

When David received the answer to his prayer then he acted based on that answer. He understood that the time for his self-imposed exile was ended.

Qal fut., עָלָה

2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the And

Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite.

Of course his first wife, Michal, Saul gave to another man. (1Sa.25.44) But in the next chapter David will restore Michal as his wife. (2Sa.3.12-16)

Hiphil pret., עָלָה

3 And his men that [were] with him did David bring up, every man with his David caused to go up

Qal fut. of יָשַׁב

pl. fem. noun for עָרִים

household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.
abode, remained,
tarried, inhabited

cities (plural) **of Hebron** – While there is a city of the same name this text shows Hebron to be a larger area having both a plain and a valley and in which are other cities.

Ge 13:18 Then Abram removed [his] tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which [is] in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

Ge 37:14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

Caleb called Hebron a *mountain*. (cf. Jos.14.12; Lk.1.39, 65) It is within a larger area called the *hill country of Judah*. (cf. Jos.21.11) *Hill country* refers

to land in the higher elevations. And so the *hill country of Judah* is the land of Judah located in higher elevations or the highlands of Judah.

In the area of Hebron is the city of Hebron.

Ge 35:27 And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre (or the plain and valley of Hebron), unto the city of Arbah, which [is] Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.

The city of Hebron was first known as Kirjatharba, קִרְיַת אַרְבָּה a fem. noun tss. *city* + אַרְבָּה *Arba, the city of Arba*. The person after whom this city was named was a great man of the people of the Anakims, named Arba. (cf. Jos.14.15; Jud.1.10; Ne.11.25) Caleb requested of Moses that he might be given this *mountain area* for his land inheritance. And Moses granted him this request *because he wholly followed after the LORD*. (cf. Jos.14.14) The cities in this area, or the *fields and the villages* here (Jos.21.12), when Israel entered Canaan to possess it, were described as great and fenced. (cf. Jos.14.12) Because the Levites were excluded from inheriting a land allotment with the other tribes they received 48 cities instead. The city of Hebron was one of those cities given to the sons of Aaron (cf. Jos.21.9-13) Also, Hebron was one of the six cities of refuge in the nation to which any that were involved in the accidental death of another could flee there for refuge from the *avenger of blood*. (cf. Nu.35.6, 7; Jos.21.41)

4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, [That] the men of Jabeshgilead [were they] that buried Saul.

This of the men of Jabeshgilead is recorded in the last chapter of the Book of 1Samuel.

*1Sa.31.11 And when all Jabeshgilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul,
12 They arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days. (verbatim in 1Chr.10.11, 12)*

About 70 miles northeast of David's present position at Hebron there were some men at Jabeshgilead that did a valiant feat to recover the bodies of their king and his sons.

Perhaps we should consider the history of the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead. Early in the history of the judges of Israel (Judges chs.17-21 record the earliest history of the times of the Judges. It's placement at the end does give the sense of the connection between the Book of Judges and the Book of Ruth.) it was a time when every man did that which is right in his own eyes. There was no king. (cf. Jud.17.6) It was during this time that a Levite was returning home from Bethlehem of Judah to Shiloh. With him was his concubine. (A concubine is a servant-wife, but a wife nonetheless. [Jud.19.3]) Along the way they would overnight in Gibeah of Benjamin. In the night they made an assault upon the house where they were staying demanding that the host give over the Levite to them, but instead they gave the concubine over, which was abused all the night by the sodomites. And in the morning they found her dead at the door of the house where they were staying. As a result this precipitated a great civil war between the tribes of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin, which refused to give over the sodomites to judgment. Benjamin was ultimately all but utterly destroyed, but for six hundred men (cf. Jud.20.47). To restore this tribe a search was made to find out if any had failed to come to the aid of Israel in this conflict. It was discovered that the none of the inhabitants of *Jabeshgilead* came up to help their brethren. For this Israel slew every soul in this place, but spared the virgins therein to be wives for the six hundred men of Benjamin. (cf. Jud.21.10)

Some four hundred fifty years later, when Samuel had anointed Saul king of Israel (cf. 1Sa.10.1), that Nahash the Ammonite came against the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead and gave them an alternative: either have your right eyes put out and become my servants or be destroyed. When word of this reached Saul, who had not as yet been officially coronated king of Israel, the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and his anger was greatly kindled against Nahash. Then Saul rallied a large force to rescue the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead from Nahash's forced and he destroyed them. It was that that must have moved these valiant men of Jabeshgilead to recover the

bodies of Saul and his sons, which the Philistines had fastened to the wall of Bethshan (Bethshean).

Though the nations had suffered a terrible defeat at mount Gilboa by the Philistines, we understand that valiant men don't always win in every conflict that they fight. But they did what they could to encourage their brethren and their nation even at a time of such a great loss. That's what valiant men do.

i.e., Joshua and Caleb couldn't prevail to persuade Israel to go to possess Canaan, but among the many rebels of their brethren they were blessed of the LORD, along the way and in the end when the others were not ... their carcasses fell as they wandered through the wilderness over the next forty years; we could mention the OT prophets (they were always on the losing side, the side of the few), and NT Stephen, Peter, John, James, Silas, Sosthenes, Paul, and others. Valiant men of God that, humanly speaking, didn't always come out on top in the conflicts they fought. (Probably better to say, men that rarely came out on top of the conflicts they fought.) But winning the conflict is not as it appears to the human eye or to natural mind. The faithful child of God wins even when he loses. In one sense of the word, he can't lose. Every child of God that resigns himself over to do the will of God though suffering loss, wins.

This one cuts both ways, but the most revealing thing in my Christian life to me and before others is not how I win, but how I lose, or how I act when put under stress.

5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabeshgilead,

Again Jabeshgilead is about 70 miles to the northeast of Hebron, on the other side, the eastern side of the Jordan River, about seven miles up the Brook Cherith. (cf. 1Ki.17.3, 5)

and said unto them, Blessed [be] ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this
to done
הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֲמַדְאֲדֹנֵיכֶם לַיהוָה the verb עָשָׂה

kindness **unto your lord, [even] unto Saul, and have buried him.**
mercy, goodness, with master
good deed, lovingkindness

 the verb עָשָׂה הַסֵּד, masc. noun וְאָמַת, fem. noun
6 And now the LORD **shew** **kindness** **and truth** **unto you:**
 do mercy, favor right with

 the verb עָשָׂה הַטֹּבָה the verb עָשָׂה
and I also **will requite** **you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.**
 do (with) good

7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant:
 hold, retain strong, be able

let ... be strengthened, Qal fut. of the verb הִזְקַן, tss. to be encouraged, to be mended, to amend, to take hold, to seize, to retain, to be mighty, to be stout, to prevail, to be courageous, to be strong, etc.

valiant, of the masc. noun חֵיל, tss. wealth, activity, able, valiantly, virtuous, strength, power, substance, war, good, riches.

Don't become overwrought by the loss sustained. God is always at work. He is always doing something for the good of His own!

for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

David, by the wisdom given him encouraged these brethren for what they did and showed them that Judah has already acted for the good of the nation by anointing them a king to continue leading them forward.

We're reading about the things which are done for Israel to transition from the throne of Saul to the throne of David. The former house (Saul's) shall become weaker and the latter (David's), stronger.

2Sa 3:1 Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

8 ¶ But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ishbosheth
Eshbaal, 1Chr.8.33; 9.39
the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim;
(the eastern side of the Jordan River)

Ishbosheth – Saul appears to have had four sons born of a wife. Three died in the recent conflict: Jonathan, Abinadab (or Ishui [1Sa.14.49]) and Malchishua. The fourth son is *Ishbosheth* or Eshbaal. (1Chr.8.33; 9.39) Saul has two other sons that were born of his concubine, Rizpah. Their names are Armōni and Mephibosheth, which I'll call Mephibosheth I. (cf. 2Sa.21.8)

Note: Jonathan had a son which he named Mephibosheth, and I would call him Mephibosheth II. (2Sa.4.4; comp. 2Sa.21.7, 8)

Mahanaim, meaning *the hosts*. It was about 650 years earlier when Jacob gave the name Mahanaim to this place after he saw a host of angels. This is recorded in Genesis chapter 32. It is in this same chapter that the Hebrew noun מַחֲנֵיִם, mah-cha-neh is translated *bands, companies, and droves*. So, there were various *hosts* gathered here. When we read of this place called Mahanaim it should remind us of that time. So, it is here at Mahanaim that that Abner appointed Ishbosheth to be king over Israel. Israel being the tribes north of Judah. The next verse tells us this much.

9 And made him king over Gilead,
(Abner) (the tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan River)

and over the Ashurites,
(On the very northwest corner of Canaan.)

and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin,
(These all centrally located in Canaan.)

and over all Israel.

(That is excepting the southernmost tribe of Judah, which includes Simeon.)

So, there is temporarily a rift in the nation.

10 Ishbosheth Saul's son [was] forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years.

Reference to Ishbosheth reigning two years has either of two meaning. It could mean that when Ishbosheth reigned two years the conflict which follows took place. Or, it means there was a space of time, five and one-half years before Israel agreed that David should be their king. I think the former to be correct. Chapter 3.1 tells us that there was *long* war between the house of Saul and the house of David.

Saul reigned for forty years. (cf. ac.13.21) So, Ishbosheth was born at the time that his father began to reign over Israel. To this let's also remember that David was 30 yrs. of age when he began to reign. (cf. 2Sa.5.4) So, the difference between the age of Ishbosheth and David is about 10 years.

There was a rift of no less than 7 ½ yrs. based on what we read in the following concerning the length of time David reigned over Judah and from the city of Hebron.

But the house of Judah followed David.

11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

Stating the fact that David reign in Hebrew for 7 ½ yrs. as the kingdom transitioned to his rule.

12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

Gibeon being of Benjamin's lot this is under Ishbosheth's rule.

13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, Qal pret. of יָצָא
went out,
proceeded

and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and **they**
made contact Abner with Ishbosheth's servants
& Joab with David's servants

and met together, Qal fut. of the verb פָּגַע, tss. to meet, to meet together, to meet with; so, 'made contact.'

It's only my opinion, but as we read along about Joab I think he went out to pick a fight. He was for a scrap.

Qal imper. of יָשַׁב
sat down, **the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the**
dwelt, continued,
abode, tarried

other side of the pool. Qal fut. of קָוַם
14 And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now **arise,**
be established, stand

and **play** **before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.** Qal fut. of קָוַם
spar, engage in a skirmish
make sport,

So they pulled out their aggravation boards, their card to play hearts, their Yatzy dice; no this term is are more serious.

and play, Piel fut. of the verb קָוַם, tss. to laugh (Pv.29.9), to have in derision (Job 30.1), to make sport (Jud.16.27), to scorn (Job 39.7), to deride (Hab.1.10), to make merry (Jer.30.19), to laugh to scorn (2Chr.30.10).

Here is a lot of thing, pride, machoism, testoserone. Men can relate to this, but I'm convinced some women do too. Watch against this. You and I are not in a contest in this church, trying to best one another by what we do or how much we do, or how much we might think we know, or how we do things.

2Co 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

This is something that we all have to learn, but let us serve one another by unfeigned love and put off a contesting spirit and *put on ... as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also [do] ye.* (cf. Col.3.12, 13) If we do anything, if we have anything it is because of the grace of God. If we have difficulty comprehending this think of how easily and quickly the Lord can touch us in our health so that we can't do anything but look up, or how easily and quickly He can take everything we have.

*Job 1.20 ¶ Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,
21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.
22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

15 Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which [pertained] to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

Sounds like a fair contest; twelve young soldiers against twelve young soldiers. But what this does is give a little insight into the kind of training these young men are receiving.

16 And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and [thrust]
seized

and they caught, Hiphil fut. of the verb קָיָץ, *to prevail, to retain, to hold, to be strong, seized, etc.*

his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkathhazzurim, which [is] in Gibeon.
the field or parcel of the strong

Helkathhazzurim, הַקְּלָת הַחֲזָרִים; meaning *the field or parcel of the strong*.

הַקְּלָת, a fem. noun tss. *parcel, portion, ground, field, plat, piece, etc.*

הַחֲזָרִים, the masc. noun צוּר, tss. *rock, sharp, stones, beauty, edge, strong*.

17 And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner
an exceeding fierce

sore, the adj. קָשָׁה, tss. *cruel, fierce, hard, grievous, etc.*

Niphal fut. of נָגַף

was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.
put to the worse, (the northerners fell to the southerners)
struck, smitten, dashed

This is civil war, and war between brethren.

18 ¶ And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai,

Abishai was the man that went with David, down into Saul's camp at Hachilah and took Saul's spear and cruse of water. Abishai was one of the top three warriors in Israel. (cf. 2Sam.23.18; 1Chr.11.20)

and Asahel: and Asahel [was as] light of foot as a wild roe.
swift with his feet like one of the roes which (is) in the field.

light, the adj. קל, tss. *light, swift*.

Qal fut. of רדף	Qal infin. of הלך
19 And Asahel pursued after Abner; and	in going
followed, chased	following, walking

he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.

20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, [Art] thou Asahel?
'faced'

then ... looked, Qal fut. of the verb פנה, tss. *to look, to appear, to behold, to have respect, to turn, to pass away, to regard*; 2Sa.1.7, *when he looked*; 2Sa. 2.20, Qal fut., *then looked*; Qal pret., 2Sa.9.8, Qal pret., *thou shouldest look*; the noun of this, פנה, *face*.

And he answered, I [am].

21 And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour.
spoil

Abner must have been an older man and a seasoned warrior. He's giving Asahel fair warning, that he's bitten off more than he can chew. He'd do better to contend with some of his own rank.

But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him.

22 And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?

For Asahel to smite Abner would have been for him quite the trophy. But not the other way around. A seasoned veteran killing what might be a younger man, could only be perceived by Joab a shameful act for Abner.

23 Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of after-part

the spear smote him under the fifth [rib], that the spear came out behind him;
to

the fifth, חַמִּישׁ, masc. noun, 4 times in the OT and always tss. the fifth (rib), 2Sa.2.23; 3.27; 4.6; 20.10.

The *hinder end* of the spear might have had a paddle shaped into it.

Deu.23.12 Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad:

13 And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee ...

weapon, of the masc. noun חַמִּישׁ, only this once in the OT. This is related to the masc. noun חֹר, tss. ear. And so this gives us the idea of having a scoop on the end of the weapon.

and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, [that] as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

24 Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that [lieth] before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

The conflict occurred by a pool at Gibeon. Giah, related to the Hebrew verb חָצַח, gee-ach, tss. *to break forth, to labor, to draw up, to come forth*, is likely named for the *fountain* of water which came of a spring or waterfall that fed the pool. (cf. *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, H. W. F. Gesenius, p.168, 1997 Reprint, Baker Books.

25 ¶ And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill.

So, the tribe of Benjamin joined together against Joab and Abishai (and undoubtedly, their men with them during the pursuit) to stand for the defense of their kinsman, Abner.

26 Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?
at the last, afterwards

in the latter end, בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיּוֹם, an adj. tss. after, latter, uttermost, afterwards, the last, in the latter end.

how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?

Battling this thing out with the brethren can't be anything but bitter in the end.

27 And Joab said, [As] God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.

unless thou hadst spoken – Is Joab referring to the early provocation of Abner (v.14) to 'let the young men arise and play?' So, we came to Gibeon and had plans to return in the morning until you set out to challenge us.

Or, is Joab referring to the Abner's most immediate words, *Shall the sword devour for ever?* (v.26) In other words 'I was planning on ceasing from the pursuit in the morning anyway.

I think the latter is better. Joab's remarks assume the conflict was already begun and that after this he was going to call it off.

The question is, why was Joab in Benjamin's territory, that part which was under Mephibosheth's rule?

בְּשׁוֹפָר

28 So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still,
with the trumpet

and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

(meaning, that day, cf. 2Sa.3.1, *there was long war; certainly the infighting continued.*)

בְּעֵרְבָה, Hebrew, Arabah

29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, desert, wilderness

and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.

Bithron, of the verb בָּתַר, tss. *to divide*. Robert Young (Young's Concordance) states Bithron was 'a district in the Arabah (desert, wilderness, added) or Jordan valley on the east side. It was in Gad between Mahanaim and the Jordan.'

This area into the Jordan River valley, aka the Great Rift Valley (perhaps referring to 'Bithron'), so called for its high hills and mountains, is mostly a desert which rises, particularly on the east side, into a sheer cliffs before one reaches to Mahanaim.

Qal fut., קָבַץ

30 And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered – or assembled together

Niphal fut. of פָּקַד

all the people together, there lacked of David's servants
– missed, numbered, emptied

nineteen men and Asahel.

31 But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, [so that] three hundred and threescore men died.

Abner lost 360 and Joab, 20. Abner lost 18 men to one of Joab's.

32 And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which [was in] Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

