

Abner: War between the houses of Saul and David

2 Samuel 3

CHAPTER 3

1 And the war was long between the house of Saul and the house of David; but David became continually stronger, and the house of Saul became continually weaker. **2** And to David were sons born in Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jizreelitess; **3** and his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maachah, daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; **4** and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; **5** and the sixth, Ithream, of Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron. **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. **7** And Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. And *Ishbosheth* said to Abner, Why hast thou gone in to my father's concubine? **8** Then was Abner very wroth for the words of *Ishbosheth*, and said, Am I a dog's head, I who against Judah do shew kindness this day to 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 reproachest me this day with the fault of this woman? **9** So do God to Abner, and more also, if, as Jehovah has sworn to David, I do not so to him; **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 Beer-sheba! **11** And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him. **12** And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose is the land? saying *also*, Make thy covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with thee, to turn all Israel to thee. **13** And he said, Well, I will make a covenant with thee; only I require one thing 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. **14** And David sent messengers to *Ishbosheth* Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, whom I espoused to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. **15** And *Ishbosheth* sent, and took her from *her* husband, from Phaltiel the son of Laish. **16** And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner to him, Go, return. And he returned. **17** Now Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David aforetime to be king over you; **18** and now do *it*, for Jehovah has spoken of David, saying, By my servant David will I save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies. **19** And Abner also spoke 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. **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 repast. **21** And Abner said to David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thy heart desires. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace. **22** And behold, the servants of David and Joab came from an expedition, and brought in a great spoil with them; but Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. **23** And Joab and all the host that was with him came; and they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has sent him away; and he is gone in peace. **24** Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came to thee; why is it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is gone? **25** Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest. **26** And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, who brought him again from the well of Sirah; but David did not know it. **27** And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him secretly, and smote him there in the belly, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. **28** And afterwards David heard *it*, and he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before Jehovah for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: **29** let it fall on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that has an issue, or that is a leper, or that leans on a staff, or that falls by the sword, or that lacks bread! **30** So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle. **31** And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your garments, and gird yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David followed the bier. **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 lamented over Abner, and said, Should Abner die as a fool dieth? **34** Thy hands were not bound, Nor thy feet put into fetters; As a man falleth before wicked men, Fellest thou! And all the people wept again over him. **35** And all the people came to cause David to eat bread while it was yet day; but David swore, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread or aught else till the sun be down! **36** And all the people remarked it, and it pleased them; as whatever the king did pleased all the people. **37** And all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to put Abner the son of Ner to death. **38** And the king said to his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? **39** And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too hard for me: Jehovah reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness!