

## 2 Samuel Chapter 3 Commentary

**2Sa 3:1 ¶ "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. 2 And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; 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; 4 And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; 5 And the sixth, Ithrean, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron."**

We are told that there was a long time of war between the houses of Saul and David, with David getting stronger and the house of Saul growing weaker.

We are told here of the children of David being born at Hebron. We notice that David has taken more wives, because each one of these six children has a different mother.

Hebron means *seat of association, a society or company*. All of David's children were born after David was anointed king: these while king over the house of Judah, and the rest while he is king over all Israel. This gives us a prophetic picture of King Jesus, recognized as such when he came in a body of flesh, seen in: **Mt 2:2 "Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."** and of the relationship to the saved children of God. King Jesus saved every Child of God, after he was the announced to be king over God's people.

We will see later that Absalom (from this first set of children, who are reckoned by genealogy under the reign of the law ordinances) is the one who will try to overthrow King David and usurp the kingdom from him. This is a prophetic picture of how the Jews, under the reign of the law ordinances, will reject Jesus and try to overthrow him and usurp his kingdom from him. Just as Absalom failed, so those under the law ordinances will fail also.

**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, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine? 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 today with a fault concerning this woman? 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 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. 11 And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him."**

As the war between Israel and Judah continues, and Abner gains strength in Israel, Ishbosheth becomes afraid that Abner may try to usurp the throne. Therefore, Ishbosheth accuses Abner of having a relationship with Saul's concubine. We believe that Ishbosheth saw an opportunity to accuse Abner and have him killed, which if successful would return Ishbosheth to power over Israel.

However, this accusation does not go as Ishbosheth had schemed. Abner turns the accusation into what it actually is, a made-up affair. Then he declares to Ishbosheth: all this time Abner has been defying God and has not already delivered Israel to come under the reign of David as their God appointed king: Abner tells Ishbosheth that now he will begin this transition and bring God's word to pass.

Abner is so mighty in Israel that Ishbosheth is afraid to make a move against him, especially since he has no evidence, which would convince Israel of the falsely accused sin of Abner. I believe there is a secondary reason that Ishbosheth is afraid of Abner, which is the truth that Abner has declared to Ishbosheth, about how they, and all Israel, are in defiance of God's will and purpose for Israel. Ishbosheth knows this to be true, and there is no answer he can give to overturn the will of God.

Again, we see men working under the laborious load of worldly knowledge. Ishbosheth is scheming with worldly wisdom. Abner is brought back to remembrance of God and God's will, by this false accusation, which gives Abner a right mind of what to do. We expect that Abner is also using some worldly knowledge, believing that with his power used to transfer the rule of all Israel to David, as God has purposed, he expects to be in a

position of power under King David also. However, I remind the readers: Abner is now working under the leading of the providence of God, to bring about the promise of God to David, that he will be king over all Israel.

What lesson can we learn from this scene? As Abner and Israel have manifested their desire to serve self and not God, we shall see God working against them to bring to pass his will and purpose. We learn that we need to be sure we are walking in the will of God, and not working to satisfy the lust of our own flesh for power, wealth, or personal gain. If we live in God's will, God will not have to intervene in our lives and through judicial judgment bring us back to himself, as he is with Israel at this point.

**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. 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. 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 And Ishbosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Phaltiel the son of Laish. 16 And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned."**

Abner, having providentially being brought to remembrance of the will of God, begins the communication, to bring to pass the kingship of David over all Israel, in accordance with God's will. David tells Abner he will make a league with him, but David has a condition that his first wife Michal, Saul's daughter, must be returned to him first. After David's response to Abner: David sends a message unto Ishbosheth demanding the return of his wife Michal. Ishbosheth yields to David's demand and sends Michal unto him. Her second husband follows her until Abner tells him to go home.

Why would David demand the return of his first wife? Michal is Saul's daughter, and her return to David validates to Israel that David, as Saul's son-in-law, has the right to be king over all Israel. Also, Saul was a Benjamite, and the return of his wife Michal to David, gives David the direct family connection to the tribe of Benjamin. David and Michal reunited in the marriage will give king David favor in the sight of Benjamin, because Benjamin can now say; we are not abandoning Saul and his family but supporting them because of Michal. This, political maneuver of David, effectively removes Ishbosheth from the throne without David doing anything against him.

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

Abner now begins in earnest to make the transition possible by conferring with the elders of Israel. He reminds Israel; in time past you sought David to be your king. Abner tells Israel, and Benjamin who has supported Saul fully: make David your king because God has declared that under the kingship of David, Israel will be delivered from the rule of the Philistines and their other enemies. Abner is using the truths of God to convince Israel to do what God has said and purposed.

Abner receives a good report from Israel and Benjamin. Now, Abner brings the news to David. Abner tells David that he will gather all Israel together to come unto him and make him king over them. David sends Abner away in peace, even though Abner has been an enemy to David and Judah for a long time. Now, this may seem odd to many, but it reminds us all; David and Abner are now working together, to bring to pass the promise and commandment of God.

It is sad that it took the awful accusation of Ishbosheth to turn Abner's heart back to God; just as it took the loss of David's wives in Ziklag, to bring David back to prayer and attentiveness to God. There is a lesson for us

herein. If we are faithful in following God, our lives will go much smoother than if we begin to follow our own hearts and desires. Faithfulness to God and Christ will not keep troubles out of our lives, however, it will keep the judicial wrath and judgments of God from be poured out upon us.

**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 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 hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone? 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."**

Joab and the army of David are off fighting some enemy and taking great spoils of war. Wherefore, Joab was not present when Abner and David met. Joab, upon returning and hearing that Abner has come to David, and David has sent him away in peace; comes to David and falsely accuses Abner of secretly spying upon Judah, with intent to come back and make war against them. Remember, Joab seeks personal vengeance of Abner, because Abner killed his brother Asahel.

Isn't it amazing how easily self-vindication will lead us to lying and other sins? A lesson for us to examine the intents of our hearts before we act. We ought to ask God what to do before we act.

**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 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."**

Joab, secretly, sends messengers after Abner and asks him to meet with him. They meet up and Joab kills Abner, to avenge the death of his brother Asahel.

Again, we see men following the ways of the world and not walking righteously before God. We point out that both Joab and Abner are living covetous lives. They both have a lust for power and honor.

Joab has a twofold reason for killing Abner. One is the revenge of his brother's death. The other is his jealous fear that Abner may usurp his position as head over the army of David.

Lessons for us in this scene:

- First, God has said: ***Ro 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."***
- Next, we should first remember to do as David and ask God what we should do, before we take off in our own strength and fail, because we are not doing the will of God.
- Another thing to consider, we do not see that Joab inquired why Abner came to see David. Joab is so consumed with his fleshly desire for vengeance, that he does not take time to find out what is going on. We always need to ask God what to do, and we need to be sure of what is really going on. We do not act on rumors but on factual information.
- Lastly, if Joab did know why Abner came, he used his second excuse for killing Abner, which is jealousy, which demonstrates that Joab is covetous of power.

This is a reminder to us that we are to love our enemies as well as our friends, which Jesus summed up in the second greatest commandment: ***Mt 22:39 "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."*** If we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will not want to do any harm to them, nor seek self-vengeance against them.

**28 "And afterward when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD forever from 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 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. 30 So Joab and Abishai his brother slew 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 clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David**

**himself 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."**

When David hears of this trickery of Joab, he declares his guiltlessness of the whole matter. To iterate that David was not party to this fiasco, David pronounces a curse upon Joab and all his house for as long as it lasts.

We are told here that Abishai was also involved in the murder of Abner, and it was because Abner slew their brother in battle. We remember that Abner twice warned Asahel to quit following him to try and take his life, and Asahel refused and thereby brought about his own demise. Do you suppose that Joab and Asahel inquired of how or why Abner killed their brother? Do you think they considered that there was a battle going on and they know that anyone is subject to be killed in battle. A reminder to us; be sure we gather all the facts before we make a rash decision.

David commands Joab and all the people with him, to rend your clothes and gird on sackcloth, and mourn before the coffin of Abner. David personally followed the coffin of Abner to the place where they buried him in Hebron and wept at the grave. The people weep along with David. David does all this to manifest to Israel, he had nothing to do with the death of Abner. This is a time when David does not have to act the fool to deceive people, as he did with Achish the Philistine king. His sorrow is sincere, and it shows.

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

King David laments over Abner and declared: Abner did not use discretion as a vigilant leader of men. He fell into the trap of vile and heartless men. And everyone started weeping again.

A warning to us: every time we are called to by the world, if we answer the call, it will always lead us to destruction, for that is all the world has to offer. A further warning, there are people in church fellowship who have evil intentions, which we must guard against, even as we guard against the wiles of the world.

What do you mean? Consider all the people involved in this scene. They are all Israelites, who are supposed to be brethren in the Lord. We have already seen that many of them have rejected God as king, and are living in accordance with their own will, not heeding *"thus saith the Lord,"* which leads to all the discord seen in this chapter. In church fellowship, we see these same kinds of things happen, when people want to be known as the top dog and have a position for power and influence. We have a scriptural example of this in: ***Lu 22:26; 24 "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. 25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. 26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. 28 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. 29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; 30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*** If we truly love God more than anything else, and our brother as ourselves, we will not resort to vengeful actions against one another, nor will we try to usurp authority over others.

**35 And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down. 36 And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people. 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. 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 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."**

The funeral being over, the people urge king David to eat. King David says that he will not eat until the sun goes down, in a manner, he is fasting and mourning for the death of Abner. This action caused all of Israel to know that King David did not slay Abner, and he did not approve Abner's death. King David further declares that a great man of Israel has died. He further declares that Joab and Abishai are men that are too heartless for him. David tells Israel that God will reward these men for their evil deeds through his judicial wrath.

We shall see that the actions of King David, in this matter, will move the hearts of Israel to turn to God, and to make David king. David has exercised in this chapter, what we talked about in the previous chapter, and in this chapter, about love for your enemies, as well as your friends.

Another lesson we can glean from this chapter: as king David has demonstrated his love for God's chosen people, Israel: our King, Jesus Christ, has demonstrated his love for God's chosen people, the kingdom of God on earth. An example we should be ready and willing to follow. Thank you, King Jesus, for being the way, the truth, the life, the love, and the living example for God's people to follow. Help us to be faithful to you, dear God, and to one another. Amen!