

2 Samuel 3:1-39 **Process Toward National Unity – Death of Abner** **David's sons born in Hebron**

Civil Wars between North and South

¹ Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

Sons of David

² Sons were born to David in Hebron: His firstborn was Amnon by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; ³ his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; ⁴ the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; ⁵ and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron.

Abner Sought a united nation with David as king

⁶ Now it was so, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner was strengthening his hold on the house of Saul.

⁷ And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. So Ishbosheth said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"

⁸ Then Abner became very angry at the words of Ishbosheth, and said, "Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I show loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David; and you charge me today with a fault concerning this woman? ⁹ May God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David as the Lord has sworn to him — ¹⁰ to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba." ¹¹ And he could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

¹² Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David, saying, "Whose is the land?" saying also, "Make your covenant with me, and indeed my hand shall be with you to bring all Israel to you."

David's demand for his wife Michal's return as the price for peace.

¹³ And David said, "Good, I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you: you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face."

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

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

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

¹⁷ Now Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, "In time past you were seeking for David to be king over you. 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 the hand of all their enemies.'" ¹⁹ And Abner also spoke in the hearing of Benjamin. Then Abner also

went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel and the whole house of Benjamin.

20 So 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.

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

Joab Murders Abner

22 At that moment 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. 23 When Joab and all the troops that were with him had come, they told Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he sent him away, and he has gone in peace."

24 Then Joab came to the king and said, "What have you done? Look, Abner came to you; why is it that you sent him away, and he has already gone? 25 Surely you realize that Abner the son of Ner came to deceive you, to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing."

26 And when Joab had gone from David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, who brought him back from the well of Sirah. But David did not know it.

27 Now when Abner had returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him privately, and there stabbed him in the stomach, so that he died for the blood of Asahel his brother.

28 Afterward, when David heard it, he said, "My kingdom and I are guiltless before the Lord forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner. 29 Let it rest on the head of Joab and on all his father's house; and let there never fail to be in the house of Joab one who has a discharge or is a leper, who leans on a staff or falls by the sword, or who lacks bread."

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

David's Mourning for Abner

31 Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes, gird yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn for Abner." And King David followed the coffin. 32 So 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 lament over Abner and said:

"Should Abner die as a fool dies? 34 Your hands were not bound Nor your feet put into fetters; As a man falls before wicked men, so you fell."

Then all the people wept over him again.

35 And when all the people came to persuade David to eat food while it was still day, David took an oath, saying, "God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down!"

36 Now all the people took note of it, and it pleased them, since whatever the king did pleased all the people. 37 For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's intent to kill Abner the son of Ner.

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? 39 And I am weak today, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too harsh for me. The Lord shall repay the evildoer according to his wickedness."

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Facts Revealed:

Civil Wars between North and South

- ✧ Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. [2 Samuel 3:1]
- ✧ God had anointed David as king of Israel. [1 Samuel 16:11-13]
- ✧ Judah had anointed David king of Judah. [2 Samuel 2:4]
- ✧ National unity was a long struggle as men adjusted to accept the reality of the Lord's will.

Sons of David from David's first marriage to Abigail the widow of Nabal from Carmel in Judah through the seven years David was king in Hebron [2 Samuel 3:2-4]

- ✧ His firstborn was **Amnon** by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess.
- ✧ His second, **Chileab**, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.
- ✧ His third, **Absalom** the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur.
- ✧ His fourth, **Adonijah** the son of Haggith.
- ✧ His fifth, **Shephatiah** the son of Abital.
- ✧ His sixth, **Ithream**, by David's wife Eglah.
 - ✧ These were all born to David in Hebron after the threat against his life by Saul had ended and David is secure as king of Judah.

Abner sought a united nation with David as king [2 Samuel 3:6-12]

- ✧ God uses the natural lusts and drives of mankind to accomplish His Will.
 - ✧ Abner, the commander of the armies of Israel who made Ishbosheth king of Israel, took a craving for Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, a concubine of Saul, and so Abner went in to her.
 - ✧ Ishbosheth, as king of Israel in his father Saul's place would have inherited the wives and concubines of his father Saul,
 - ✧ Ishbosheth questioned Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"
 - ✧ Abner resented being questioned on the matter so he decided to switch loyalties from Ishbosheth and use his influence to bring all Israel under David as a unified kingdom which he said to Ishbosheth.
 - ✧ Ishbosheth was afraid to say anything more.
 - ✧ It is obvious at this point to realize that everyone in Saul's kingdom was fully aware of the fact that David had been chosen by God to be king of all Israel.
 - ✧ Abner sent messengers to David expressing his decision seeking a covenant with David.

David's demand for his wife Michal's return as the price for peace. [2 Samuel 3:13-21]

- ✧ King Saul had given his daughter Michal to David as wife for the price of 100 foreskins from the Philistines which meant that 100 Philistines would need to be killed for the collection, hoping the Philistines would kill David if he so attempted to meet the price. [1 Samuel 18:25]
- ✧ David was excited at the prospect of killing the enemies of the Lord, so he doubled the count and returned with 200 Philistine foreskins. [1 Samuel 18:26-27]
- ✧ Saul had given David's wife Michal to Palti when David escaped and became a fugitive. [1 Samuel 25:44]

- ✧ David demanded that his wife Michal be returned to him as the price for accepting the covenant suggested by Abner. [2 Samuel 3:13]
- ✧ David backed up his request by sending a message to Ishbosheth demanding the return of his wife Michal the daughter of Saul.
- ✧ Ishbosheth gave the order to take Michal away from Paltiel.
- ✧ Paltiel followed weeping until Abner commanded him to return home.
- ✧ Abner kept his word to David and encouraged the elders of Israel to accept David as king of all Israel, to which they agreed.
- ✧ Abner then took David's wife Michal and 20 men of Israel to David in Hebron and encouraged David to take all Israel in a covenant with the people to be their king.
- ✧ David accepted the proposal and sent Abner away in peace.

Joab Murders Abner [2 Samuel 3:22—27]

- ✧ After Abner and his men had left town, Joab, the commander of David's army returned from a raid and learned that Abner had come to David and David had sent him away in peace.
- ✧ Joab could not believe that Abner the commander of the enemy army had come for any good so he asked David why he had allowed their enemy to depart in peace.
- ✧ Without David knowing it, Joab sent messengers who brought Abner back to Hebron where Joab took him aside and killed him, because Abner had killed Asahel the brother of Joab in battle. [2 Samuel 2:18-23, 3:26-27]
 - ✧ Zeruah was the sister of David, her sons were Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. [1 Chronicles 2:12-17]
- ✧ Afterward, when David heard of it, he said, "My kingdom and I are guiltless before the Lord forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner. Let it rest on the head of Joab and on all his father's house; and let there never fail to be in the house of Joab one who has a discharge or is a leper, who leans on a staff or falls by the sword, or who lacks bread." [2 Samuel 3:28-29]
 - ✧ David publicly proclaims his innocence in the death of Abner, and wants a clear record on the matter to avoid a blotch against his name and his kingdom.

David's Mourning for Abner [2 Samuel 3:31-39]

- ✧ Abner was buried in Hebron the royal city, and David led the people in mourning for the loss of a champion of Israel.
- ✧ David sang a lament over Abner.
 - ✧ Abner died at the hands of wicked men without being bound except by deceit.
 - ✧ David refused to eat until sunset, and all the people approved of David's response because they understood that Abner's death was not of the king's intent.
- ✧ Then the king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? And I am weak today, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruah, are too harsh for me. The Lord shall repay the evildoer according to his wickedness." [2 Samuel 3:38-39]