

# CHAPTER 2

## INTRODUCTION TO SECOND SAMUEL 2

This chapter relates that David, upon inquiring of the Lord, was directed to go up to Hebron, and did, where he was anointed king of Judah, ([1011](#) 2 Samuel 2:1-4). And that being told of the kindness of the men of Jabeshgilead in burying Saul, he sent them thanks, and promised to remember it, and took the opportunity to let them know he was anointed king over Judah, ([1015](#) 2 Samuel 2:5-7). It also relates that Abner set up Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, to be king over Israel, ([1018](#) 2 Samuel 2:8-11); and that there was an encounter between twelve of Abner's men and twelve of David's, which brought on a sore battle between them, in which Abner was beaten, ([1022](#) 2 Samuel 2:12-17); and Asahel, who was of David's party, was slain in the pursuit by Abner, ([1028](#) 2 Samuel 2:18-25); when a retreat was sounded by Joab, at the influence of Abner, who, with his men, betook themselves to Mahanaim, where he had left Ishbosheth, ([1035](#) 2 Samuel 2:26-29). And the chapter closes with an account of the slain on both sides, the burial of Asahel, and the return of Joab with David's men to Hebron, ([1039](#) 2 Samuel 2:30-32).

**Ver. 1.** *And it came to pass after this,* etc.] After David had heard of the death of Saul and Jonathan, and made a lamentation over them, perhaps the next day; since David and his men are only said to mourn, and weep, and fast till even, ([1010](#) 2 Samuel 1:10);

*that David inquired of the Lord;* of the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, by Abiathar the priest, and through the Urim and Thummim, in the ephod he had put on on this occasion:

*saying, shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?* though the Lord had promised him the kingdom, and he had been anointed by Samuel by his appointment, yet he was not hasty to take it into his hands, but was desirous of acting according to the will of God, and by his direction, and wait his time when and where he should go and take possession of it; he mentions Judah because it was his own tribe, and where he had the most friends:

*and the Lord said unto him, go up;* from Ziklag into the tribe of Judah, but did not mention any particular place whither he should go; hence another question was put:

*and David said, whither shall I go up?* To what town or city in the tribe of Judah? whether Jerusalem or any other?

*And he said, unto Hebron;* a city of the priests, a city of refuge, (<sup><4613></sup>Joshua 21:13 <sup><3367></sup>1 Chronicles 6:57), twenty miles from Jerusalem, or more, which is not directed to, because it was then chiefly in the hands of the Jebusites, and because, as Procopius Gazaeus says, Hebron was now the metropolis of Judah.

**Ver. 2.** *So David went up thither,* etc.] From Ziklag to Hebron, which was sixteen miles according to Bunting <sup>f23</sup>

*and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, Nabal's wife, the Carmelite;* who were beloved by him, and who had shared with him in his troubles, and which he took with him to partake of his honour and grandeur, wealth and riches; in which he was now a type of Christ. (see <sup><817></sup>Romans 8:17 <sup><821></sup>2 Timothy 2:11,12).

**Ver. 3.** *And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household,* etc.] They and their families, and no doubt provided well for them when he was settled on the throne, who had shown themselves to be his faithful friends, closely attached to his interest, and had run the risk of their all on his account. (see <sup><1028></sup>Matthew 19:28).

*And they dwelt in the cities of Hebron;* in the towns and villages about it; for that itself being a city of refuge, and inhabited by priests, there was not room enough for all David's men, who were now increasing, persons from various tribes flocking to him. (see <sup><320></sup>1 Chronicles 12:1-40).

**Ver. 4.** *And the men of Judah came,* etc.] The inhabitants of the tribe of Judah came from the several parts of it to Hebron, that is, the principal of them, the elders of each city:

*and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah;* they did not take upon them to make him king over all Israel, but left the rest of the tribes to act for themselves; and no doubt in this they had the mind of David, who was not willing to force himself upon the people at once, but by degrees get the whole government into his hands, as Providence should

make his way; these men knew the kingdom was promised to their tribe, from (<sup><440></sup>Genesis 49:10); and were quite clear in what they did, and, without question, knew that David had been anointed by Samuel: but as that anointing was only a declaration of the Lord's choice of him, and of his will that he should be king after Saul's death, he is again anointed by the people, as an inauguration into his office:

*and they told David, saying, [that] the men of Jabeshgilead [were they] that buried Saul.* It is highly probable, that as soon as David was anointed king, the first thing he thought of was to inquire after the body of the late king, and give it an honourable interment, and upon inquiry was told that the men of Jabeshgilead had buried him already. (see <sup><4811></sup>1 Samuel 31:11-13).

**Ver. 5.** *And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabeshgilead,* etc.] To return them thanks for their courage and boldness in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons out of the hands of the Philistines, and for their civility in the burial of them:

*and said unto them, blessed [be] ye of the Lord;* which may be considered either as a wish, the Lord bless you for it, or as a prediction, the Lord will bless you:

*that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, [even] unto Saul, and have buried him.* To bury the dead, with the Jews, was always reckoned an instance of humanity and kindness, and indeed of piety; an act done in imitation of God <sup>f24</sup>, who buried Moses, and so it might be expected the divine blessing would attend it.

**Ver. 6.** *And now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you,* etc.] Or true kindness; confer real favours, bestow upon you good and substantial blessings, blessings indeed!

*and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.* He not only prayed to God to bless them and reward them for it, but would remember them himself, and at a proper opportunity would show favour to them for this act of kindness to Saul. De Dieu proposes to consideration whether it may not be as well interpreted to this sense, "and I also do you this kindness" because of it; that is, have done you this honour by sending messengers to you, to thank you for it, and by wishing a blessing upon you on account of it, and by praising and commending you for it; but the former sense seems best.

**Ver. 7.** *Now therefore let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant,* etc.] And not be afraid of the Philistines, who might resent their conduct in taking away from them the bodies of Saul and his sons, whom they had hung up in triumph; and these men might fear they would bring their armies against them, and destroy them; but David bids them be of good heart and courage, and not be afraid of them:

*for your master Saul is dead;* or rather “though” <sup>f25</sup> he is dead; for that he was dead they knew full well, having buried him, and needed no information of it; but being dead, they might be discouraged, as having none to protect and defend them, or come to their relief as he did, should they be attacked:

*and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them;* or “for even”, or “notwithstanding” <sup>f26</sup>; and this therefore being the case, he would take their parts, and help and assist them; and which he suggests to them, to invite them to own him as their king also, and put themselves under his protection.

**Ver. 8.** *But Abner, the son of Ner, captain of Saul’s host,* etc.] This man’s father, Ner, was Saul’s uncle, (<sup>0940</sup>1 Samuel 14:50), and he was his own cousin, and being general of his army, a post he was willing to keep, might be the reasons for doing what he did, as follows:

*took Ishbosheth the son of Saul;* and who seems to be his only son left, except what he had by his concubine. This man’s name is Eshbaal in (<sup>1083</sup>1 Chronicles 8:33 9:39). Baal is the name of a shameful idol, and which was therefore sometimes called Bosheth, “shame”. (see <sup>2090</sup>Hosea 9:10); wherefore such names of men, which had Baal in them, were changed for Besheth or Bosheth, as the names of Jerubbaal and Meribbaal, who were called Jerubbesheth and Mephibosheth. (see <sup>0785</sup>Judges 8:35); compared with (<sup>0112</sup>2 Samuel 11:21), and (<sup>3040</sup>2 Samuel 4:4) with (<sup>1034</sup>1 Chronicles 8:34 9:40). The latter of these, a son of Jonathan, bid fairest for the crown by lineal succession, but he being but five years of age, and lame, this man Abner judged fittest for his purpose; and though he knew it was the will of God, and he had sworn that David should be king, yet so blind and obstinate was his ambition, that he set up another against him:

*and brought him over to Mahanaim;* a city on the other side Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, on the border of the half tribe of Manasseh; (see <sup>0635</sup>Joshua 13:26-30 <sup>0370</sup>Genesis 32:2); and hither Abner had Ishbosheth, partly to

keep the men of Jabeshgilead in awe, to whom David had sent messengers, acquainting them with his being king of Judah, and prevent their joining with him; and partly that he might be at a proper distance both from the Philistines and from David, till he could form his measures, and gradually carry his point, as he did.

**Ver. 9.** *And he made him king over Gilead*, etc.] Which lay beyond Jordan, and included the tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh; these he prevailed upon to acknowledge Ishbosheth, their king, and proclaimed him king over them:

*and over the Ashurites*: that is, those of the house or tribe of Asher, as the Targum, and indeed none else can well be thought of; some indeed read the Geshurites, as the Vulgate Latin version; but these were never expelled by the Israelites, and had at this time a king over them, (<sup><1082></sup>2 Samuel 3:3); (see <sup><1083></sup>Joshua 13:13);

*and over Jezreel*; the great plain which went along the borders of Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali, and included these tribes:

*and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin*: the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin:

*and over all Israel*, excepting the tribe of Judah; that is, he prevailed first on one of these, then on another, until he got all the tribes of Israel to own him for their king; David all this time being still and quiet, and not opposing him, waiting God's own time to open the way for his possession of the kingdom over all Israel, and having a strict regard to his oath to Saul, (<sup><1084></sup>1 Samuel 24:21,22).

**Ver. 10.** *Ishbosheth, Saul's son, [was] forty years old when he began to reign over Israel*, etc.] Being born the same year his father began to reign. (See Gill on "<sup><1085></sup>1 Samuel 31:6");

*and reigned two years*; which some understand of these, and no more; and whereas David reigned seven years and a half over Judah, before he reigned over all Israel, it is thought by the Jewish chronologer<sup>f27</sup> that there was a vacancy in the throne of Israel for the space of five years, and so says Kimchi; which vacancy was either before the reign of Ishbosheth, it being a matter in dispute whether he or Mephibosheth should be set up, or after his death; the tribes of Israel being so long before they acknowledged David their king; or Ishbosheth's reign of two years must be in the middle

of David's reign over Judah; but there is no need to suppose either of these, for the text says not that Ishbosheth reigned only two years; but the meaning is, as Ben Gersom observes, that he had reigned two years when the following things happened, and a war began, and not by him but by Abner, and carried on by him; and he being an inactive prince, the rest of his reign was reckoned as no reign, whereas he lived and reigned the same length of time David did over Judah; (see ~~1001~~ 2 Samuel 3:1);

*but the house of Judah followed David*; kept close to him as their king, yielding a cheerful obedience to him.

**Ver. 11.** *And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah*, etc.] And over them only,

*was seven years and six months*; to which being added thirty three years he reigned over all Israel in Jerusalem, made forty years and six months; and which, for the roundness of the number, is usually called forty years. (see ~~1004~~ 2 Samuel 5:4 ~~1021~~ 1 Kings 2:11).

**Ver. 12.** *And Abner the son of Ner*, etc.] Who was before captain of Saul's host, and now of Ishbosheth's:

*and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul*; who seem to be not only his domestic servants, that waited upon him, or his courtiers, but his whole army by what follows:

*went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon*; came from the city on the other side Jordan, where perhaps they had been two years past, concerting schemes to bring all Israel under the government of Ishbosheth; in which they had succeeded, only Judah stood out with David; and in order to reduce that tribe, they passed over Jordan and came to Gibeon, a city in Benjamin. (see ~~6825~~ Joshua 18:25).

**Ver. 13.** *And Joab the son of Zeruiah*, etc.] A sister of David, and this her son was general of David's army:

*and the servants of David, went out*; that is, his army went out from Hebron to Gibeon, which was twenty four miles <sup>f28</sup> to meet that under Abner; for though he had but one tribe with him, and Ishbosheth had all the rest, yet Judah was a numerous, powerful, and warlike tribe; and besides many out of the other tribes had joined them, and, above all, God was on their side, and they had his promise to rely upon with respect to the

establishment of the kingdom in the house of David, and his power and providence to trust in, and therefore went out boldly and cheerfully to meet the armies of Israel under Abner:

*and met together by the pool of Gibeon*; the same perhaps with the great waters in Gibeon, (<sup>2411D</sup>Jeremiah 41:12);

*and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool*; facing one another, and watching each other's motions.

**Ver. 14.** *And Abner said to Joab*, etc.] Perceiving he made no motion towards an engagement with him, his orders from David being only to act on the defensive, and avoid as much as possible the effusion of blood:

*let the young men now arise, and play before us*; with their swords after the manner of gladiators or duellers; that it might appear who were best skilled in the use of the sword, and who were the bravest, stoutest, and most courageous; and this he proposed in a way of bravado, and in order to bring on a battle, or to decide the quarrel between them; and this bloody barbarous exercise Abner calls play, as if it was a diversion and pastime to see men wounding and killing one another:

*and Joab said, let them arise*; he accepted the challenge, not caring to be hectored and bullied by Abner.

**Ver. 15.** *Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin*, etc.] Whom Abner had picked out of that tribe, being his own, and whom he knew to be stout and courageous men, and closely attached to him. It seems by this as if Abner's men,

*[which pertained to] Ishbosheth, the son of Saul*, passed over the pool of Gibeon unto Joab's men; so forward were they to engage in this duel, and it makes it still more appear that they were the aggressors:

*and twelve of the servants of David*; of his army under Joab, whom Joab either selected, or they, offered themselves as willing to engage with the twelve that were come over.

**Ver. 16.** *And they caught everyone his fellow by the head*, etc.] By the hair of his head with his hand:

*and [thrust] his sword in his fellow's side*; which he had in the other;

*so they fell down together*; the twelve on each side, all the twenty four; some think only the twelve on Abner's side fell; but to me it seems that they all fell dead as one man, since they thrust their swords in each other's sides:

*wherefore that place was called Helkathhazzurim, which [is] in Gibeon*; the field of rocks, or of mighty men as strong as rocks, who stood as immovable, and would not give way, but fell and died in the field of battle; the Targum interprets it, the inheritance of the slain.

**Ver. 17.** *And there was a very sore battle that day*, etc.] When the twenty four men fell together, and no decision could be made thereby, or any triumph on either side, both armies drew up in battle array, and fought very furiously:

*and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David*; the army under him had the worst of it, and were routed, and obliged to flee before the army of David under the command of Joab.

**Ver. 18.** *And there were three sons of Zeruiah there*, etc.] In the battle,

*Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel*; Joab was the general of the array, Abishai was he who went into Saul's host at night, and took away his spear and cruse of water at his head, (<sup><1026></sup>1 Samuel 26:6,7); and it is for the sake of the third, Asahel, that the account is given, the story of his death being about to be told.

*And Asahel [was as] light of foot as a wild roe*: swiftness of foot, as well as courage, for which this man was famous, (<sup><13125></sup>1 Chronicles 11:26); was a very great qualification for a warrior<sup>f29</sup>. So Achilles, in Homer<sup>f30</sup>, is often said to be swift of foot, and others of his heroes are commended for their swiftness. Harold son of King Canutus, was from his swiftness<sup>f31</sup> called Harefoot; as here this man for the same reason is compared to a wild roe, which is a very swift creature, or to one of the roes that were in the field as in the original text. (see <sup><21117></sup>Song of Solomon 2:7,17 8:14); one sort of which, called "kemas", is said to run as swift as a tempest<sup>f32</sup>.

**Ver. 19.** *And Asahel pursued after Abner*, etc.] Ambitious of the glory of taking or slaying the general of the army of Israel; trusting to his swiftness, not considering that the race is not always to the swift, and that he had to do with a veteran soldier, and he a raw young man, though valiant:



*and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left in following Abner*; he kept his eye upon him, and pursued him closely, disregarding persons on the right or left he could have made prisoners; but those he neglected, being bent on taking Abner if possible.

**Ver. 20.** *Then Abner looked behind him*, etc.] Perceiving one at his heels, and making haste up to him.

*And said, [art] thou Asahel?* for it seems he knew him personally, being well acquainted with his family:

*and he answered, I [am]*; so that they were very near to each other, as to discourse together, and be heard and understood by each other.

**Ver. 21.** *And Abner said unto him*, etc.] Having a respect for him, and consulting his good, and however fearing his brother Joab should he slay him:

*turn thee aside to thy right or to thy left*; he does not advise him to go back, which would have been to his disgrace, having engaged in the pursuit, but to turn to the right or left, as if pursuing some other person and not Abner:

*and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour*; one of the common soldiers, or an attendant on Abner, a young man like himself, whom he might be able to cope with, and take him a prisoner and disarm him, when he was not a match for such an old experienced officer as he was; and this Abner seems to speak as a friend, consulting the young man's safety and his honour too.

*But, Asahel would not turn aside from following him*; fired with the ambition of taking him, and not content with any prey short of him; and perhaps was the more animated by what he said, as supposing it arose from fear of him.

**Ver. 22.** *And Abner said again to Asahel*, etc.] Being loath to dispatch him:

*turn thee aside from following me, wherefore should I smite thee to the ground?* which was giving him fair warning, and letting him know what he must expect, if he did not desist from his pursuit:

*how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?* the general of David's army, a stout valiant commander, a man of spirit and resentment, whom Abner knew full well, and that should he slay his brother, he would never be friendly with him, or look pleasantly on him; he would never forgive him, but seek ways and means to avenge his blood on him and by this it seems as if Abner was conscious to himself that he was in a wrong cause, that the kingdom was of right David's, and would be his, and he must be obliged to make peace with him; when he should stand in need of Joab as his friend, which he could not expect, if he slew his brother, nor to live in favour and friendship with him hereafter.

**Ver. 23.** *Howbeit, he refused to turn aside,* etc.] Determined on making him his captive if possible.

*Wherefore Abner, with the hinder end of the spear;* he had in his hand, which seems to have had a pike at both ends; so that with the hinder end of it, next to Asahel, he thrust it at him, without turning to him: and

*smote him under the fifth [rib];* the place where hang the gall and liver, as the Jewish commentators from their Talmud<sup>f33</sup> observe. There are twelve ribs, seven of which are called true ones, and five spurious; if this was the fifth of the seven, the spear must pierce the breast<sup>f34</sup>, and strike the seat of life, the heart and lungs; if the fifth from the eighth and first of the spurious ones, then wounding the hypochondria, it must pass to the vital bowels of the abdomen, which seems to be the case here<sup>f35</sup>: according to some<sup>f36</sup> this is meant of the inferior ribs, which we call the short ribs, and any of these five are called the fifth rib; and Abner must strike him in the right side, because he was behind him, and which stroke must be deadly, because he struck him through the liver:

*that the spear came out behind him:* the thrust was so violent that the spear went through him, and came out at his back:

*and he fell down and died in the same place;* he fell at once, and died on the spot immediately:

*and it came to pass, [that] as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still;* that is, such of David's men who were in the pursuit after the Israelites, when they came to the spot, and saw Asahel dead, they had no power to proceed in the pursuit, being so troubled and grieved at the death of him.

**Ver. 24.** *Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner*, etc.] Or rather but Joab, etc. <sup>f37</sup>. They stood not still as the rest, but, filled with indignation and resentment, pursued after Abner, to be avenged on him:

*and the sun went down when they came to the hill of Ammah*; a hill by the side of which was a pool of water, as Kimchi thinks, and from thence so called:

*that [lieth] before Giah*; a place near Gibeon, but nowhere after mentioned:

*by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon*; very likely not far from the city from which it had its name.

**Ver. 25.** *And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner*, etc.] Either those that were with him before, who upon the battle were dispersed, but now got together again; or others of that tribe, who, hearing of the defeat of Abner, went out of the several cities after him, to strengthen his hands, and renew the fight with Joab:

*and became one troop*; were united together in a body, and became a regular troop:

*and stood on the top of an hill*; which was some advantage to them, and from whence they could take a view of Joab's army, and observe its motions.

**Ver. 26.** *Then Abner called to Joab*, etc.] For having now a troop of men with him, he could stop with the greater safety; and being on an hill, and perhaps Joab on one opposite to him, could call to him, so as to be heard:

*and said, shall the sword devour for ever?* slay men, and devour their blood. (see <sup>2460</sup>Jeremiah 46:10). That he was not thoughtful of, nor concerned about, when he set the young men to fighting before the battle, and called it play to wound and shed the blood of each other; but now the battle going against him, he complains of the devouring sword; and though it had been employed but a few hours, it seemed long to him, a sort of an eternity:

*knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?* since it might issue in the death of himself, or of Joab, or of both, as it had in Asahel, or, however, in the death of a multitude of others; and which at last would cause bitter reflection in the prosecutors of the war:

*how long shall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?* he pleads relation, that the men of Israel and the men of Judah were brethren; so they were by nation and religion, and therefore should not pursue one another to destruction; but who was the aggressor? It was Abner, that brought his forces against Judah; the men of David acted only on the defensive.

**Ver. 27.** *And Joab said, as God liveth,* etc.] Which was the form of an oath, swearing by the living God:

*unless thou hadst spoken;* that is, these words in (<sup><1024></sup>2 Samuel 2:14); “let the young men arise and play”, that he had not given the challenge to fight:

*surely then in the morning the people had gone up everyone from following his brother;* they would have gone away and never fought at all; they were not desirous of shedding their blood, and following after them to slay them: thus he lays the blame upon Abner, and makes him to be the cause and beginner of the war. Some render the particle by “if”, and give the sense, that if he had spoken what he last did sooner, the people would long before this time have desisted from pursuing them; for it was not from a thirst after their blood, and a desire to luke vengeance on them, that they pursued them, but to bring them to submission, and lay down their arms; for they could not in honour retreat until they desired it; but the former sense seems best, and is the general sense of the Jewish commentators.

**Ver. 28.** *So Joab blew a trumpet,* etc.] Or caused one to be blown as a signal of a retreat:

*and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more;* as soon as they heard the trumpet sound, the meaning of which they understood, they stepped at once, and left off their pursuit:

*neither fought they any more;* that day, and perhaps no pitched battle afterwards; for none we read of, though the war continued after this a long time, and there might be often skirmishes, which greatly weakened Abner’s party. (see <sup><1031></sup>2 Samuel 3:1).

**Ver. 29.** *And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain,* etc.] The plain of Jordan. He marched with his men all night, lest Joab should return, and pursue him, and take vengeance on him for the death of his brother:

*and passed over Jordan*; at one of the fords of it:

*and went through all Bithron*; the name of a province or country, as Jarchi, called so perhaps from its being separated from the rest of the tribes of Israel by the river Jordan; some think the mountains of Bether were in this country, (<sup>2007</sup>Song of Solomon 2:17). From Gibeon, where the battle was fought, to Bithron, according to Bunting <sup>f38</sup>, was twenty eight miles, the which he says was in the tribe of Gad, twenty eight miles from Jerusalem northeastward, lying between Dibon and Jordan:

*and they came to Mahanaim*: from whence they came, and where they had left Ishbosheth, (<sup>4008</sup>2 Samuel 2:8,12). From Bithron to this place, according to the same writer <sup>f39</sup>, was sixteen miles.

**Ver. 30.** *And Joab returned from following Abner*, etc.] It being in his commission from David to shed as little blood as he could:

*and when he had gathered all the people together*; who had been pursuing the Israelites, some one way and some another:

*there lacked of David's servants nineteen men, and Asahel*; who is particularly mentioned, because a very honourable man, valiant and courageous, a relation of David, and brother of Joab the general, and the loss of him was greater than all the rest. This has made some think that the twelve men of the servants of David were not killed in the duel, or otherwise there must be but seven slain in the battle; though that is not more strange than that in the battle with Midian not one should be slain, and, yet a terrible slaughter was made of the Midianites, (<sup>0810E</sup>Numbers 31:1-54). So in a sharp battle between the Spartans and Arcadians, ten thousand of the latter were slain, and not one of the former <sup>f40</sup>. Stilicho killed more than an hundred thousand of the army of Rhadagaisus, king of the Goths, without losing one of his own men, no, not so much as one wounded, as Austin affirms <sup>f41</sup>. At the battle of Issus the Persians lost an hundred ten thousand men, and Alexander not two hundred <sup>f42</sup>. Julius Caesar killed in the three camps of Juba, Scipio, and Labienus, ten thousand men, with the loss of fifty men only <sup>f43</sup>. After these instances, not only the case here, but that between the Israelites and Midianites, cannot be thought incredible, for the sake of which the above are produced. This account, according to Josephus <sup>f44</sup>, was taken the day following.

**Ver. 31.** *But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and Abner's men*, etc.] Of those of the tribe of Benjamin that joined him, and of those

that he brought with him from Mahanaim; so many of them were smitten, as appeared by their bodies lying on the field of battle,

*[so that] three hundred and threescore men died*; the number of the slain on each side was very unequal.

**Ver. 32.** *And they took up Asahel*, etc.] From the place where he fell; that is, Joab and Abishai, his brethren, as Josephus<sup>f45</sup> relates; after they had buried the dead in the field of battle, they took up him:

*and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which [was in] Bethlehem*: not in the city of Bethlehem, but without it, on the south side of it; so says Fuller<sup>f46</sup>,

“southward, i.e. of Bethlehem, we find Asahel’s sepulchre, who was buried in the grave of his father.”

What was his father’s name is not known, only his mother’s name, Zeruah, is mentioned in Scripture, a sister of David, and daughter of Jesse the Bethlehemite. Bethlehem was sixteen miles from Gibeon, according to Bunting<sup>f47</sup>.

*And Joab and his men went all night*; not the night following the battle, but the night following the next day, after he had been to Bethlehem, and buried his brother there; wherefore, lest David should think it long before he came, he travelled all night:

*and they came to Hebron at break of day*; where David was, which, according to the same writer<sup>f48</sup>, was twenty miles from Bethlehem.