

2 Samuel 3:17-39 (ESV)

¹⁷ And Abner conferred with the elders of Israel, saying, “For some time past you have been seeking David as king over you. ¹⁸ Now then bring it about, for the LORD has promised 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 Abner also spoke to Benjamin. And then Abner went to tell David at Hebron all that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin thought good to do.

²⁰ When Abner came with twenty men to David at Hebron, David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him. 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 you, and that you may reign over all that your heart desires.” So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

²² Just then the servants of David arrived with Joab from a raid, bringing much spoil with them. But Abner was not with David at Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. ²³ When Joab and all the army that was with him came, it was told Joab, “Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has let him go, and he has gone in peace.” ²⁴ Then Joab went to the king and said, “What have you done? Behold, Abner came to you. Why is it that you have sent him away, so that he is gone? ²⁵ You know that Abner the son of Ner came to deceive you and to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing.”

²⁶ When Joab came out from David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern of Sirah. But David did not know about it. ²⁷ And when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he struck him in the stomach, so that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. ²⁸ Afterward, when David heard of it, he said, “I and my kingdom are forever guiltless before the LORD for the blood of Abner the son of Ner. ²⁹ May it fall upon the head of Joab and upon all his father's house, and may the house of Joab never be without one who has a discharge or who is leprous or who holds a spindle 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.

³¹ Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, “Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and mourn before Abner.” And King David followed the bier. ³² They buried Abner at 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 for Abner, saying,

“Should Abner die as a fool dies?

³⁴ Your hands were not bound;
your feet were not fettered;
as one falls before the wicked
you have fallen.”

And all the people wept again over him. ³⁵ Then all the people came to persuade David to eat bread while it was yet day. But David swore, saying, “God do so to me and more also, if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down!”³⁶ And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them, as everything that the king did pleased all the people. ³⁷ So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to put to death Abner the son of Ner. ³⁸ And 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 was gentle today, though anointed king. These men, the sons of Zeruiah, are more severe than I. The LORD repay the evildoer according to his wickedness!”

Psalm 6 (NIV)

LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath.

² Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am faint;
heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.

³ My soul is in deep anguish.
How long, LORD, how long?

⁴ Turn, LORD, and deliver me;
save me because of your unfailing love.

⁵ Among the dead no one proclaims your name.
Who praises you from the grave?

⁶ I am worn out from my groaning.
All night long I flood my bed with weeping
and drench my couch with tears.

⁷ My eyes grow weak with sorrow;
they fail because of all my foes.

⁸ Away from me, all you who do evil,
for the LORD has heard my weeping.

⁹ The LORD has heard my cry for mercy;
the LORD accepts my prayer.

¹⁰ All my enemies will be overwhelmed with shame and anguish;
they will turn back and suddenly be put to shame.