

17.21b David Reigns in Hebron (2 Samuel 3:1–21; 5:4; 1 Chronicles 3:1–4; 29:27; 1 Kings 2:11)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

Brackets [. . .] indicate a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud, or they show answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- Pictures of this Bible story are rare; only two are given at the end of this lesson. Suggestion: use wooden “people” or toy Bible soldiers for a 3D illustration of these events.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *concubine*: a servant wife
- *league*: a treaty or agreement
- *to avenge*: to pay back for a wrong done
- *assassination*: the slaying/killing of someone, especially a political person, suddenly and secretly

Scripture: (ESV)

2 Samuel 3:1 There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker.

2 And sons were born to David at Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam of Jezreel; 3 and his second, Chileab [Daniel], of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; 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, of Eglah, David’s wife.

1 Chronicles 3:4 six were born to him in Hebron, where he reigned for seven years and six months. And he reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

6 While there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, 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 of Judah? To this day I keep showing steadfast love to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not given you into the hand of David. And yet you charge me today with a fault concerning a woman. 9 God do so to Abner and more also, if I do not accomplish for David what the Lord has sworn to him, 10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba.” 11 And Ish-bosheth could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

12 And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, “To whom does the land belong? Make your covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with you to bring over all Israel to you.” 13 And he said, “Good; I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you; that is, you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul’s daughter, when you come to see my face.” 14 Then David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son, saying, “Give me my wife Michal, for whom I paid the bridal price of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.” 15 And Ish-bosheth sent and took her from her husband Paltiel the son of Laish. 16 But her husband went with her, weeping after her all the way to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, “Go, return.” And he returned.

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!”

1 Kings 2:11; 1 Chronicles 29:2; 2 Samuel 5:4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

Introduction/Review:

Saul was dead. Jonathan was dead. But another son of Saul, Ishbosheth (“ish BO sheth”), became king of most of the tribes of Israel. Abner, Saul’s army commander, helped Ishbosheth. David’s army commander and nephew to David was Joab, who was probably close to David’s age. Two other nephews, Abishai and Asahel, were good soldiers. Asahel ran like a deer to catch up to Abner, but Abner slew Asahel. Both armies went home after this battle.

Story:

Abner for Ishbosheth

David lived in Hebron about seven and one-half years and had six sons born there. Three of them we’ll hear about later: Amnon, the oldest; Absalom, the third child; and Adonijah, the fourth son. All of this time David

ruled over only Judah while Ishbosheth ruled over the rest of the land. But Ishbosheth was nothing without his commander, Abner, who was “making himself strong in the house of Saul” (2 Samuel 3:6). This probably meant that ✓he was promoting himself and that people were looking up to him, for he was responsible for any prosperity Saul’s kingdom had.

During these seven and one-half years, David’s army, led by Joab, fought Ishbosheth’s army, led by Abner. David’s kingdom grew stronger while Ishbosheth’s kingdom grew weaker.

Abner against Ishbosheth

One day Ishbosheth expressed disgust with Abner for taking Saul’s concubine, Rizpah, as his own concubine.¹ ✓Ishbosheth didn’t like this inappropriate affront to his father and rebuked Abner for it. Abner got very offended and angry. (This is something we see often in life: rather than own up to doing wrong, people get angry and condemn or dismiss the person who points out the fault.)

Abner said, “Do you treat me like a dog’s head after all I’ve done for you? I could have given you over to David. Now I *am* going to David’s side, and he will be king over Judah *and* all Israel from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south as the Lord has said.”

Abner for David

Then Abner sent messengers to David, saying, “Let’s make a league, and I will help bring all of Israel to your side.”

David sent messengers back to Abner, saying, “Okay, I’ll make a treaty with you, but first you must bring me my wife Michal [most people pronounce this name like the male name *Michael*; others say MICKel], Saul’s daughter, for whom I killed one hundred (actually two hundred) Philistines.” David also sent messengers to Ishbosheth with the same message: “Give me my wife.”

What had happened to David’s wife in the long period of time since David had left Gibeah and Saul had tried to find and slay David?² Saul had given her in marriage to another man, Paltiel. Nevertheless, Ishbosheth took Michal from her “new” husband so that he could give her back to David. Paltiel, the husband, followed Michal, weeping all the way, until Abner sent him back home.

Then Abner talked to all the leaders of Israel, convincing them that the Lord had chosen David to save Israel from the Philistines and that they should follow David. Actually, he probably didn’t need to convince them, for Abner states in 2 Samuel 3:17, “For some time past *you have been seeking David as king over you.*”

Abner was giving up his opposition to David and turning away from Ishbosheth. He took twenty men and went to see David, who made them a feast. Abner again promised to gather the loyalty of all Israel, and David sent Abner and his men away in peace.

Joab against Abner

Meanwhile, Joab and some of David’s men had been raiding in order to get some spoil. They returned to Hebron right after Abner left. ✓It didn’t take much time before someone found Joab and said, ✓“Joab, you’ll never guess who was here. Abner. David has sent him away in peace.”

Now, ✓Joab despised Abner—✓maybe because he was afraid of losing his job as commander, but for sure because he wanted to pay back Abner for his brother Asahel’s death. He was upset enough to go to David and scold him—his uncle! his king! “What have you done?” he demanded. “Abner has come and you have sent him away in peace. You surely know Abner came to deceive you and to spy on you to find out what you are doing.”

Then, without David’s knowledge or permission, Joab sent messengers to bring Abner back. When Abner came, Joab and Abishai met him at the city gate. “Come here. Let’s talk privately,” is what Joab said. But what Joab did was to assassinate Abner, right near the city gate, in order to avenge Asahel’s death.

David for Abner

When David heard about Abner's assassination, he did eight things to show his displeasure and lack of involvement in this senseless deed: (1) he told everyone that he himself was not guilty of Abner's death; (2) he pronounced a severe curse upon Joab and all his children and grandchildren; (3) he told Joab and all the people to rip their clothes and be sad about Abner's death; (4) he followed the casket to the burying place; (5) he gave a speech at the funeral, saying, "Abner died as a fool dies—not suspecting he would be killed"; (6) he fasted until evening, even when the people tried to get him to eat; (7) he told his servants, "A great man, a prince, has fallen today in Israel; (8) he said, "These sons of Zeruiah, my sister, are too hard for me; the Lord will reward their wickedness with trouble."

Do you get the idea that David deplored the wicked deed of Joab and Abishai? ✓As king, David probably could have executed Joab for Abner's assassination. After all, Asahel had died in battle after fair warning. ✓What Joab and Abishai had done was base murder. Yet, David said, "Even though I am anointed king, I am weak/gentle today." ✓Was David weak with fasting, weak in his control of Joab, weak in grief? Whatever he meant, he was clear in his pronouncement of judgment on the evil doers.

God for you

God, too, is clear when He pronounces judgment on wickedness. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 20:4, 20). That judgment is fitting for all of us, for all have sinned. "But God showed His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Jesus took the punishment of sin for those who believe on Him. When sinners, even worse sinners than Joab, believe that Jesus Christ died and rose again in order to save them, Jesus Christ saves them from their sin. Trust Jesus to save you.

¹Taking the concubine[s] of the king was something that conquerors often did to humiliate the conquered. Since Abner was "making himself strong in the house of Saul," ✓he likely included this practice to advance his cause.

²How long had David and Michal been apart? It is difficult to know. "However, one expression of previous efforts in this direction is found in the dating associated with the various chapters that is provided in some editions of the King James Version of the Bible. That dating places 1 Samuel 16, when David first enters Saul's service, as well as the following two chapters, in which Saul begins to become jealous of David and to fear David, in 1018 BC, and 1 Samuel 31, in which Saul dies, in 1011 BC. Traditional Christian scholarship, then, has placed the time period in which Saul sought David's life and David fled from Saul at about seven years" ([history - How long was David on the run from Saul? - Christianity Stack Exchange](#)). Add to this seven years the seven and one-half years David reigned in Hebron without Michal, and the total is about fourteen years. (If the calculations found in this footnote are correct and we subtract fourteen years, then the age of David when he married Michal is 16! That seems to be a very young age for a seasoned man of valor.)

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:

David reigned first in Hebron and then in all Israel. King Jesus rules the world now, but we do not yet see Him on His throne. One day and forever after He will visibly and totally reign "where'er the sun does his successive journeys run"—over all of the universe.

Activities:

- Play dough: sword
- Snack: Place cupcakes, cookies, or other food items on a platter in the shape of the numeral 30 (for David's age when he began to reign in Hebron).
- Teach about the town of Hebron using the verses and information found below.
- Review questions: (Game:
 1. In the long war between Ishbosheth and David, who was getting stronger and stronger? [David.]

2. How long did David reign in Hebron? [Seven and one-half years.]
3. Who was Ishbosheth's army commander? [Abner.]
4. Why did Abner become angry at Ishbosheth? [Because Ishbosheth rebuked Abner about Saul's concubine.]
5. Because of his conflict with Ishbosheth, what did Abner decide to do? [Go to David's side.]
6. What condition did David require before talking about a league with Abner? [That Michal, his wife, be returned to him.]
7. How did David treat Abner when he came to Hebron? [Made a feast for him.]
8. How did Joab treat Abner when he and Abishai met him near the city gate? [They slew him.]
9. Name two things David did to show his grief and innocence after Abner died? [(1) told everyone that he was innocent of Abner's death; (2) pronounced a severe curse upon Joab, his children, and grandchildren; (3) told Joab and all the people to rip their clothes and be sad about Abner's death; (4) followed the casket to the burying place; (5) gave a speech at the funeral, saying, "Abner died as a fool dies—not suspecting he would be killed"; (6) fasted until evening; (7) told his servants, "A great man has fallen today in Israel; (8) said, "These sons of Zeruiah, my sister, are too hard for me; the Lord will reward their wickedness with trouble."]

Memory Verse[s]: (KJV)

- Psalm 100:1 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. 5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Handwork:

- Go to [20. David is Crowned the King application pack #Biblefun SEC.pdf - Google Drive](#) for several handwork ideas. Suggestion: Print the maze on page 5, have students color it, and have them do the maze.

concubine

league

to avenge

assassination

Book of 2 Samuel

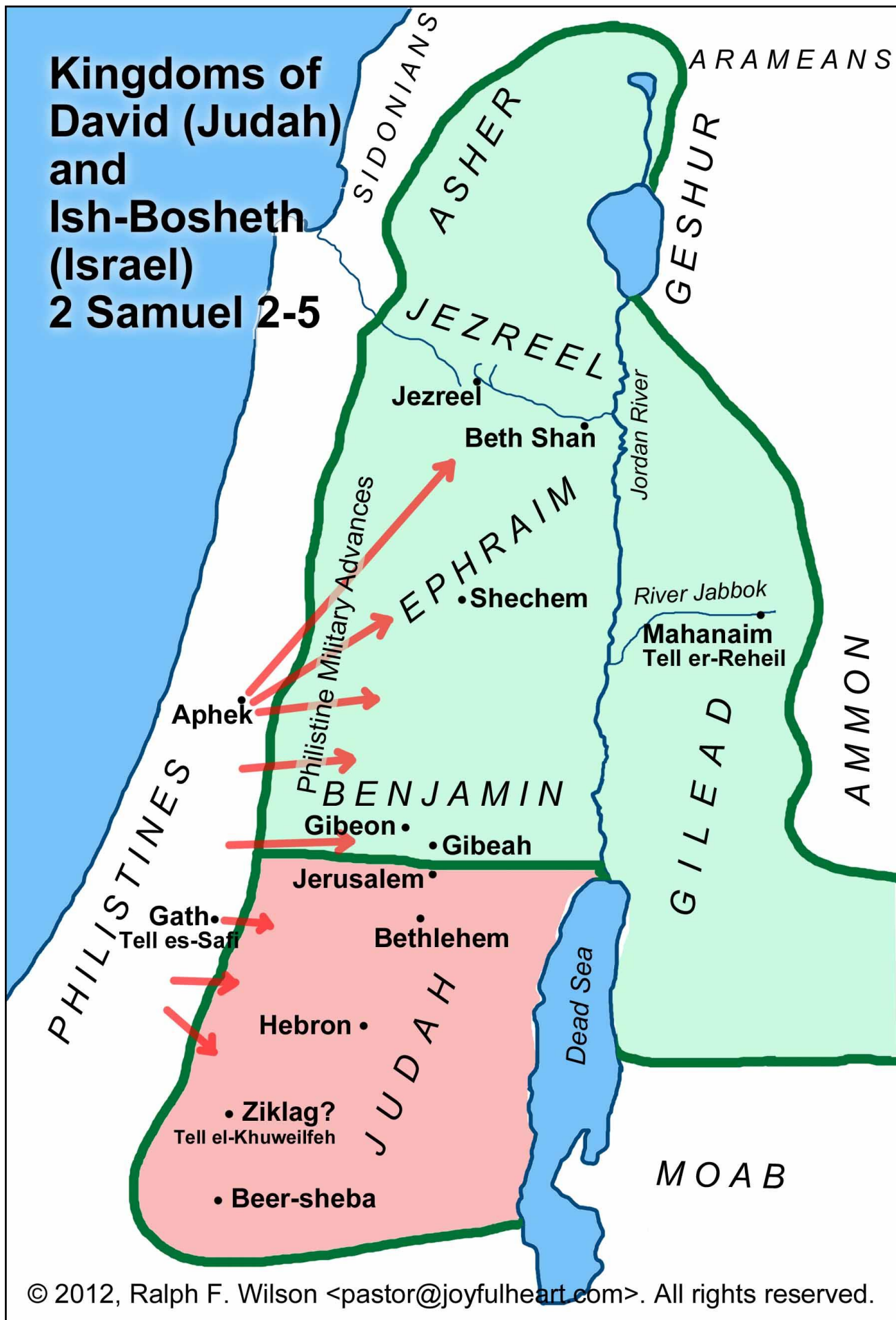
Chapter 03 : House of David Strengthened

Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: and David waxed stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.





Kingdoms of David (Judah) and Ish-Bosheth (Israel) 2 Samuel 2-5



David's Grief and Innocence Concerning the Death of Abner

- (1) told everyone that he was innocent of Abner's death
- (2) pronounced a severe curse upon Joab, his children, and grandchildren
- (3) told Joab and all the people to rip their clothes and be sad about Abner's death
- (4) followed the casket to the burying place
- (5) gave a speech at the funeral, saying, "Abner died as a fool dies—not suspecting he would be killed"
- (6) fasted until evening
- (7) told his servants, "A great man has fallen today in Israel"
- (8) said, "These sons of Zeruiah, my sister, are too hard for me; the Lord will reward their wickedness with trouble."

Events at *Hebron* from the entire Bible

Genesis 13:18

So Abram moved his tent and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at **Hebron**, and there he built an altar to the LORD. [*Jewish history begins in the area of Hebron, the first place Abraham built an altar upon entering the Promised Land.*]

Genesis 23:2

And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, **Hebron**) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

Genesis 23:19

After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah east of Mamre (that is, **Hebron**) in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 35:27

And Jacob came [*after returning from Padan Aram*] to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kiriath-arba (that is, **Hebron**), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned.

Genesis 37:14

[*Jacob*] said to [*Joseph*], “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word.” So he sent him from the Valley of **Hebron** [*where Jacob was living*], and he came to Shechem.

Numbers 13:22

They went up into the Negeb and came to **Hebron**. Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, were there. (**Hebron** was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

Joshua 10:3, 5, 23, 36, 39

So Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of **Hebron**, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon.

Joshua 10:5

Then the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of **Hebron**, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered their forces and went up with all their armies and encamped against Gibeon and made war against it. [*Joshua was victorious over these kings.*]

Joshua 11:21

And Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from **Hebron**. . . . Joshua devoted them to destruction with their cities.

Joshua 14:13—15; 15:13

Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave **Hebron** to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. Therefore **Hebron** became the inheritance of Caleb . . . the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD, the God of Israel. Now the name of **Hebron** formerly was Kiriath-arba. (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim.) And the land had rest from war. According to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, he gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh a portion among the people of Judah, Kiriath-arba, that is, **Hebron** (Arba was the father of Anak). **Judges 1:20** And he drove out from it the three sons of Anak.

Joshua 15:54

Kiriath-arba (that is, **Hebron**), and Zior: nine cities with their villages. [*Given to the tribe of Judah.*]

Joshua 20:7; 21:13

So they set apart . . . Kiriath-arba (that is, **Hebron**) in the hill country of Judah. [*A city of refuge.*]

Joshua 21:11

They gave them Kiriath-arba (Arba being the father of Anak), that is **Hebron**, in the hill country of Judah, along with the pasturelands around it. [*A Levite city.*]

Judges 16:3

But Samson lay till midnight, and at midnight he arose and took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and pulled them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that is in front of **Hebron**.

1 Samuel 30:31

in **Hebron**, for all the places where David and his men had roamed.

2 Samuel 2:1, 3, 11

After this David inquired of the LORD, “Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?” And the LORD said to him, “Go up.” David said, “To which shall I go up?” And he said, “To **Hebron**.” And David brought up his men who were with him, everyone with his household, and they lived in the towns of **Hebron**. And the time that David was king in **Hebron** over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

2 Samuel 3:2–5

And sons were born to David at **Hebron**.

2 Samuel 3:19, 20, 22, 27 [*Today’s story*]

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. When Abner came with twenty men to David at **Hebron**, David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him. 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. 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.

2 Samuel 3:32

They buried Abner at **Hebron**. And the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept.

[After today’s story, other events took place in Hebron, but they are all associated with David. There is no New Testament reference to this city. Today Hebron is a war-torn scene.]

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