

Thursday, May 23

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2 Samuel 2:12 - 3:39

2 12 One day Abner led Ishbosheth's troops from Mahanaim to Gibeon. **13** About the same time, Joab son of Zeruiah led David's troops out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. The two groups sat down there, facing each other from opposite sides of the pool. **14** Then Abner suggested to Joab, "Let's have a few of our warriors fight hand to hand here in front of us." "All right," Joab agreed. **15** So twelve men were chosen to fight from each side—twelve men of Benjamin representing Ishbosheth son of Saul, and twelve representing David. **16** Each one grabbed his opponent by the hair and thrust his sword into the other's side so that all of them died. So this place at Gibeon has been known ever since as the Field of Swords. **17** A fierce battle followed that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by the forces of David. **18** Joab, Abishai, and Asahel—the three sons of Zeruiah—were among David's forces that day. Asahel could run like a gazelle, **19** and he began chasing Abner. He pursued him relentlessly, not stopping for anything. **20** When Abner looked back and saw him coming, he called out, "Is that you, Asahel?" "Yes, it is," he replied. **21** "Go fight someone else!" Abner warned. "Take on one of the younger men, and strip him of his weapons." But Asahel kept right on chasing Abner. **22** Again Abner shouted to him, "Get away from here! I don't want to kill you. How could I ever face your brother Joab again?" **23** But Asahel refused to turn back, so Abner thrust the butt end of his spear through Asahel's stomach, and the spear came out through his back. He stumbled to the ground and died there. And everyone who came by that spot stopped and stood still when they saw Asahel lying there. **24** When Joab and Abishai found out what had happened, they set out after Abner. The sun was just going down as they arrived at the hill of Ammah near Giah, along the road to the wilderness of Gibeon. **25** Abner's troops from the tribe of Benjamin regrouped there at the top of the hill to take a stand. **26** Abner shouted down to Joab, "Must we always be killing each other? Don't you realize that bitterness is the only result? When will you call off your men from chasing their Israelite brothers?" **27** Then Joab said, "God only knows what would have happened if you hadn't spoken, for we would have chased you all night if necessary." **28** So Joab blew the ram's horn, and his men stopped chasing the troops of Israel. **29** All that night Abner and his men retreated through the Jordan Valley. They crossed the Jordan River, traveling all through the morning, and didn't stop until they arrived at Mahanaim. **30** Meanwhile, Joab and his men also returned home. When Joab counted his casualties, he discovered that only 19 men were missing in addition to Asahel. **31** But 360 of

Abner's men had been killed, all from the tribe of Benjamin. **32** Joab and his men took Asahel's body to Bethlehem and buried him there in his father's tomb. Then they traveled all night and reached Hebron at daybreak.

3 1 That was the beginning of a long war between those who were loyal to Saul and those loyal to David. As time passed David became stronger and stronger, while Saul's dynasty became weaker and weaker. **2** These are the sons who were born to David in Hebron: The oldest was Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel. **3** The second was Daniel, whose mother was Abigail, the widow of Nabal from Carmel. The third was Absalom, whose mother was Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. **4** The fourth was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith. The fifth was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital. **5** The sixth was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, David's wife. These sons were all born to David in Hebron. **6** As the war between the house of Saul and the house of David went on, Abner became a powerful leader among those loyal to Saul. **7** One day Ishbosheth, Saul's son, accused Abner of sleeping with one of his father's concubines, a woman named Rizpah, daughter of Aiah. **8** Abner was furious. "Am I some Judean dog to be kicked around like this?" he shouted. "After all I have done for your father, Saul, and his family and friends by not handing you over to David, is this my reward—that you find fault with me about this woman? **9** May God strike me and even kill me if I don't do everything I can to help David get what the LORD has promised him! **10** I'm going to take Saul's kingdom and give it to David. I will establish the throne of David over Israel as well as Judah, all the way from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south." **11** Ishbosheth didn't dare say another word because he was afraid of what Abner might do. **12** Then Abner sent messengers to David, saying, "Doesn't the entire land belong to you? Make a solemn pact with me, and I will help turn over all of Israel to you." **13** "All right," David replied, "but I will not negotiate with you unless you bring back my wife Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come." **14** David then sent this message to Ishbosheth, Saul's son: "Give me back my wife Michal, for I bought her with the lives of 100 Philistines." **15** So Ishbosheth took Michal away from her husband, Palti son of Laish. **16** Palti followed along behind her as far as Bahurim, weeping as he went. Then Abner told him, "Go back home!" So Palti returned. **17** Meanwhile, Abner had consulted with the elders of Israel. "For some time now," he told them, "you have wanted to make David your king. **18** Now is the time! For the LORD has said, 'I have chosen David to save my people Israel from the hands of the Philistines and from all their other enemies.'" **19** Abner also spoke with the men of Benjamin. Then he went to Hebron to tell David that all the people of Israel and Benjamin had agreed to support him. **20** When Abner and twenty of his men came to Hebron, David entertained them with a great feast. **21** Then Abner said to David, "Let me go and call an assembly of all Israel to support my lord the king. They will

make a covenant with you to make you their king, and you will rule over everything your heart desires.” So David sent Abner safely on his way. **22** But just after David had sent Abner away in safety, Joab and some of David’s troops returned from a raid, bringing much plunder with them. **23** When Joab arrived, he was told that Abner had just been there visiting the king and had been sent away in safety. **24** Joab rushed to the king and demanded, “What have you done? What do you mean by letting Abner get away? **25** You know perfectly well that he came to spy on you and find out everything you’re doing!” **26** Joab then left David and sent messengers to catch up with Abner, asking him to return. They found him at the well of Sirah and brought him back, though David knew nothing about it. **27** When Abner arrived back at Hebron, Joab took him aside at the gateway as if to speak with him privately. But then he stabbed Abner in the stomach and killed him in revenge for killing his brother Asahel. **28** When David heard about it, he declared, “I vow by the LORD that I and my kingdom are forever innocent of this crime against Abner son of Ner. **29** Joab and his family are the guilty ones. May the family of Joab be cursed in every generation with a man who has open sores or leprosy or who walks on crutches or dies by the sword or begs for food!” **30** So Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because Abner had killed their brother Asahel at the battle of Gibeon. **31** Then David said to Joab and all those who were with him, “Tear your clothes and put on burlap. Mourn for Abner.” And King David himself walked behind the procession to the grave. **32** They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king and all the people wept at his graveside. **33** Then the king sang this funeral song for Abner: “Should Abner have died as fools die? **34** Your hands were not bound; your feet were not chained. No, you were murdered— the victim of a wicked plot.” All the people wept again for Abner. **35** David had refused to eat anything on the day of the funeral, and now everyone begged him to eat. But David had made a vow, saying, “May God strike me and even kill me if I eat anything before sundown.” **36** This pleased the people very much. In fact, everything the king did pleased them! **37** So everyone in Judah and all Israel understood that David was not responsible for Abner’s murder. **38** Then King David said to his officials, “Don’t you realize that a great commander has fallen today in Israel? **39** And even though I am the anointed king, these two sons of Zeruiah—Joab and Abishai—are too strong for me to control. So may the LORD repay these evil men for their evil deeds.”

John 13:1 - 30

13 1 Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. **2** It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. **3** Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority

over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. **4** So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist,**5** and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him. **6** When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" **7** Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will." **8** "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me." **9** Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!" **10** Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." **11** For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean." **12** After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? **13** You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. **14** And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. **15** I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. **16** I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. **17** Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them. **18** "I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me.' **19** I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I AM the Messiah. **20** I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me." **21** Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!" **22** The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. **23** The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. **24** Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, "Who's he talking about?" **25** So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it?" **26** Jesus responded, "It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl." And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. **27** When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, "Hurry and do what you're going to do." **28** None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. **29** Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. **30** So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

119 **1** Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the LORD. **2** Joyful are those who obey his laws and search for him with all their hearts. **3** They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in his paths. **4** You have charged us to keep your commandments carefully. **5** Oh, that my actions would consistently reflect your decrees! **6** Then I will not be ashamed when I compare my life with your commands. **7** As I learn your righteous regulations, I will thank you by living as I should! **8** I will obey your decrees. Please don't give up on me! **9** How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. **10** I have tried hard to find you— don't let me wander from your commands. **11** I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. **12** I praise you, O LORD ; teach me your decrees. **13** I have recited aloud all the regulations you have given us. **14** I have rejoiced in your laws as much as in riches. **15** I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. **16** I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.

Proverbs 15:29 - 30

15 **29** The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayers of the righteous. **30** A cheerful look brings joy to the heart; good news makes for good health.