

General Church Education



Abner Joins Forces with David

2 Samuel 3:20-29; 4:1-12

Lesson 23

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 5: The Lord Is King of Kings

For ages 10-11

Abner Joins Forces With David

2 Samuel 3:20-29; 4:1-12

Teacher Background

Ishbosheth said something to upset Abner, the captain of his army, leading Abner to make an agreement with David. David invited him for a feast during which they made peace. After Abner left, Joab, David's captain, returned. When he heard about the agreement Abner and David had made he was suspicious and sent messengers to bring Abner back. Abner came in peace, but Joab murdered him for killing his brother Asahel. When David heard about it he mourned for Abner. When Ishbosheth heard what had happened he was alarmed. Two of his men, Baanah and Racab, turned on him and murdered him at night. When they brought David news of Ishbosheth's death David executed them.

The figures in this story appear to act for many different reasons. Abner appeared to want peace with David. Joab was suspicious of Abner, but his real reason for killing Abner was to get revenge because for him killing his brother Asahel. Often children are not aware their motives. Probing why children have acted in a particular way can help them become aware of their motives, about which they may otherwise have no awareness.

Focus Points

- The Lord tells David to go to Hebron, where he is crowned king of Judah.
- Saul's commander, Abner, anoints Ishbosheth king over Israel, provoking conflict.
- Abner kills Joab's brother Asahel, but then tries to make peace with Joab.

Readings from the Writings

“Among the externals by which were represented in the ancient churches was wailing and weeping over the dead, by which was signified interior mourning (although the mourning itself was not interior), as we read...concerning David's weeping over Abner: ‘They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept (2 Samuel 3:32).’” *Arcana Coelestia* 4786

“It is the mark of someone wise to be aware of which ends are present in himself. Sometimes it does seem as though his ends are selfish when in fact they are not, for the human being is such that in everything he considers how it affects himself... But if anyone wishes to know the ends he himself has in view he has merely to take note of his feeling of delight—whether it is on account of his receiving praise and glory, or whether it is on account of his performing some unselfish service. If it is the latter delight which he feels, genuine affection is present in him.” *Arcana Coelestia* 3796

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers students the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the Lord's Word by heart.

“For you are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness
Nor shall evil dwell with you.” (Psalm 5:4)

Projects and Activities (see back for answers)

Choose one or two.

Fill in the Blanks

Write down the name of

Crossword

There are many people in this lesson. Use their connections with each other to solve a crossword puzzle.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Examining Motives

What motivated Joab? What motivated Abner's captains? What are the motives for the things we do? We often have more than one reason for the things that we do and that this is okay! Look at several situations and choose the best motives for acting on them. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-examining-motives-2samuel3-4.pdf>

Discussion: Waiting

David spent years waiting to become king. Fifteen years after Samuel anointed him he took charge of Judah, the southern part of the kingdom. Then after another seven years he became king over Israel. That's more than twenty years of waiting!

We wait many years for things too. For example, people wait at least sixteen years to drive. What are you waiting for? How could you prepare to do it? (For example, if you want to drive, you could pay attention when you are in a car or learn the rules of the road.)

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2 Samuel 3:20-29, 4:1-12

Vocabulary

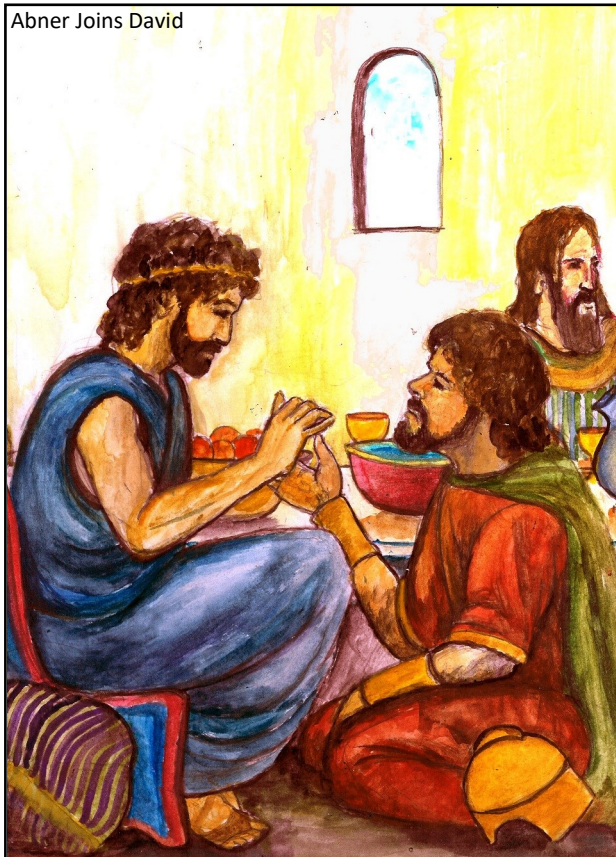
allegiance—faithfulness or loyalty

trustworthy—able to be relied on as honest or truthful

motives—a reason for doing something

During the long war between Judah and Israel, David grew stronger, and Ishbosheth grew weaker. David had many sons and daughters. His son Solomon became king after him. David's descendants remained on the throne until the Lord was born on earth, for the Lord was born of the house of David.

Saul's family was very different. The Philistines killed his three oldest sons in battle. Abner made Saul's fourth son, Ishbosheth, king but he was a weak man. The Lord did not choose him to be king.



Abner Joins David

Abner Joins David

Abner had commanded Saul's army and served him faithfully throughout his reign. He remained loyal to Saul until Ishbosheth criticized him. When Ishbosheth found fault with him after all his years of loyal service to Saul and his family he was furious !

Abner sent messengers to David, offering to make a covenant with him, promising that he would gather all Israel to David's side.

“Make your covenant with me, and indeed my hand shall be with you to bring all Israel to you.” (2 Samuel 3:12)

Abner and twenty of his men went to meet with David in Hebron. David prepared a feast for them. Abner promised to support David and David sent him away in peace:

“I will arise and go, and gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant

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with you and that you may reign over all that your heart desires.” (2 Samuel 3:21)

Joab Is Angry

Joab, the commander of David’s army was away on a raid when Abner came. When he returned, he was surprised to hear that the commander of the enemy army had been with David, and had left in peace. He told David:

“Surely you realize that Abner the son of Ner came to deceive you, to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing.” (2 Samuel 3:25)

Joab secretly sent messengers after Abner to bring him back to David’s camp. Abner had no idea that Joab was plotting against him. He did not think anything was wrong. After all, he had just made a covenant with King David. So Abner willingly went to speak with Joab. But when Joab met him in the gate, he stabbed him in the stomach.

David Mourns for Abner

David was very distressed about Abner’s death. He and his people tore their clothes, and put on sackcloth and wept. He said,

“Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?” (2 Samuel 3:38)

David refused to eat. When everyone saw how sad he was, they knew that he had not meant Abner to be killed. David put a curse on the house of Joab because of what he had done.

“The Lord shall repay the evildoer according to his wickedness.” (2 Samuel 3:39)



Joab Is Angry

Ishbosheth Is Murdered

Ishbosheth was a weak king. Abner’s strength had been his main support against David. Now that Abner was gone, he and his followers were frightened.

Before being killed, Abner had switched his allegiance to David. Rechab and Baanah, two more of Ishbosheth’s captains, decided to do the same thing. Perhaps they thought they could win David’s favor by removing his rival.

Rachab and Baanah went to Ishbosheth’s house in the middle of the day. They pretended that they had come for some wheat. When they saw Ishbosheth lying in bed they stabbed him in the

stomach and beheaded him. Then they took Ishbosheth's head and escaped to Hebron. They probably felt very proud and important as they showed David what they had done! They said:

“Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul your enemy, who sought your life; and the Lord has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and his descendants.” (2 Samuel 4:8)

A Big Mistake

But this was a big mistake. David had never harmed Saul because he was the Lord's anointed. He mourned for Abner. The men did not understand that David would never break his promise to protect Saul's descendants and the honor of his name. The Lord had promised David the throne but he would not do anything terrible to get it. David executed the men who had done this awful thing.

“Therefore, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and remove you from the earth?” (2 Samuel 4:11)

Then David buried Ishbosheth's head in Abner's tomb in Hebron.

The Motivation of Joab and Abner's Captains

Joab claimed he had killed Abner because he was not trustworthy and might be a spy. But this was not his real reason for killing Abner. The Word tells us that Joab wanted revenge.

“He died for the blood of Asahel his brother.” (2 Samuel 3:27)

Joab may have also been jealous. David had let Abner join forces with him and Joab may have been afraid that since Abner was a capable leader, David would give him power.

We do not know why Ishbosheth's army captains killed him and brought his head to David. Were they trying to protect David? Or were they helping him to become king over Judah *and* Israel? They knew David's armies would soon conquer the house of Saul. Were they worried for their safety? Or getting a place in David's army?

The Lord asks us to question our own motives from time to time. We do not always do things for the right reasons, but the more we do things because they are right, the happier we will be.



Rachab and Baanah Kill Ishbosheth

Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“For you are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness
Nor shall evil dwell with you.” (Psalm 5:4)

Projects and Activities (answers at back)

Choose one or two.

Fill in the Blanks

Uses phrases from the box to complete the story.

Crossword

There are many people in this lesson. Use their connections with each other to solve the crossword puzzle.

Fill in the Blanks

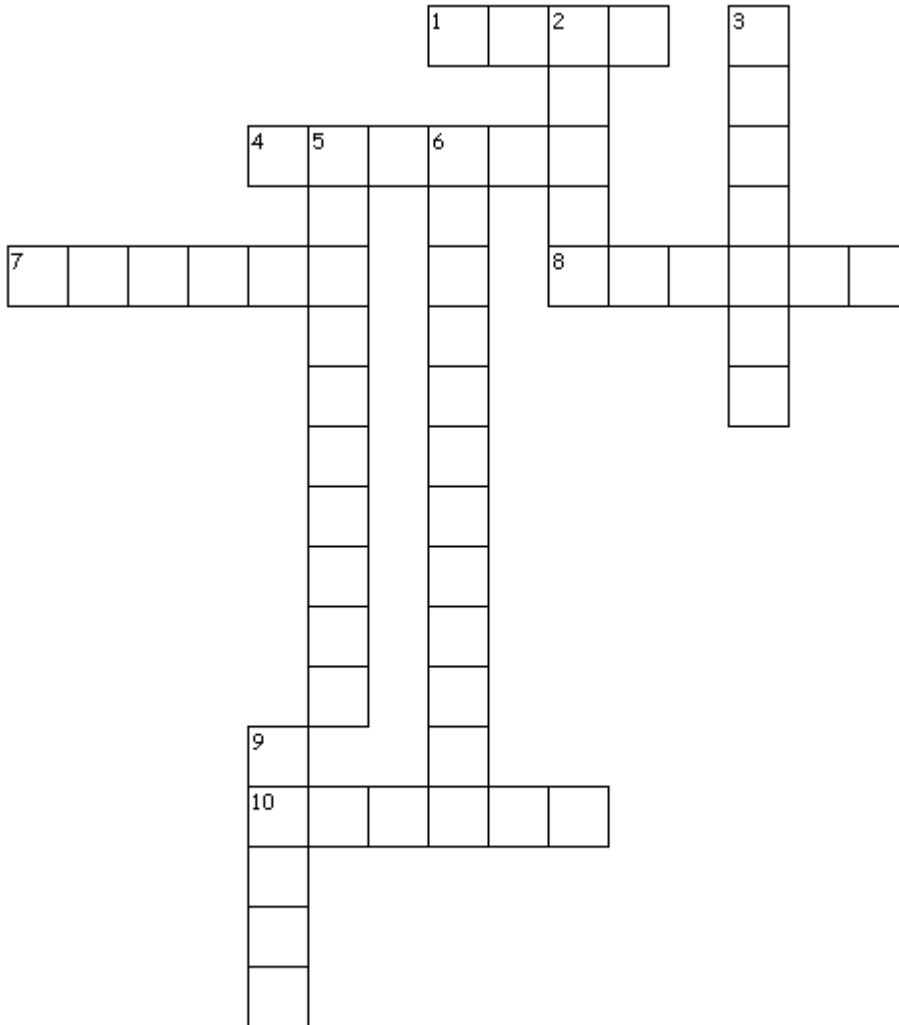
Use the phrases in the box to fill in the blanks and complete the story. Answer questions 9 and 10 on your own.

make a covenant	in peace
the death of Asahel	Saul
Hebron	stronger and stronger
wear sackcloth	captains of his troops
executed	pretending to get wheat

1. The house of David grew _____ while the house of _____ grew weaker and weaker.
2. Abner sent messengers to _____ with David.
3. David sent Abner away _____.
4. Joab stabbed Abner because of _____.
5. David told the people to _____ as a sign of mourning for Abner.
6. David buried Abner in _____.
7. Ishbosheth was murdered by two _____ who were _____.
8. David was very upset with Rechab and Baanah and had them _____.
9. How did David feel about people taking revenge into their own hands?
10. Do you agree with him?

Crossword

There are many people mentioned in this story. Use their connections to each other to solve the crossword. Be sure to spell each name correctly! Look at 2 Samuel chapters 3 and 4 if you need help.



Across:

- 1. brother of Abishai and Asahel
- 4. father of Baanah and Rechab
- 7. son of Rimmon
- 8. brother of Baanah
- 10. brother of Joab and Abishai

Down:

- 2. former captain of Saul's army
- 3. brother of Joab and Asahel
- 5. son of Saul, king of Israel
- 6. son of Jonathan
- 9. king of Judah

Answers

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Fill in the Blanks

1. stronger and stronger; Saul 2. make a covenant 3. in peace 4. the death of Asahel 5. wear sackcloth 6. Hebron 7. captains of his troops 8. executed

Crossword

Across: 1. Joab, 4. Rimmon, 7. Baanah, 8. Rechab, 10 Asahel.

Down: 2. Abner, 3. Abishai, 5. Ishbosheth, 6. Mephibosheth, 9. David.