

Saul is dead David is king yet Abner Saul's commander initiates a coup by making Saul's son Ish-Bosheth king over a competing kingdom in Israel at Mahanaim east of the Jordan. And war breaks out after Abner challenges 12 warriors of Joab w/ his 12 warriors. No winner each kills the other & the war begins--similar to Goliath

*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.*

Some say two years of war while David's army winning and Ish-Bosheth w/ Abner losing. Abner is full of ambition will do whatever it takes to gain and stay in power.

*2 Sons were born to David at Hebron: his first-born was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; 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; 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 were born to David at Hebron.*

David's compromise w/ God's law giving into the culture of the times. Dt17:17

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

Ish-Bosheth is weak & Abner is intimidating. Accusation could be true, it doesn't say but Abner is upset that his inferior would challenge him. Big egos can't stand those they deem lesser calling them out.

Abner reacts w/ disdain toward one supposedly king. He has contempt for the one he set in office, **a pawn**, a tool so Abner keep position of Commander. Abner was making himself strong..**not** nation or king or people but himself a true **politician**. If he did sleep w/ Saul's concubine it a violation worthy of being put to death, as if he went into king Ish-Bosheths harem. What was the fathers belongs to the son.

Dogs head ....He thinks too highly of himself as if only he keeps Israel from turning to David—no recognition of God. He calls it *kindness*....I'm doing you a favor he then brings a curse on himself...he doesn't transfer, only God does in his time. It only exposes who Abner is--one seeking status & position & dies doing it. **Dan** in the North **Beersheba** in the South 150 miles

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

**Shuttle diplomacy**-messengers sent to mediate & negotiate a settlement

Disappointed w/ Ish-Bosheth he seeks an opportunity to leave & join David or used to force I-B hand to deny charges against him. **Sends** a message to David acknowledging his kingship '*whose is the land*' as the best to rule, anointed, w/ best interest of the people. God has ways of turning those on the other side to the right side & making them serviceable to Godly government.

David make treaty w/ condition of bringing his estranged wife Michal—test of sincerity & honesty.

But a matter of honor, respect, dignity, nobility as king, what God has joined together let no man separate. David doubled the dowry Saul required.

*17 Now Abner had consultation with the elders of Israel, saying, "In times 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 from the hand of all their enemies.'" 19 And 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. 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. 21 And 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.*

Abner uses influence & diplomacy as Saul's commander & has them recall their former desire & how David delivered Israel in times past w/ proven character while Ish-Bosheth w/out experience is unproven. People need to crown David who is proven in his leadership w/ God on his side & Gods hand upon David to save Israel.

It is your duty in order to have victory over your enemy & fulfill God's will for the nation. It will be of the greatest stupidity to oppose him. Amazing that God turns the heart of one who opposed Him & chased David w/ Saul in order to destroy him as king to rule the nation. Noted is those of Benjamin Saul's own tribe have come around to David. Abner had the greatest influence & deceived them on behalf of Saul--**now desires to undeceive.**

David makes a covenant receives Abner into his confidence as friend w/ Abners 20 associates ***in the mouth of witnesses a thing is established***, feast sealed the deal a sign of friendship

Abner seems to take credit for the kingdom coming together because of him. He does not recognize David as God's choice to reign. But is ambitious-- No fingerprints of man can ever be attributed to God's sovereign work...*let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.*

*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. 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." 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? 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."*

Joab comes back from the fight, raid, w/ much spoil & learns Abner had been w/ David & just left in peace. Joab is angry & practically accuses David of being **naïve** & a fool instead of arresting him. David doesn't answer him—answer a fool according to his folly & **sometimes no answer at all is an answer**. Joab believes he knows better than David, yet not seeking to understand the plan to bring the rest of Israel together under David's reign. Joab likely sees his position threatened by a competing army commander. But still seeking to avenge his brother Asahel's death.

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

Joab contrived a wicked scheme using David's name as a pretense to meet w/ Abner & murder his rival in cold blood.

Abner killed Joab's brother Asahel in war, Joab assassinated Abner by deception. Hard to see the sovereignty of God in all this, wickedness and betrayal working together for God's good. Abner hunted David & betrayed Ish-Boseth not likely a trustworthy commander in David's army when things turn against David especially when Absalom rebelled. David brings a curse on Joab & his family---but better deal w/ the perpetrator than his family.

*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. 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. 33 And the king chanted a lament for Abner and said, Should Abner die as a fool dies? 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.*

What Joab did was an outrage & insult to David's reign, seeing he had made a covenant w/ Abner. Joab brought reproach upon David by murdering one in David's service. By doing this *in the gate* showed his contempt for what is honorable. He is arrogant & unconcerned for the kingdom and reputation of his king. Plus *Hebron* was a city of refuge & Levite, priests city. Joab is unconcerned for God, the law or man.

David distances himself from the situation, shows his regard for Abner & disdain for the wicked way he died. David & his kingdom is w/o guilt. He calls Joab to lament the death of Abner

*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." 36 Now all the people took note of it, and it pleased them, just as everything the king did pleased all the people. 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. 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 Zeruih are too difficult for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil."*