

2 Samuel 03 - Abner Joins Forces with David; Joab Murders Abner; David Mourns Abner's Death

I. David's faith (2 Sam 1:1—10:19)

(1) Political victory (1:1—5:25)

(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)

(c) David's house begins to prevail (3:1)

(D) David's many children (3:2-5)

(E) David's acceptance of Abner's desire for rapprochement begins to unify the nation (3:6-21)

(F) David mourns Joab's murder of Abner (3:22-39)

2 Samuel 3

(c) David's house begins to prevail (3:1) (Cf. 1 Chr 3:1-4)

1 Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David became steadily stronger, while the house of Saul became steadily weaker.

1 Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David grew steadily stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker continually.

1 After this, a state of protracted war existed between Saul's dynasty and David's dynasty, and the dynasty of David continued to grow and become strong while the dynasty of Saul continued to grow weaker.

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.

- This verse summarizes 2:8-32

— The point of the remaining verses in this chapter is to show that during the seven-and-a-half years that David ruled Judah, he grew stronger because God was blessing him

- The rival parties had varying success, but David's interest steadily increased; less, however, by the fortunes of war, than a growing adherence to him as the divinely designated king

(D) David's many children (3:2-5)

2 Sons were born to David in Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon, by **Ahinoam** the Jezreelitess;

2 Sons were born to David at Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;

2 During this time, sons were born to David while he was living in Hebron. His firstborn was Amnon by Ahinoam from Jezreel,

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

- During this period, David resorted to further polygamy, even though God had commanded Israel's kings not to multiple wives (Deut 17:17)

— David's genealogy in 1 Chr 3:1-9 records that he had six sons born to him in Hebron, plus 13 more sons, one daughter, and an unknown number of sons of his concubines who were born in Jerusalem

- David indeed married the women mentioned in 1 Chr 3, partially to cement political alliances, which was common at the time

— However, God had forbidden such alliances (Deut 7:3)

- "...Ahinoam"- not the same person as Saul's wife (Cf. 1 Sam 14:50)

3 and his second, **Chileab**, by **Abigail** the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of **Geshur**;

3 and his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur;

3 his second was Chileab by Abigail, widow of Nabal from Carmel, his third was Absalom by Maacah, daughter of King Talmai from Geshur,

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;

- "...Chileab" - "his father's picture"; called also Daniel (1 Chr 3:1)

- "...Abigail" - not the same person as the mother of Amasa (17:25; Cf. 1 Sam 25)

- David's marriage to Maacah seems to have been a political match, made by David, with a view to strengthen himself against Ish-bosheth's party, by the aid of a powerful friend and ally in the north (see note on v2)

— David reaped the bitter fruits of this alliance with a heathen prince in the life of the turbulent Absalom

- "...Geshur" - a region in Syria, northeast of the Sea of Galilee and north of Jabesh-gilead

— The Israelites were forbidden from making covenants with the inhabitants of the Promised Land (Ex 23:32; 34:12), however that is where the king of Geshur lived

— Perhaps if David had relied less on foreign alliances, which his marriage to Maacah signals, he would not have had to fight as many battles with his neighbors as he did

— David spent a large portion of his total reign as king fighting battles (Cf. 1 Chr 22:8)

4 and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

4 and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

4 his fourth was Adonijah by Haggith, his fifth was Shephatiah by Abital,

4 And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

5 and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These sons were born to David in Hebron.

5 and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These were born to David at Hebron.

5 and his sixth was Ithream by David's wife Eglah. They were all born to David in Hebron.

5 And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

- This addition has led many to think that Eglah was another name for Michal, the first and proper wife, who, though she had no family after her insolent ridicule of David (2 Sam 6:23), might have had a child before

- David's many wives were chosen in direct violation of Deut 17:15–17. Some believe that David's lust eventually led to the many family problems that plagued his later days:

— Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar (2 Sam 13)

— Absalom rebelled against David and tried to capture the crown (2 Sam 13-18)

— Adonijah tried to wrest the kingdom from Solomon (1 Kings 1:5ff)

— Abner had problems with lust too: he took one of Saul's concubines and incurred the displeasure of the pretended king. This led to a disruption between Abner and Ish-bosheth.

(E) David's acceptance of Abner's desire for rapprochement begins to unify the nation (3:6-21)

6 Now it happened that while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was strengthening himself in the house of Saul.

6 It came about while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David that Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul.

6 While war continued between the dynasties of Saul and David, Abner was growing in influence within the dynasty of Saul.

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.

- Abner was the "strong man" in Israel; Ish-bosheth was merely a figurehead (Cf. v11)

7 And Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"

7 Now Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"

7 Meanwhile, Saul had a mistress named Rizpah, who was the daughter of Aiah. Ish-bosheth asked Abner, "Why did you have sex with my father's mistress?"

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?

- A king's concubines were his means for raising up heirs if the queen could not bear children, or even if she could

— Taking a king's wives or concubines declared that a man would seize the kingdom (16:21-22; 1 Kings 2:17-23); if true, this act represented a threat by Abner to dethrone Ish-bosheth

— Ish-bosheth considered Abner's act as a sign of disloyalty, by trying to have an heir by a royal concubine who could have, according to custom, become king one day (Cf. 16:22; 1 Kings 2:22)

8 Then Abner became very angry over Ish-bosheth's question and said, "Am I a **dog's head** that belongs to Judah? Today I show kindness to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers and to his friends, and have not let you fall into the hands of David; yet today you call me to account for wrongdoing with that woman?"

8 Then Abner was very angry over the words of Ish-bosheth and said, "Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I show kindness to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hands of David; and yet today you charge me with a guilt concerning the woman.

8 What Ish-bosheth said made Abner furious, so he replied, "A dog's head for Judah—is that what I am? Up until today I've kept on showing loyalty to your father Saul's dynasty, to his relatives and friends, and I haven't turned you over to David, but you're charging me today with moral guilt regarding this woman!"

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?

- It is not clear whether the accusation against Abner was well-founded or not (he implied denial of the motive, but not the act), but he resented the charge and, impelled by revenge, was determined to transfer all the weight of his influence to David

- "...dog's head" - slang for penis; a special kind of slur against Abner, typically reserved for a male prostitute

— In this case, Abner is asking Ish-bosheth if he thinks that David had hired him as a male prostitute to sleep with Rizpah and embarrass Ish-boseth

— The term "dog" by itself was a term for a male prostitute (Cf. Deut 23:18-19)

9 May God do so to me, and more so, if as the LORD has sworn to David, I do not accomplish this for him:

9 May God do so to Abner, and more also, if as the LORD has sworn to David, I do not accomplish this for him,

9 Therefore may God do to me—and more also!—just as the LORD has promised to David, since I'm doing this for him:

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

10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from **Dan even to Beersheba!**"

10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba."

10 I will take away the kingdom from the dynasty of Saul by making the throne of David firm over Israel and Judah—from Dan to Beer-sheba!"

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.

- Abner's vow affirms that he had knowingly rebelled against God's plan

— Like Saul, Abner seemed to think he could control the fulfillment of God's promises

- This verse is one of the first references to David's Throne in Scripture...

— The Throne of David is always portrayed as earthly (Cf. 2 Sam 7:12-16; 1 Kings 2:11-12; Jer 13:13; 22:2,4)

— This deals with the eclipse of Saul's reign. As the kingdom was being transferred from Saul to David, you find this verse relative to David's Throne.

- "...Dan even to Beersheba" - a cultural reference to the entire territory of the land of Israel in that day. Dan refers to the north, Beersheba to the south. Similar to saying NY to LA...

11 And *Ish-bosheth* could no longer say a word in response to Abner, because he was afraid of him.

11 And he could no longer answer Abner a word, because he was afraid of him.

11 *Ish-bosheth* couldn't say another word in response to Abner, because he was terrified of him.

11 And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him.

12 Then Abner sent messengers to David at his place, saying, "Whose is the land? Make your covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with you to bring all Israel over to you."

12 Then Abner sent messengers to David in his place, saying, "Whose is the land? Make your covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with you to bring all Israel over to you."

12 So Abner sent messengers to David at Hebron to ask him, "Who owns this land? Cut a deal with me, and look!—I'll lend my hand in bringing all of Israel over to you!"

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.

- Part of the deal Abner offered David may have been that Abner be the commander-in-chief of David's army (currently held by Joab), a position he currently filled for Ish-bosheth

13 And he said, "Good! I will make a covenant with you, only I require one thing of you, namely, that you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see me."

13 He said, "Good! I will make a covenant with you, but I demand one thing of you, namely, you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see me."

13 David replied, "Sounds good to me! I'll cut a deal with you under one condition: you're not to show yourself in my presence unless you bring Saul's daughter with you when you come to see me."

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.

- The fact that Michal was Saul's daughter was clearly part of the reason David requested her return; their reunion would have tied David to Saul's house and made him more acceptable to the northern tribes. It would be a symbolic reunion of Judah and Israel.

— By making Michal his queen, David would divide the loyalties of the citizens in the north: did loyalty to Saul mean they should be subjects of his son (Ish-bosheth) or his daughter (Michal)?

— This question would weaken David's opponents in the north, without a battle and without creating any lingering resentment

— According to the law of Deut 24:1-4, David could not legitimately receive back his wife after her marriage to Paltiel. However, God graciously blessed David in spite of his disobedience (v2-5,12-16), but this sin undoubtedly weakened him.

14 So David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, to whom I was betrothed for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines."

14 So David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, to whom I was betrothed for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines."

14 Then David sent a delegation to Saul's son Ish-bosheth to say, "Give me my wife Michal, to whom I was engaged with a dowry of 100 Philistine foreskins."

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.

15 Ish-bosheth sent *men* and had her taken from *her* husband, from Paltiel the son of Laish.

15 Ish-bosheth sent and took her from *her* husband, from Paltiel the son of Laish.

15 So Ish-bosheth ordered that she be taken away from her husband, Laish's son Paltiel.

15 And Ishbosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Phaltiel the son of Laish.

16 And her husband went with her, weeping as he went, following her as far as Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go, return." So he returned.

16 But her husband went with her, weeping as he went, and followed her as far as Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go, return." So he returned.

16 Her husband accompanied her, crying as he followed after her all the way to Bahurim, where Abner told him, "Leave! Go back!" So he went back.

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

17 Now Abner had a consultation with the elders of Israel, saying, "In times past you were seeking for David to be king over you.

17 Now Abner had consultation with the elders of Israel, saying, "In times past you were seeking for David to be king over you.

17 Later, Abner had a talk with the elders of Israel. He said, "In the past you were looking to see David made king over you.

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

- Abner lobbied for David with Israel's leading men, on the basis that they had previously favored David over Ish-bosheth, and because he was the Lord's anointed (v18)

18 Now then, do *it!* For the LORD has spoken regarding David, saying, 'By the hand of My servant David I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hands of all their enemies.'

18 Now then, do *it!* For the LORD has spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of My servant David I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all

their enemies.”

18 So do it, then! Because the LORD has said this about David: ‘Through my servant David I will save my people Israel from the control of the Philistines and from all of their enemies.’”

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 impressed their minds with the well-known fact of David’s divine designation to the kingdom

— He urged all Israel to unite behind David, and even applied to David a promise the Lord had once spoken about Saul (1 Sam 9:16)

— However he was hypocritical in pretending that his present movement was prompted by religious motives, when it sprang entirely from malice and revenge against Ish-bosheth

19 Abner also spoke to Benjamin; and in addition Abner went to speak to David in Hebron everything that seemed good to Israel and to the entire house of Benjamin.

19 Abner also spoke in the hearing of Benjamin; and in addition Abner went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel and to the whole house of Benjamin.

19 Abner also addressed the tribe of Benjamin. Furthermore, with David’s permission, Abner said anything that seemed like it would be good for Israel and for the entire tribe of Benjamin.

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.

- Abner applied to David a promise the Lord had once spoken about Saul: “...thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines:...” (1 Sam 9:16b)

- The appeal of the Benjamites was a necessary policy; their tribe enjoyed the honor of giving birth to the royal dynasty of Saul; they would naturally be disinclined to lose that prestige

— They were, besides, a determined people, whose close geographical proximity to Judah might render them troublesome and dangerous; the enlistment of their interest would smooth the way for the adhesion of the other tribes

20 Then Abner and twenty men with him came to David at Hebron. And David held a feast for Abner and the men who were with him.

20 Then Abner and twenty men with him came to David at Hebron. And David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him.

20 Afterwards, Abner brought 20 soldiers to David at Hebron, and David threw a party for Abner and the men who were with him.

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.

21 Abner said to David, "Let me set out and go and gather all Israel to my lord the king, so that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may be king over all that your soul desires." So David let Abner go, and he went in peace.

21 Abner said to David, "Let me arise and go and gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may be king over all that your soul desires." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

21 So Abner told David, "Give me permission to go out and rally all of Israel to your majesty the king so they can enter into a formal agreement with you to reign over everything that your heart desires." So David sent Abner off, and he went away in peace.

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.

- As a public ambassador, Abner was received by David; while the restoration of Michal was the only reason for his visit, he made overtures to David that he could bring the northern tribes (whom he had already artfully seduced) to support David's kingship — Abner pursued a course unworthy of an honorable man, and though his offer was accepted by David, the guilt and infamy of the transaction seem exclusively his

(F) David mourns Joab's murder of Abner (3:22-39)

22 And behold, the servants of David and Joab came from a raid and brought a large amount of plunder with them; but Abner was not with David in Hebron, since he had let him go, and he had gone in peace.

22 And behold, the servants of David and Joab came from a raid and brought much spoil with them; but Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace.

22 Right about then, David's servants returned from a raid, bringing plenty of war booty with them, but Abner wasn't in Hebron with David, since David had sent him away and Abner had left in peace.

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.

23 When Joab and all the army that was with him arrived, they informed Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has let him go *on his way*, and he has gone in peace."

23 When Joab and all the army that was with him arrived, they told Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has sent him away, and he has gone in peace."

23 When Joab returned with his entire army, Joab was informed, "Ner's son Abner visited the king, and he has dismissed him. He has left in peace."

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.

24 Then Joab came to the king and said, "What have you done? Behold, Abner came to you; why then have you let him go, so that he is already gone?"

24 Then Joab came to the king and said, "What have you done? Behold, Abner came to you; why then have you sent him away and he is already gone?"

24 So Joab approached the king and asked him, "What have you done? Look, Abner came to you! What's this? You sent him away? He's long gone now!"

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?"

- Joab's knowledge of Abner's wily character might have led him to doubt the sincerity of Abner's proposals, and to disapprove the policy of relying on his fidelity. But undoubtedly there were other reasons of a private and personal nature which made Joab displeased and alarmed by the reception given to Abner:

- Abner was the rival commander-in-chief
- Abner evidently had superior character in some respects (Cf. v38)
- Abner was a threat to Joab's career advancement, if the alliance went through
- His military talents
- His popularity with the army
- His influence throughout the entire nation, especially among the northern tribes
- Abner killed Joab's brother (Asahel) in battle (v30; Cf. 2:23)

In the event that Abner and David went forward with their alliance, Abner's ability to bring the northern tribes to support David would make David indebted to Abner. This indebtedness would inevitably raise a serious obstacle to the ambitions of Joab.

To this consideration, add the remembrance of the blood feud that existed between Joab and Abner since the death of Joab's brother Asahel (2:23). Abner tried to make a peaceful agreement with David, but the "sons of Zeruiah" plotted against him and killed him (v26-30). While Joab did the actual killing, it is likely that his brother was in on the plans.

25 You know Abner the son of Ner, that he came to gain your confidence, and to learn of your going out and coming in and to find out everything that you are doing."

25 You know Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive you and to learn of your going out and coming in and to find out all that you are doing."

25 You know Ner's son Abner came to mislead you, to learn your troop movements, and to learn everything you're doing!"

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.

26 When Joab left David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the well of Sirah; but David did not know *about it*.

26 When Joab came out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the well of Sirah; but David did not know *it*.

26 As soon as Joab left David, Joab sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern at Sirah, but David was not aware of this.

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.

27 So when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the middle of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he struck him in the belly, so that he died on account of the blood of his brother Asahel.

27 So when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the middle of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he struck him in the belly so that he died on account of the blood of Asahel his brother.

27 When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab brought him aside within the gateway to talk to him alone and then stabbed him in the abdomen. So he died for shedding the blood of Joab's brother Asahel.

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.

- Determined to get Abner out of the way, Joab feigned some reason, probably in the king's name, for recalling him, and after a conversation, murdered him

— Abner may have been too sure of his own importance in David's eyes to suspect that one of David's officers would dare attack him

- There is some debate on where the murder of Abner took place...within the city of Hebron, or outside the city, at a noted well in the neighborhood:

— Hebron was a city of refuge, where God prohibited the taking of revenge (Num 35:22-25)

- Joab's hands continued to be stained with blood as he not only killed Abner, but also Absalom (2 Sam 18:14) and Amasa (2 Sam 20:10)
- How different history would have been had Abner lived, it is difficult to tell
- Certainly Joab held unusual power over David, particularly after he assisted the king in his murderous plot against innocent Uriah (11:14ff)
- Note David's godly conduct in the matter of Abner's death...

God calls His children to be agents of reconciliation rather than agents of retribution (Matt 6:14-15; 18:21-35; Rom 12:20; 2 Cor 2:7-11; 5:16-21).

28 Afterward, when David heard *about* this, he said, "I and my kingdom are innocent before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner.

28 Afterward when David heard it, he said, "I and my kingdom are innocent before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner.

28 Later on, David found out about it and proclaimed, "Let me and my kingdom remain guiltless forever in the LORD's presence for the death of Ner's son Abner.

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:

- David was careful to let everyone know that Abner's murder was Joab's doing, not his. If it had been David's doing, he would have lost the support of the northern tribes.

29 May it turn upon the head of Joab and on all his father's house; and may there not be eliminated from the house of Joab someone who suffers a discharge, or has leprosy, or holds the spindle, or falls by the sword, or lacks bread."

29 May it fall on the head of Joab and on all his father's house; and may there not fail from the house of Joab one who has a discharge, or who is a leper, or who takes hold of a distaff, or who falls by the sword, or who lacks bread."

29 May judgment rest on Joab's head and on his father's entire household. May Joab's dynasty never be without one who has a discharge, who is a leper, who walks with a cane, who commits suicide, or who lacks food!"

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.

- Why did David not execute or at least punish Joab? We do not know.
- He was characteristically slow to discipline members of his own family when they deserved it (i.e., Joab, Ammon, and Absalom)
- The only punishment in this case was that David wished on Joab's descendants was that they would continually experience diseases, violent death, and poverty

— This is what God promised to bring on those of His people who despised His will (Cf. Deut. 21:1-9)

30 So Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.

30 So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.

30 He said this because Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner after he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.

30 So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

31 Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth, and mourn before Abner." And **King David** walked behind **the bier**.

31 Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes and gird on sackcloth and lament before Abner." And King David walked behind the bier.

31 David ordered Joab and all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourn for Abner." King David walked behind the funeral procession,

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.

- David's sorrow was sincere and profound, and he took occasion to give it public expression by the funeral honors he appointed for Abner

- "...King David" - for the first time, David is referred to in this manner

— David was referred to as "king" previously (2:4,7,11; 3:17,21-24), but this is the first time the title "King David" has been used

— Now that the threat of the north had died with Abner, David's throne was secure enough to warrant this title

- "...the bier" - a sort of wooden frame, partly resembling a coffin, and partly a hand-barrow

32 And they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king raised his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept.

32 Thus they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept.

32 and they buried Abner at Hebron. The king wept loudly at Abner's grave, and all the people wept, too.

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.

33 And the king sang a song of mourning for Abner and said, "Should Abner die as a fool dies?"

33 The king chanted a *lament* for Abner and said, "Should Abner die as a fool dies?"

33 The king composed this mourning song for Abner: "Should Abner's death be like a fool's?"

33 And the king lamented over Abner, and said, "Died Abner as a fool died?"

34 "Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put in bronze shackles; As one falls before the wicked, you have fallen." And all the people wept over him again.

34 "Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put in fetters; As one falls before the wicked, you have fallen." And all the people wept again over him.

34 Your hands were not bound, nor were your feet in irons. As one falls before the wicked, you have fallen." Then all the people cried again because of him.

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.

- This brief elegy is a combination of indignation and sorrow. Abner killed Asahel in open war (2:23), but Joab killed Abner out of hatred and for personal benefit

- If Abner had been really slain in revenge for blood, as Joab asserted, he ought to have been delivered up "bound hand and foot"

— But Joab, instead of waiting for his being delivered up with the legal formalities to the authorized penalty (if he were really guilty, which he was not), as an assassin, stabbed him as a worthless fellow (1 Kings 2:5)

- David added that he felt himself, though a king, weakened by his loss, and that "a prince and great man had fallen."

35 Then all the people came to provide food for David *in his distress* while it was still day; but David vowed, saying, "May God do so to me, and more so, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun goes down."

35 Then all the people came to persuade David to eat bread while it was still day; but David vowed, saying, "May God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun goes down."

35 Everyone tried to persuade David to have a meal while there was still daylight, but David took an oath by saying, "May God do like this to me and more, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun sets!"

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

36 Now all the people took note of *David's vow*, and it pleased them, just as everything that the king did pleased all the people.

36 Now all the people took note of *it*, and it pleased them, just as everything the king did pleased all the people.

36 Everybody took note of this and was very pleased, just as everything else the king did pleased everyone.

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

37 So all the people and all Israel understood on that day that it had not been *the desire* of the king to put Abner the son of Ner to death.

37 So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been *the will* of the king to put Abner the son of Ner to death.

37 As a result, the entire army and all of Israel understood that day that the king had nothing to do with the murder of Ner's son Abner.

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.

- David's feelings and conduct upon hearing of the death, together with the funeral, tended not only to remove all suspicion of guilt from him, but even to turn the tide of popular opinion in his favor, and to pave the way for his reigning over all the tribes more honorably than by the treacherous negotiations proposed by Abner

38 Then the king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a leader and a great man has fallen in Israel this day?"

38 Then the king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?"

38 The king reminded his staff, "Don't you know that a prince and a great man has fallen today in Israel?"

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?"

39 And I am weak today, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too difficult for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer in proportion to his evil."

39 I am weak today, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah are too difficult for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil."

39 Today, even though I'm anointed as king, I'm weak. These men, sons of Zeruiah, are too difficult for me. May the LORD repay the one who acts wickedly in accordance with his

wickedness!"

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

- David had organized 600 malcontents, dealt harshly with the Amalekites (2 Sam 1), put to death the men who murdered Ish-bosheth (2 Sam 4), but failed to act in the case of Joab's misdeeds

— David washed his hands and left the family of Joab to the judgment of God

— He later instructs to Solomon deal with Joab as some of the "loose ends" he will inherit (1 Kings 2:5-6,28-34)