



*Abner Shows Loyalty  
To The House  
Of Saul*

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## Overview

No one ever hardened his heart against God and prospered.

The history of Abner as well as all Bible history is recorded so that all may exert themselves for the honour of God, and the support of his cause, with bold and unshaken reliance on him.

There is one conflict in which all the followers of the Lamb are, and must be engaged; one enemy, more formidable than Goliath, still challenges the armies of Israel.

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

Many, like Abner, are not above committing base crimes, who are too proud to bear reproof, or even the suspicion of being guilty.

Many mean to serve their own purposes; and will betray those who trust them, when they can get any advantage.

Yet the Lord serves his own designs, even by those who are thus actuated by revenge, ambition, or lust; but as they intend not to honour him, in the end they will be thrown aside with contempt.

## **The Life and Battles of Abner**

**Abner was the son of Ner and a cousin to Saul**

### **1 Samuel 14:15**

And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.

Saul seems to have been quite at a loss, and unable to help himself. Those can never think themselves safe who see themselves out of God's protection.

Now he sent for a priest and the ark. He hopes to make up matters with the Almighty by a partial there was trembling in the host.

It is called a trembling of God, signifying, not only a great trembling they could not resist, nor reason themselves out of, but that it came at once from the hand of God. He that made the heart, knows how to make it tremble.

### **The Defeat of the Philistines**

The Philistines were, by the power of God, set against one another. The more evident it was that God did all, the more reason Saul had to inquire whether God would give him leave to do any thing.

But he was in such haste to fight a fallen enemy that he would not stay to end his devotions, nor hear what answer God would give him. He that believeth, will not make such haste, nor reckon any business so urgent, as not to allow time to take God with him.

**Abner was the son of Saul's brother.**

### **1 Samuel 14:50-51**

And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz: and the name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. And Kish was the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abi.

Here is a general account of Saul's court and camp. He had little reason to be proud of his royal dignity, nor had any of his neighbours cause to envy him, for he had but little enjoyment after he took the kingdom.

### **Captain of the host**

### **1 Samuel 17:55**

And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, as thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.

See how frail and uncertain life is, even when a man thinks himself best fortified; how quickly, how easily, and by how small a matter, the passage may be opened for life to go out, and death to enter!

Let not the strong man glory in his strength, nor the armed man in his armour. God resists the proud, and pours contempt on those who defy him and his people.

No one ever hardened his heart against God and prospered.

The history is recorded, that all may exert themselves for the honour of God, and the support of his cause, with bold and unshaken reliance on him.

There is one conflict in which all the followers of the Lamb are, and must be engaged; one enemy, more formidable than Goliath, still challenges the armies of Israel.

### **Abner replies to David's call.**

#### **1 Samuel 26:14**

And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerer thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, who art thou that cries to the king?

David reasoned seriously and affectionately with Saul. Those who forbid our attendance on God's ordinances, do what they can to estrange us from God, and to make us heathens.

We are to reckon that which exposes us to sin the greatest injury that can be done us. If the Lord stirred thee up against me, either in displeasure to me, taking this way to punish me for my sins against him, or in displeasure to thee, if it be the effect of that evil spirit from the Lord which troubles thee; let Him accept an offering from us both.

Let us join in seeking peace, and to be reconciled with God by sacrifice.

### **Dedicated spoils of war to the tabernacle**

#### **1 Chron. 26:27-28**

Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord. And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruah, had dedicated; and whosoever had dedicated any thing, it was under the hand of Shelomith, and of his brethren.

These treasures typified the plenty there is in our heavenly Father's house, enough and to spare.

From those sacred treasuries, the unsearchable riches of Christ, all our wants are supplied; and receiving from his fulness, we must give him the glory, and endeavour to dispose of our abilities and substance according to his will.

We have an account of those employed as officers and judges. The magistracy is an ordinance of God for the good of the church, as truly as the ministry, and must not be neglected.

None of the Levites who were employed in the service of the sanctuary, none of the singers or porters, were concerned in this outward business; one duty was enough to engage the whole man.

Wisdom, courage, strength of faith, holy affections, and constancy of mind in doing our duty, are requisite or useful for every station.

### **Loyalty of, to the house of Saul**

#### [2 Samuel 2:8-32](#)

But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim;

And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

Ish-bosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.

Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon. And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe. And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.

Then Abner looked behind him, and said, Art thou Asahel? And he answered, I am. And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him.

And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? How then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?

Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of a hill. Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? How long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?

And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother. So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.

And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and threescore men died.

And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

### **Abner Makes Ishbosheth King Battle between Abner's Men and Those of Joab**

The nation in general refused David. By this the Lord trained up his servant for future honour and usefulness; and the tendency of true godliness was shown in his behaviour while passing through various difficulties.

David was herein a type of Christ, whom Israel would not submit to, though anointed of the Father to be a Prince and a Saviour to them. Abner meant, let the young men fight before us, when he said, Let them play before us: fools thus make a mock at sin.

But he is unworthy the name of a man that can thus trifle with human blood.

### **Both Parties Retreat**

Death often comes by ways we least suspect. We are often betrayed by the accomplishments we are proud of! Asahel's swiftness, which he presumed so much upon, did him no service, but hastened his end.



## **Asahel Slain by Abner**

Abner appeals to Joab concerning the miserable consequences of a civil war. Those who make light of such unnatural contests, will find that they are bitterness to all concerned.

How easy it is for men to use reason, when it makes for them, who would not use it, if it made against them! See how the issue of things alter men's minds! The same thing which looked pleasant in the morning, at night looked dismal.

Those who are most forward to enter into contention, will repent before they have done with it, and had better leave it off before it be meddled with, as Solomon advises.

This is true of every sin, oh that men would consider it in time, that it will be bitterness in the latter end! Asahel's funeral is here mentioned.

Distinctions are made between the dust of some and that of others; but in the resurrection no difference will be made, but between the godly and ungodly, which will remain for ever.

## **Alienation of Abner from the house of Saul**

### **2 Samuel 3:6-21**

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. And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth, 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 charges me to day with a fault concerning this woman?

So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; 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. And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him.

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.

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.

And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, deliver me my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

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

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

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.

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.

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 desired. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

### **David's Power Increases His Family (1 Samuel 3:1-6)**

The length of this war tried the faith and patience of David, and made his settlement at last the more welcome. The contest between grace and corruption in the hearts of believers, may fitly be compared to this warfare.

There is a long war between them, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; but as the work of holiness is carried on, corruption, like the house of Saul, grows weaker and weaker; while grace, like the house of David, grows stronger and stronger.

### **Abner Revolts to David (1 Samuel 3:7-21)**

Many, like Abner, are not above committing base crimes, who are too proud to bear reproof, or even the suspicion of being guilty.

While men go on in sin, and apparently without concern, they are often conscious that they are fighting against God.

Many mean to serve their own purposes; and will betray those who trust them, when they can get any advantage. Yet the Lord serves his own designs, even by those who are thus actuated by revenge, ambition, or lust; but as they intend not to honour him, in the end they will be thrown aside with contempt.

There was real generosity both to Michal and to the memory of Saul, in David's receiving the former, remembering probably how once he owed his life to her affection, and knowing that she was separated from him partly by her father's authority.

Let no man set his heart on that which he is not entitled to. If any disagreement has separated husband and wife, as they expect the blessing of God, let them be reconciled, and live together in love.

## **Abner is killed by Joab. David's feels great sorrow.**

### **2 Samuel 3:27-39**

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.

And afterward when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever 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 leaned on a staff, or that falls on the sword, or that lacked bread. So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

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. 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.

And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor did thy feet put into fetters: as a man filleth before wicked men, so fell thou. And all the people wept again over him.

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.

And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people. For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.

And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? 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.

Judgments are prepared for such scorers as Abner; but Joab, in what he did, acted wickedly.

David laid Abner's murder deeply to heart, and in many ways expressed his detestation of it. The guilt of blood brings a curse upon families: if men do not avenge it, God will.

It is a sad thing to die like a fool, as they do that any way shorten their own days, and those who make no provision for another world.

Who would be fond of power, when a man may have the name of it, and must be accountable for it, yet is hampered in the use of it?

David ought to have done his duty, and then trusted God with the issue. Carnal policy spared Joab.

The Son of David may long delay, but never fails to punish impenitent sinners. He who now reigns upon the throne of David, has a kingdom of a nobler kind.

Whatever He doeth, is noticed by all his willing people, and is pleasing to them.

**To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Verse Concept: Matthew Henry's Concept Bible Commentary.

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