

14 And Abner said to Joab: Let the young men rise, and play before us. And Joab answered: Let them rise.

15 Then there arose and went over twelve in number of Benjamin, of the part of Isboseth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

16 And every one catching his fellow by the head, thrust his sword into the side of his adversary, and they fell down together: and the name of the place was called: The field of the valiant, in Gabaon.

17 And there was a very fierce battle that day: and Abner was put to flight, with the men of Israel, by the servants of David.

18 And there were the three sons of Sarvia there, Joab, and Abisai, and Asael: now Asael was a most swift runner, like one of the roes that abide in the woods.

19 And Asael pursued after Abner, and turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.

20 And Abner looked behind him, and said: Art thou Asael? And he answered: I am.

21 And Abner said to him: Go to the right hand or to the left, and lay hold on one of the young men and take thee his spoils. But Asael would not leave off following him close.

22 And again Abner said to Asael: Go off, and do not follow me, lest I be obliged to stab thee to the ground, and I shall not be able to hold up my face to Joab thy brother.

23 But he refused to hearken to him, and would not turn aside: wherefore Abner struck him with his spear with a back stroke in the groin, and thrust him through, and he died upon the spot: and all that came to the place where Asael fell down and died stood still.

24 Now while Joab and Abisai pursued after Abner, the sun went down: and they came as far as the hill of the aqueduct, that lieth over

against the valley by the way of the wilderness in Gabaon.

25 And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together to Abner: and being joined in one body, they stood on the top of a hill.

26 And Abner cried out to Joab, and said: Shall thy sword rage unto utter destruction? knowest thou not that it is dangerous to drive people to despair? how long dost thou defer to bid the people cease from pursuing after their brethren?

27 And Joab said: As the Lord liveth, if thou hadst spoke sooner, even in the morning the people should have retired from pursuing after their brethren.

28 Then Joab sounded the trumpet, and all the army stood still, and did not pursue after Israel any farther, nor fight any more.

29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plains: and they passed the Jordan, and having gone through all Beth-horon, came to the camp.

30 And Joab returning, after he had left Abner, assembled all the people: and there were wanting of David's servants nineteen men, beside Asael.

31 But the servants of David had killed of Benjamin, and of the men that were with Abner, three hundred and sixty, who all died.

32 And they took Asael, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father in Bethlehem and Joab, and the men that were with him, marched all the night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

Chapter 3

Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: David prospering and growing always stronger and stronger, but

the house of Saul decaying daily.

2 And sons were born to David in Hebron: and his firstborn was Ammon of Achinoam the Jezrahelitess:

3 And his second Cheleab of Abigail the wife of Nabal of Carmel: and the third Absalom the son of Maacha the daughter of Tholmai king of Gessur:

4 And the fourth Adonias, the son of Haggith: and the fifth Saphathia the son of Abital:

5 And the sixth Jethraam of Egla the wife of David: these were born to David In Hebron.

6 Now while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner the son of Ner ruled the house of Saul.

7 And Saul had a concubine named Respha, the daughter of Aia. And Isboseth said to Abner:

8 Why didst thou go in to my father's concubine? And he was exceedingly angry for the words of Isboseth, and said: Am I a dog's head against Juda this day, who have shewn mercy to the house of Saul thy father, and to his brethren and friends, and have not delivered thee into the hands of David, and hast thou sought this day against me to charge me with a matter concerning a woman?

9 So do God to Abner, and more also, unless as the Lord hath sworn to David, so I do to him,

10 That the kingdom be translated from the house of Saul, and the throne of David be set up over Israel, and over Juda from Dan to Bersabee.

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

12 Abner therefore sent messengers to David for himself, saying: Whose is the land? and that they should say: Make a league with me, and my hand shall be with thee: and I will bring all Israel to thee.

13 And he said: Very well: I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee,

saying: Thou shalt not see my face before thou bring Michol the daughter of Saul: and so thou shalt come, and see me.

14 And David sent messengers to Isboseth the son of Saul, saying: Restore my wife Michol, whom I espoused to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

15 And Isboseth sent, and took her from her husband Phaltiel, the son of Lais.

16 And her husband followed her, weeping as far as Bahurim: and Abner said to him: Go and return. And he returned.

17 Abner also spoke to the ancients of Israel, saying: Both yesterday and the day before you sought for David that he might reign over you.

18 Now then do it: because the Lord hath spoken to David, saying: By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hands of the Philistines, and of all their enemies.

19 And Abner spoke also to Benjamin. And he went to speak to David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and to all Benjamin.

20 And he came to David in Hebron with twenty men: and David made a feast for Abner, and his men that came with him.

21 And Abner said to David: I will rise, that I may gather all Israel unto thee my lord the king, and may enter into a league with thee, and that thou mayst reign over all as thy soul desireth. Now when David had brought Abner on his way, and he was gone in peace,

22 Immediately, David's servants and Joab came, after having slain the robbers, with an exceeding great booty. And Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had now sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

23 And Joab and all the army that was with him, came afterwards: and it was told Joab, that Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

24 And Joab went in to the king, and said: What hast thou done? Behold Abner came to thee: Why didst thou send him away, and he is gone and departed?

25 Knowest thou not Abner the son of Ner, that to this end he came to thee, that he might deceive thee, and to know thy going out, and thy coming in, and to know all thou dost?

26 Then Joab going out from David, sent messengers after Abner, and brought him back from the cistern of Sira, David knowing nothing of it.

27 And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside to the middle of the gate, to speak to him treacherously: and he stabbed him there in the groin, and he died, in revenge of the blood of Asael his brother.

28 And when David heard of it, after the thing was now done, he said: I, and my kingdom are innocent before the Lord for ever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner:

29 And may it come upon the head of Joab, and upon all his father's house: and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue of seed, or that is a leper, or that holdeth the distaff, or that falleth by the sword, or that wanteth bread.

30 So Joab and Abisai his brother slew Abner, because he had killed their brother Asael at Gabaon 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 sackcloths, and mourn before the funeral of Abner. And king David himself followed the bier.

32 And when they had buried Abner in Hebron, king David lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner: and all the people also wept.

33 And the king mourning and lamenting over Abner, said: Not as cowards are wont to die, hath Abner died.

34 Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet laden with fetters: but as men fall before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall. And all the people repeating it wept over him.

35 And when all the people came to take meat with David, while it was yet broad day, David swore, saying: So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread or any thing else before sunset.

36 And all the people heard, and they were pleased, and all that the king did seemed good in the sight of all the people.

37 And all the people, and all Israel understood that day that it was not the king's doing, that Abner the son of Ner was slain.

38 The king also said to his servants: Do you not know that a prince and a great man is slain this day in Israel?

39 But I as yet am tender, though anointed king. And these men the sons of Sarvia are too hard for me: the Lord reward him that doth evil according to his wickedness.

Chapter 4

And Isboseth the son of Saul heard that Abner was slain in Hebron: and his hands were weakened, and all Israel was troubled.

2 Now the son of Saul had two men captains of his bands, the name of the one was Baana, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Remmon a Berothite of the children of Benjamin: for Beroth also was reckoned in Benjamin.

3 And the Berothites fled into Gethaim, and were sojourners there until that time.

4 And Jonathan the son of Saul had a son that was lame of his feet: for he was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan from Jezrahel. And his nurse took him up and fled: and as she made haste to flee, he fell and