself his equipment." But Asahel was unwilling to turn aside from following him.

21 So Abner said to him, "Turn to your right or to your left, and take hold of one of the young men for yourself, and take for yourself his spoil." But Asahel was not willing to turn aside from following him.

21 Abner told him, "Go off to your right or left after one of the young men and grab some war spoils." But Asahel would not stop following him,

21 And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him.

- To gain the general's armor was deemed the grandest trophy

— Asahel, ambitious of securing Abner's, had outrun all other pursuers, and was fast gaining on the retreating commander

22 Then Abner repeated again to Asahel, "Turn aside for your *own good* from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I show my face to your brother Joab?"

22 Abner repeated again to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I lift up my face to your brother Joab?"

22 so Abner told Asahel again, "Stop following me. Why should I strike you down? How could I show my face to your brother Joab?"

22 And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?

- Abner warned Asahel twice to stop pursuing him and to fight someone he might be able to defeat

— Abner likely wanted to avoid a blood feud with Joab's family that might last for generations

23 However, he refused to turn aside; so Abner struck him in the belly with the butt end of the spear, so that the spear came out at his back. And he fell there and died on the spot.

And it happened that all who came *thereafter* to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, stood still.

23 However, he refused to turn aside; therefore Abner struck him in the belly with the butt end of the spear, so that the spear came out at his back. And he fell there and died on the spot. And it came about that all who came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, stood still.

23 But Asahel refused to turn away, so Abner struck Asahel in the abdomen with the butt end of his spear, and the spear protruded through his back. He collapsed to the ground and died where he fell. Everyone gathered round the place where Asahel had collapsed and died, and stood still there.

23 Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

- Asahel, unheeding to Abner's warnings, finally caught up with him, but was summarily killed

- Those who came to the place of Asahel's death were David's men, Asahel's pursuers, who were transfixed in horror at the death of a fallen comrade

24 But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner, and when the sun was going down, they came to the hill of Ammah, which is opposite Giah by way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

24 But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner, and when the sun was going down, they came to the hill of Ammah, which is in front of Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

24 Meanwhile, Joab and Abishai continued to chase Abner. At dusk, as they approached the hill of Ammah that is located near Giah on the way to the Gibeon desert,

24 Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

- But Joab and Abishai continued the pursuit by another route till sunset

25 And the sons of Benjamin gathered together behind Abner and became one troop, and they stood on the top of a hill.

25 The sons of Benjamin gathered together behind Abner and became one band, and they stood on the top of a certain hill.

25 the descendants of Benjamin rallied around Abner, forming a single military force. They took their stand on top of the hill.

25 And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill.

- While many of David's soldiers stopped their pursuit at the spot of Asahel's death, Joab and Abishai continued to chase Abner

26 Then Abner called to Joab and said, "Should the sword devour forever? Do you not realize that it will be bitter in the end? So how long will you refrain from telling the people to turn back from pursuing their kinsmen?"

26 Then Abner called to Joab and said, "Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that it will be bitter in the end? How long will you refrain from telling the people to turn back from following their brothers?"

26 Then Abner called out to Joab, "Must the battle sword keep on devouring forever? Don't you realize that the end result is bitterness? How long will it take for you to order your army to stop pursuing their own relatives?"

26 Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?

- On reaching a rising ground, and receiving a fresh reinforcement of some Benjamites, Abner tried to call for a truce

27 Joab said, "As God lives, if you had not spoken, then the people of *Judah* certainly would have withdrawn in the morning, each from pursuing his brother."

27 Joab said, "As God lives, if you had not spoken, surely then the people would have gone away in the morning, each from following his brother."

27 Joab answered, "As God lives, if you hadn't spoken up, by morning my army would have broken off their pursuit of their own relatives."

27 And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.

- Joab rightly blamed Abner for starting the conflict in the first place (Cf. v14)

28 So Joab blew the trumpet, and all the people halted and no longer pursued Israel, nor did they continue to fight anymore.

28 So Joab blew the trumpet; and all the people halted and pursued Israel no longer, nor did they continue to fight anymore.

28 So Joab sounded his battle trumpet, his entire army stopped pursuing Israel any longer, and they quit fighting.

28 So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

- Joab, while upbraiding his opponent as the sole cause of the fray, felt the force of the appeal and called off his men

29 Abner and his men then went through the Arabah all that night; so they crossed the Jordan, walked all morning, and came to Mahanaim.

29 Abner and his men then went through the Arabah all that night; so they crossed the Jordan, walked all morning, and came to Mahanaim.

29 Abner and his army traveled through the Arabah by night, crossed the Jordan, and arrived at Mahanaim after marching all morning.

29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.

30 Then Joab returned from pursuing Abner; but he gathered all the people together, and nineteen of David's servants were missing, besides Asahel.

30 Then Joab returned from following Abner; when he had gathered all the people together, nineteen of David's servants besides Asahel were missing.

30 Joab returned from his pursuit of Abner, and when he had mustered his entire army, nineteen of David's soldiers were missing besides Asahel.

30 And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel.

31 However, the servants of David had struck and killed *many* of Benjamin and Abner's men; 360 men were dead.

31 But the servants of David had struck down many of Benjamin and Abner's men, *so that* three hundred and sixty men died.

31 Meanwhile, other soldiers of David had killed 360 of Abner's men from the tribe of Benjamin.

31 But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and threescore men died.

- On David's side the loss was only 20 men, including Asahel; of Ish-bosheth's party, 360 were killed

32 And they carried Asahel *away* and buried him in his father's tomb, which was in Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men traveled all night until *the day* dawned at Hebron.

32 And they took up Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb which was in Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men went all night until the day dawned at Hebron.

32 They retrieved Asahel's body and buried him in his father's tomb at Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men marched all night until daybreak and arrived back in Hebron.

32 And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

- Abner's murder of Asahel was the prelude to the "long war" between the two kings (3:1). As we shall see, the two remaining brothers avenged this death, much to David's grief.

This incident accounts for the personal hostility that later resulted in Abner's death and the disintegration of Ish-bosheth's throne. Note that David played no part in it. God worked through Joab and Abner to place His anointed on the throne of all Israel. This passage shows how hostilities between the two factions in Israel escalated, as they often do in modern nations, neighborhoods, and families. First, the opposing parties stopped talking (v12). Next, they started fighting (v13). Then, Asahel kept pushing (v23). Finally, Abner insisted on defending himself (v23).