

2SAMUEL 3

2Samuel 3:1–3

Ishbosheth, David, Abner and Joab

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Doctrines Covered	Doctrines Alluded To

ntroduction: 2Sam. 3 is a fascinating chapter of political intrigue, power plays, deceit and revenge. But within all of this, we take note of David's love life as well, and see his children named herein (those born to him in Hebron). Along with all of this, we get fascinating insights into the characters of David, Abner, Ishbosheth and Joab. We probably better understand these men from this chapter than from any other chapter.

Personally, I have lived with these men for several years now, so who is who is quite clear to me; however, it occurs to me that if, for whatever reason, you just picked up this particular chapter to read, that you may not follow exactly who is who; and therefore, not appreciate all that is occurring.

The People of 2Samuel 3

Character	Character Information
Abishai	David's nephew. Abner was forced to kill Abishai's brother, Asahel, in battle when a small portion of David's army stood up against a small portion of Abner's army.
Abner	Abner is either King Saul's uncle or cousin. He has faithfully served Saul for at least 30 years, until Saul's death. Abner pulls all of the strings in order to move Ishbosheth to a safe place in eastern Israel; and garners popular support for Ishbosheth as king over central, eastern and northern Israel.
Asahel	Abner was forced to kill Asahel in battle, as Asahel continued to chase Abner and would not back down. Asahel is dead already at the beginning of this chapter (2Sam. 2).
David	David once served under Saul, both as a musician and as a general in Saul's army. Because the people loved David, Saul became inordinately jealous of David and forced David into hiding. David eventually exiled himself to Philistine controlled territory. At Saul's death, David assumes rulership over Judah, which is southern Israel.
Ishbosheth	This is Saul's fourth son, a man with very little backbone. Saul, on his last day as king, likely asked Abner to take Ishbosheth to eastern Israel and to set him up as king over Israel.
Joab	Joab is the foremost of David's nephews, which include Abishai and Asahel. Joab will hatch a plot to kill Abner, since Abner killed Asahel in battle. Joab appears to be in control of David's army.
Michal	Saul's daughter; the sister or half-sister of Ishbosheth, and David's wife when David was living in Israel as one of Saul's chief generals. David had to leave her behind when he left his position as one of Saul's generals and was on the run from Saul (this was over a period of perhaps 10 years). While David was on the run or in exile, Saul gave Michal to another man in marriage.
Saul	Israel's first king. ¹ Saul went to battle against the Philistines at the end of 1Samuel and died in battle. He apparently saw to it that Abner, his lead general, take his fourth son into eastern Israel where he would be safe and Abner could set him up as king. Saul is died in battle prior to the events of this chapter (1Sam. 31).

I am sure that you were familiar with Saul and David, and probably with Joab, Abner and Michal. However, just in case, an enumeration of those found in this chapter should be helpful to you to keep in mind who is who.

¹ More or less; Israel has already had a king back from the time of the Judges.

Also, by mid chapter, we will gather a list of **questionable actions and motivations**, which might cause the critical mind to question these events. Afterwards, we will devise a theory which will attempt to explain all of the **events and motivations** found in this chapter, so that each action makes sense, and so that the motivations of each character fits this character's interests and personality.

We begin this chapter by noting that there was a long war which raged between David and Ishbosheth (v. 1) which appears to be suddenly followed by a list of David's children who were born to him in Hebron (vv. 2–5). During this civil war, Ishbosheth calls Abner, his top general, in, and accuses him of having a sexual relationship with his father's mistress (vv. 6–7). Abner reacts vehemently, and says that he will do all in his power to bring David to power over all Israel (vv. 8–10). Abner storms out, leaving Ishbosheth afraid of him (v. 11).

Ishbosheth then contacts David and tells him that he can deliver all Israel to him, which appeals to David, except that, David asks first that his wife, Michal, be brought to him (vv. 12–14). Interestingly enough, at this point, David sends messengers to Ishbosheth asking for the return of his wife, which Ishbosheth attends to personally (vv. 15–16). While this is going on, Abner is speaking to various groups of men and sending messengers to others, to convince them to give their allegiance to David (vv. 17–19). Soon thereafter, when the alliances are essentially in place, David has Abner come to him for a great feast (v. 20). Abner then excuses himself in order to put the final touches on these new alliances (v. 21). Almost immediately afterward, Joab rides back into town, and is furious with David, when he finds that Abner has been there and left (vv. 22–25). Joab storms out of David's office, and sends messengers to bring back Abner (sent as messengers from David, most likely—v. 26). When Abner returns, Joab manages to take him aside and murders him (v. 27).

When David hears about what happened, he mourns Abner's death, but feels powerless to do anything to Joab (vv. 28, 30–34). David instead calls upon God to execute His perfect justice (v. 29). Despite the fact that David does not execute Joab, it is clear to all Israel that David had nothing to do with Abner's death; and that David's actions and decisions pleased the people (vv. 35–39).

What is interesting is, nothing is said about David's involvement in the civil war itself. We find out about David and his wives in this chapter, about David and Abner's alliance, about David and Joab's confrontation, and about David's mourning for Abner—but David does not appear to take part in the actual civil war.

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It is always good to see what another person has done. Both Clarke and Gill seemed random when summarizing this chapter, but Matthew Henry gives us a good overview:

Matthew Henry Summarizes 2Samuel 3

The battle between Joab and Abner did not end the controversy between the two houses of Saul and David, but it is in this chapter working towards a period.

1. The gradual advance of David's interest ([2Sam. 3:1](#)).
2. The building up of his family ([2Sam. 3:2–5](#)).
3. Abner's quarrel with Ish-bosheth, and his treaty with David ([2Sam. 3:6–12](#)).
4. The preliminaries settled ([2Sam. 3:13–16](#)).
5. Abner's undertaking and attempt to bring Israel over to David ([2Sam. 3:17–21](#)).
6. The treacherous murder of Abner by Joab, when he was carrying on this matter ([2Sam. 3:22–27](#)).
7. David's great concern and trouble for the death of Abner ([2Sam. 3:28–39](#)).

As is normally the case, this outline is similar, but not identical to mine.

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What I find fascinating about the Word of God, that, even in chapters which seem to be fairly straightforward, such as the narrative that we find in this chapter, there is a great deal to be dug out of this chapter by way of personal application. When I first put together the basic exegesis from the Hebrew, trying to make certain that I understood what was going on from the narrative standpoint, I often wondered, *okay, but how is this applicable in any way to my life?* However, as I got further into the narrative, examining the motivations and the actions of the principals involved, I found that there was a great deal to be learned from this, as well as a lot of personal application. Everything in Scripture has a purpose, although we may not always be able to determine what that purpose is. Much of what we read has application to our lives (however, do not think that every verse that you read is going to necessarily have some application to you). There is a balance, and in that balance we will find life lessons, if you will, that we might use to guide us in our walk on this earth. **All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart** (2Tim. 3:16 Heb. 4:12b).

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As we begin this chapter, bear in mind that there is no actual hard, chapter break between 2Sam. 2 and 3; in the original, we go directly from the parting of the ways between Joab and Abner (after Abner had killed Joab's brother) to an overview of the civil war which ensued (v. 1 below).

Civil War in Israel

Slavishly literal:

And so she is the war long between a house of Saul and between a house of David. And David is going and holding fast and a house of Saul is going and [they are] weak.

2Samuel
3:1

Moderately literal:

And so the war is long between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David advances and is strong and the house of Saul advances but [they are] weakening.

The civil war between those loyal to Saul and those loyal to David seemed to go on for a long time. David's army continued to strengthen, and Saul's army continued to weaken.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so she is the war long between a house of Saul and between a house of David. And David is going and holding fast and a house of Saul is going and [they are] weak. And there was war for a long time between the house of Saul and the house of David; and the house of David grew continually stronger; but the house of Saul grew continually weaker.

Septuagint

Significant differences:

The Greek somewhat expands on the adjective *long* from the Hebrew. The description of David's and Saul's house in the Greek is definitely different from the Hebrew, having one less verb in each case, and the verb used in the Greek is somewhat different.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

This battle was the beginning of a long war between the followers of Saul and the followers of David. Saul's power grew weaker, but David's grew stronger.

NLT	That was the beginning of a long war between those who had been loyal to Saul and those who were loyal to David. As time passed David became stronger and stronger, while Saul's dynasty became weaker and weaker.
REB	The war between the house of Saul and the house of David was long drawn out, David growing steadily stronger while the house of Saul became weaker.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	As the war between the royal families of Saul and David dragged on, David's family became stronger and stronger, and Saul's family became weaker and weaker.
HCSB	The war between the house of Saul and the house of David was long and drawn out, with David growing stronger and the house of Saul becoming weaker.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	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.
Young's Literal Translation	And the war is long between the house of Saul and the house of David, and David is going on and is strong, and the house of Saul are going on and are weak.

What is the gist of this verse? There is a civil war in Israel which is long and drawn out, with David's side getting stronger while Abner's side grows weaker.

2Samuel 3:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
mil ^e châmâh (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced mil-khaw-MAW]	battle, war	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4421 BDB #536
‘ärûkâh (אֶרְכָּה) [pronounced uh-rook-KAW]	long	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #752 BDB #74
bêyn (בּּין) [pronounced bane]	in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	house, household, habitation as well as inward	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
Shâ’ûwl (שָׁׁעַוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
w ^e (or v ^e) (!) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

2Samuel 3:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced bane]	<i>in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between</i>	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

Translation: And so the war is long between the house of Saul and the house of David. We don't find this adjective *long* used very often. This would also make sense for this war to take place over a period of time less than 2 years, while Ishbosheth is ruling over Israel. Although I could come up with a scenario where the war between them was longer, that just seems less likely.

That a war seems long is a matter of perception. At present, we have been in Iraq for a few years—since I am not stationed there, the war seems rather brief to me, and for the most part, there are no battles, but rather skirmishes. Similarly, American casualties are low. A year's worth of casualties for the US in Iraq is comparable to a couple months in Viet Nam and comparable to one battle from World War II. Furthermore, there is a lot more occurring other than skirmishes there. I am aware of at least one soldier who never used his weapon while there; and that there are innumerable building and infrastructure projects going on as we speak. On the other hand, a war where there are frequent confrontations of large groups of men, is going to seem lengthy after two years, which is the situation that we have here.

At this juncture, Gill suggests a time line: *The recent battle, though so much in favour of David, did not, put an end to the war between him and Ishbosheth, which lasted five years longer; for it was when Ishbosheth had reigned two years that that battle was fought, and he reigned five years longer; for not till his death, and when David had reigned above seven years in Hebron, was he made king over all Israel; and during this time peace was not made, but the war carried on; though perhaps not in pitched battles, of which we no more read, but in skirmishes.*

Back in the previous chapter, I suggested a time line, to account for the fact that Ishbosheth ruled for 2 years while David ruled for 7½ years. During the time the David ruled, the Philistines had a strong foothold in central Israel for perhaps as long as 3 years, which prevented any autonomy among the Israelites. Then Abner probably spent 2 or more years getting Ishbosheth situated, and then Abner went out and garnered support for Ishbosheth. At that point, Ishbosheth ruled for 2 years, which is most of chapters 2–4 of 2Samuel. After Ishbosheth dies (coming up in the next chapter), it will take another 6 months for David to gather popular support for his rule over all Israel. I think this makes far more sense than Gill's rambling explanation above.

2Samuel 3:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^o (or v ^o) (!) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

2Samuel 3:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved</i> and is transliterated <i>David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
hâlak ^e (הַלָּךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châzaq (חָזָק) [pronounced khaw-ZAHK]	<i>to tie up, to bind; to hold fast, to adhere to, to be stuck to; to be strong, to be firm, to increase in prosperity, to strengthen</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #2388 BDB #304

Translation: And David advances and is strong... David's army goes out and they gain ground, they lose very few of their men, and morale is high. They continue to become stronger.

Here, by the way, *David* is a metonym for *his army*. Although David possibly did travel with his troops, this paragraph does not require that. That is, he can be named as the subject, even if he is simply giving the overall orders, but not going out into the field (which is not necessarily the case).

This is interesting, that, even though Israel desired a king in order to go to war against Israel's enemies, we do not seem to have that situation here. That is, it does not appear as though David or Ishbosheth are going into battle themselves, nor are their armies engaged in war against their enemies, but against each other. Samuel warned Israel what might happen if Israel desired a king; however, this particular scenario was not a part of his warning.

2Samuel 3:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bayith (בֵּית) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁׁאַוְּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means asked for	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
hâlak ^e (הַלָּךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

2Samuel 3:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dal (דָל) [pronounced dahl]	<i>frail, helpless, weak, low, poor, needy</i>	masculine plural noun/adjective	Strong's #1800 (and #1803) BDB #195

Translation: ...and the house of Saul advances but [they are] weakening. Although the general Hebrew construction is not easy to deal with, this simply means that the army of Abner keeps going out to fight, but each time, it becomes weaker and weaker. More troops are killed, morale is low, and they are losing ground.

The house of Saul simply refers to Ishbosheth's army led by Abner. The impression given by the previous chapter is, Ishbosheth probably did not travel with his army.

Matthew Henry waxes perhaps too poetically about this verse: *David's side got ground. The house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker, lost places, lost men, sunk in its reputation, grew less considerable, and was foiled in every engagement. But the house of David grew stronger and stronger. Many deserted the declining cause of Saul's house, and prudently came into David's interest, being convinced that he would certainly win the day. The contest between grace and corruption in the hearts of believers, who are sanctified but in part, may fitly be compared to this recorded here. There is a long war between them, the flesh lusted against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; but, as the work of sanctification is carried on, corruption, like the house of Saul, grows weaker and weaker; while grace, like the house of David, grows stronger and stronger, till it come to a perfect man, and judgment be brought forth unto victory.*²

At least the beginning of Henry's commentary gives us a good idea as to what was happening. However, even when Henry begins speaking of the war of the spirit against the flesh, I don't want to necessarily rule these thoughts out. Matt. 10:35–36: **For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.** Gal. 5:17: **For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.** Eph. 6:12: **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.** The war between our sin nature and our spiritual nature is a constant in our lives; the war between the spiritual forces that we cannot see is a constant in our lives; it is no wonder that we should see warfare between men, and rebellion against God's plan (David should rule over Israel, not Ishbosheth; and Ishbosheth and Abner know this).

Keil and Delitzsch summarize this verse with a little less fanfare: *The historian sums up in these words the historical course of the two royal houses, as they stood opposed to one another. "The war" does not mean continual fighting, but the state of hostility or war in which they continued to stand towards one another. They concluded no peace, so that David was not recognised by Ishbosheth as king, any more than Ishbosheth by David. Not only is there nothing said about any continuance of actual warfare by Abner or Ishbosheth after the loss of the battle at Gibeon, but such a thing was very improbable in itself, as Ishbosheth was too weak to be able to carry on the war, whilst David waited with firm reliance upon the promise of the Lord, until all Israel should come over to him.*³

² Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:1–6.

³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:1.

This, by the way, is a summary verse, which summarizes much of what is to follow in this chapter. It is almost a title for this chapter, albeit, a lengthy one. How David becomes stronger and Saul's house weaker will be discussed in the almost 40 verses which follow.

What we find in v. 1 is an introverted parallelism.⁴ Simply by observing the indentations below, I think the almost poetic structure of this verse is obvious:

The Introverted Parallelism of 1Samuel 3:1

And so the war is long
 between the house of Saul
 and the house of David.
 And David advances and is strong
 and the house of Saul advances but [they are] weakening.

It may not seem obvious to the casual reader, but there are times when there is great literary structure to be found in Scripture. We see this over and over again in David's psalms. When you recognize the key to his psalm, then, all of a sudden, it takes on this great overall structure, which most people do not ever see.

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Unfortunately, this civil war will not be the last; we will later study civil wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1Kings 14:30), and Asa and Baasha as well (1Kings 15:16, 32).

You may wonder why God allows this civil war to continue. First of all, God allows man free will, and that these events are a result of probably Saul's last wish given to Abner before the battle against the Philistines began. Secondly, there are a number of men who are still loyal to Saul and to any in his line; many of these men have to be eliminated, which will happen in war. Therefore, God is going to wipe out (through David's army) most of those who support Ishbosheth, Saul's son.

It may seem weird to you that we begin this chapter with commentary on the civil war between Abner and David, and then suddenly stop and discuss the children born to David in Hebron; however, recall that there were no chapter breaks in the original. The end of 2Sam. 2 moved right into the beginning of 2Sam. 3 without any sort of notation of a chapter break. 2Sam. 3:1 is somewhat of a summary verse, which summarizes what follows the standoff between Abner and Joab in Gibeon. The remainder of 2Sam. 3 gives us a few events which took place during this civil war and during David's reign in Hebron. Part of David's concern, during this period of time, was devoted to his wives, and to having children (vv. 2–5). In fact, in the midst of all this, David even will get Ishbosheth to deliver his wife, Michal, to him (vv. 13–16).

Keil and Delitzsch also comment on what seems to be a sudden detour: *The account of the sons who were born to David at Hebron does not break the thread, as Clericus, Thenius, and others suppose, but is very appropriately introduced here, as a practical proof of the strengthening of the house of David, in harmony with the custom of beginning the history of the reign of every king with certain notices concerning his family (vid., 2Sam. 5:13. 1Kings 3:1 14:21 15:2, 9, etc.).*⁵

Furthermore, David's increase of wives and children stands in stark contrast to what follows—an argument between Ishbosheth and Abner over a former mistress of Saul's. Vv. 2–5 illustrate just how David's house grows stronger and stronger; and vv. 6–11 illustrate just how Saul's house becomes weaker and weaker.

⁴ For a complete explanation on this figure of speech, see *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 301, 356.

⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:2–5.

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David's Children Born to Him in Hebron

2Chron. 3:1–4a

And so is born to David sons in Hebron. And so is his firstborn Amnon to Ahinoam the Jezreelite.

2Samuel
3:2

And sons are born to David in Hebron. His firstborn is Amnon, [born to] Ahinoam the Jezreelite.

David sired several sons while living in Hebron: His firstborn was Amnon, the son of Ahinoam, the Jezreelite.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so is born to David sons in Hebron. And so is his firstborn Amnon to Ahinoam the Jezreelite.

Septuagint

And sons were born to David in Chebron: and his first-born was Ammon the son of Achinoom the Jezraelite.

Significant differences: None

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Several of David's sons were born while he was living in Hebron. His oldest son was Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

HCSB Sons were born to David in Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelite...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV And sons were born to David at Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam of Jezreel...

Young's Updated LT And there are born to David sons in Hebron. And his first-born is Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelite.

What is the gist of this verse? The first son that David had born to him was Amnon, the son of Ahinoam the Jezreelite.

2Samuel 3:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (תַּלְדֵּ) [pronounced yaw-LAHDI]	<i>to be born</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408

2Samuel 3:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
There appears to be a missing letter in the MT; it is pointed (i.e., there is a vowel point), but the consonant is missing. This consonant is apparently found in the Qere reading. ⁶			
lāmed (לָמֶד) [pronounced <i>lamed</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEE-d</i>]	<i>beloved</i> and is transliterated <i>David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
bēn (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b eh</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Cheb ^e rōwn (חוּרֹון) [pronounced <i>kheb-ROHN</i>]	<i>association, league, joined;</i> transliterated <i>Hebron</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #2275 BDB #289

Translation: And sons are born to David in Hebron. When David became king over Judah, this did give him certain privileges, which included being able to marry pretty much as many women as he desired. Whereas, David did not amass as many wives as did Solomon, he did marry a number of women. At some point in the future, we'll have a list of those wives and their children.

David did not, insofar as we know, have any children when he was on the run from Saul. He did have two wives, as we know, but not having children was probably intentional on David's part. When in Judah, he never knew when he would have to pick up stakes and move on; and when living in a protectorate of Gath, he knew that he was deceiving the king of Gath—so that made his time in Gath uncertain as well. However, once David moves to Hebron as king over Judah, he has some human stability, and he chose to enjoy this time, apparently.

I should speak to Solomon and David: Solomon learned a lot of his father, and part of that included Bible doctrine. However, he also learned from David's example of having multiple wives, which Solomon was most excessive about—he had 1000 wives and mistresses, and the Song of Solomon chronicles his frustration and love for a woman that he could not have. In other words, you can have it all without having anything at all.

To some, including me, the first time I read these few verses, they seemed to come out of nowhere. We are in the midst of a civil war, and suddenly, everything stops and David's wives and children are enumerated; and then we return to the civil war. Why is this not listed immediately after David's move to Hebron? Why is it not listed immediately before 2Sam. 5, where David is made king over all Israel?

Why We Find David's Progeny Listed Right here, During Civil War Narrative

1. This insertion seems to indicate that David had his mind on other things, apart from the civil war in which he was engaged. There is even an implication that David himself did not take a very active part in the war. He is just as concerned with collecting wives and having children as he is with the war with Ishbosheth.

⁶ I quite frankly don't know what the Qere reading is, but this is what Owen says. *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*; John Joseph Owens; Baker Book House, Grand Rapid, Michigan; ©1989; Vol. 2, p. 285.

Why We Find David's Progeny Listed Right here, During Civil War Narrative

We do not find David going to war himself—at least, there is no mention of that. We will see David making babies, making alliances, and making eulogies, but not making war himself.

2. The first verse of this chapter tells us that the house of David became stronger and stronger—this is illustrated not by an enumeration of battles between the two armies and the relative casualty count, but by the number of wives and children which David had. The section after this will deal with Abner and Ishbosheth arguing about a mistress who once belonged to Saul (which symbolizes their side becoming weaker and weaker).
3. Another reason that David's wives and children are mentioned here is, even though David is in the midst of a civil war, David's mind is on other things.
4. David has 3 (now 2) nephews who obviously look up to him, but are not under his control and influence. What will follow in this chapter will illustrate this fact. David will also lack control and influence over his own children, the ones being born at this time.
5. Finally, what the author might be illustrating here is simultaneous action—David involved in a civil war, which he does not participate much in; and filling the palace with new babies.

Reason #2 came from Keil and Delitzsch, which I believe to be the primary reason for the insertion of these verses on David's progeny.

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David has 3 nephews—now one deceased and two filled with revenge motivation—and these men could really used David's steady hand and influence in their lives. It is much better to nip their problems in the bud, rather than to let their youthful exuberance and poor judgment get the best of them. However, David will not do this. He is content to be the uncle that they look up to; but he gives them no guidance that we can see. We know that he had the chance when Joab comes in to speak to him later in this chapter; but David offers no guidance and no boundaries.

David's sons are going to be raised the same way—David will take a hands-off approach—and perhaps we can blame this on his father, who has David out watching the sheep at a very young age, and who seemed to have little confidence and few expectations in David (however, we did note an instance of Jesse teaching David).

So there is no misunderstanding, David is not supposed to have multiple wives, as per Deut. 17:17 ([And he \[any king over Israel\] shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold](#)). Is David aware of this? We really don't know; however, David does seem to be well-schooled in the Law, so my opinion is, David did know. Furthermore, it would be reasonable that he would want to know about all passages related to being a king; so I suspect that he knew this and other passages for this reason as well.

Application: God has designed a family unit: one man, one woman, and children. I know of blended families and single mother families, and the problems which they face are almost insurmountable. Bringing in a new mother or a new father into a family often ends up as mutual toleration at best; out and out antagonism at worst. Having no father to speak of, means a child grows up without the guidance and insight of a father. A normal father, for instance, will do anything to protect the soul and body of his daughter. The mother might be enjoying sharing makeup with her daughter, buying clothes together, letting her daughter go out at a young age—but a father knows what men are like. Most fathers might even want to keep their daughters under lock and key until age 30. With both parents, there is a balance which is achieved. A daughter learns about what kind of man she should marry and she learns about what kind of wife she should be. Remove one of the parents, and you remove a key element in that young girl's training. The same with a male. A young man sees how his father treats his mother, and learns from this. He observes the faithfulness and dedication of his mother and looks for this in a woman.

Application: I have heard the statistic that 3 out of 4 Black babies are born out of wedlock in the United States at this time. Half of these are young men, most of whom will grow up without a real father. At a certain age, many

women are no longer able to reign in their young men, and they go out of control. They function without any morality and without any respect for others (which a father often enforces and teaches). And many of them go out and do exactly as their absent father has done. My point is, God has a perfect design, and this design, not matter how tempting it sounds, is not a marriage of one man to several women, as David is doing. What we should expect is difficulties from his sons, which we will find. However, at this point, we will simply get to know these children from birth.

Application: In case you were not aware, there are few nations in the history of the world with as a high a percentage of believers as we find in the United States. It is said that, of those who founded our country, 97% of them could be classified as Protestants.⁷ From my own experience, a larger percentage of the Blacks which I know appear to believe in Jesus Christ. Therefore, here, in the United States, we should expect to find innumerable attacks by Satan against God, Jesus Christ, and the divine institutions (marriage, family, volition and nation). In the day that I live, the assault on marriage and the family is almost unnerving. We have a huge divorce rate and a demand by those who do not fit into God design for marriage petitioning for marriage rights and for family rights. We find some school districts no longer using the colors red and green during Christmas (which is not called *Christmas* by many of them). We have the *spring bunny* rather than the *Easter bunny*. And the great Christmas songs which I recall singing in choir are rarely sung today in any public institution. We find Black families ravaged first by no father, which results in them being taken by drugs and by false religion (Islam or the Charismatic movement). We have a huge percentage of Blacks who see themselves first as *Africans* and secondly as *Americans*, which is symbolic of Satan's attempt to take these people from their true Christian roots as Americans and associate them with the paganism of Africa. We have hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people, who want to move to America just to start on the bottom rung of the ladder so that they can pull themselves up; and we have so many Blacks who see themselves as being in a nation of oppression and no opportunity, who expect the government to subsidize their lives and lifestyle. These are Satanic attacks; Satan is real and his arguments and logic are greater than our own personal arguments; and, apart from Bible doctrine, we cannot stave off his attacks.

Application: One final note: none of these sons born to David in Hebron are ever celebrated as men of spiritual integrity; several of them whose background we do know, are infamous. If a man as great as David, with all the financial resources of a king, cannot control and guide several children by several wives, what do you think is going to happen to the children of the seeds that you so indiscriminately plant?

Application: What you need to understand is, a husband and a wife form a unit, insofar as their children are concerned. Although my parents were very different in personality and interests, I never played one against the other, because their decisions concerning us were made jointly; they backed up one another. They took their responsibility of raising children seriously, and did so as a team. David cannot function as a team with a half-dozen different wives. He does not have the time. There is no unity and no coordination of discipline and guidance for these children. Even as a king with the resources of a king, David cannot properly father these children he has fathered. There are too many mothers and not enough fathers; and no unity and no unbreakable bond has been established. Now, bear in mind, we are speaking of a great man; David has great spiritual integrity. Over and over again when we have studied him, we find indications of this greatness. However, you cannot take your spiritual greatness outside of God's plan and make it work. It just won't.

You cannot take your spiritual greatness outside of God's plan and make it work.

Polygamy seems like a dream for many men; therefore, let's answer the question...

What's Wrong with Polygamy?

1. Perhaps, if the man can turn things around for a moment, he might understand better. Why do we rarely

⁷ I wish I had the reference for this! By the way, this high concentration of believers has precedence: God created only believers to begin with; the only survivors of the flood all believed in Jesus Christ; and the two generations of the exodus were virtually 100% believers.

What's Wrong with Polygamy?

find one woman with several husbands? After all, there are queen bees, aren't there? The man has a particular role in the family unit, which involves authority. If there are several husbands, then who has the authority? Furthermore, the authority seems to be with the wife, as she has the several husbands. Similarly, a man with several wives has the problem that, a woman has a particular place in the household. She is second in command. Now, this, to the one with the highest authority, may not seem like much, but it is every bit as important as the man's authority. When there are several people with the same command position in the same home, we have a problem.

2. The family makes up a basic unit of society; God designed us the way we are to best function inside the family unit.
3. The husband and wife are a unit with respect to their children. A good husband and wife function as a unit before their children. Children tend to see their parents as a unity as well. None of this comes into play when there is one husband and several wives. That basic structure no longer exists.
4. We have illustrations throughout David's life as to how his children got out of control, even though David is a man after God's own heart. Because of the male and female roles in a marriage, it is easier for a husband and a wife, for instance, to raise 4 children, than it is for a husband and 4 wives to raise 4 children. With one husband and wife, we have the basic marriage unit, and we have the command center. The children, ideally, find themselves under the authority of one command center (and a child even at the age of 3 knows when there are two different commanders spouting different commands). This command center breaks down when there are several women occupying the post of second-in-command.
5. The unique intimacy between one man and one woman is broken down when there are several women involved. When there is more than one wife, a woman belonging to David does not have unfettered access to him. When we have a half-dozen wives, each wife, for all intents and purposes, is out there on her own, as she may see David intimately once a week (and by *intimately* I do not mean sex, although that is the physical expression of soul intimacy).
6. Most men have had the experience of a woman becoming emotional and rather irrational now and again. A household can afford at most, one woman, losing her control for a period of time. At this point, the husband has to gently, and with love, rein his wife in, and often take over her relationship with the children as well. No way does David have time for this with 2 or more women.
7. In our society today, millions of Black children function with absentee fathers; and a percentage of these actually have contact with their biological father. This has ruined several generations of Blacks. As we follow David's children while he is king, we will see that they have control issues; authority issues, lust issues, etc. Does this sound like the youth of the US today? Of course it does. I have been illustrating in several of these points that, polygamy does not work in a single household; of course, the male immediately thinks, *what if I make enough money to buy two or more houses?* We still have the problem that, neither the wife nor children have unfettered access to David, which destroys intimacy, training and discipline (don't get me wrong; David is in charge of training and disciplining his children; not his wife).
8. One man and one woman together make a perfect balance; not too much testosterone, not too much estrogen. God designed us that way, and throughout Scripture, this model is upheld as a basic unit of society. We need to be able to accept the fact that God knows what He is doing in the design of the male and female, and in the design of marriage and the family unit. In our imagination, we may think that we can come up with better alternatives (polygamy, gay marriages, single parent families, being raised by a village); however, even in one generation, it is clear that man's alternatives to God's approach do not work.

There is a television show on HBO now where polygamy is a part of the setup. HBO has some excellent shows, with outstanding writing and direction and acting. My guess originally was that, the difficulties of polygamy will be downplayed, so that they are peripheral and occasional issues at most (if these issues are raised at all). I have since seen a few episodes of *Big Love* and they clearly use many of the logical problems which would occur in such a marriage.

We have seen, on the other hand, a rather playful and positive approach to gay couples on television over the past decade or so. They are presented as behaving almost exactly as male-female couples, which is not the case. In the US, we have a particularly bad situation with regards to marriage—50–60% of mates stray (at one time, this percentage was in the single digits). However, in homosexual unions, I think the percentage is closer to 95%; this means, there is no true intimacy, since physical intimacy occurs outside of the relationship with virtually every gay couple.

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Even though the Law condemns polygamy (Deut. 17:17), the author of Samuel makes no comment; however, the disastrous interaction of the children from David's polygamous unions will speak volumes (see 2Sam. 13–19 1Kings 1–2).⁸

Application: Okay, you are now convinced as to the importance of the nuclear family; now, *why does God allow David to have several wives?* God is a gentleman and He respects our volition. God allows us to sin; He allows us to make grave mistakes. With David, this is a matter of teaching by example: if David, a man of great spiritual integrity and with almost unlimited resources, cannot control a half-dozen kids by as many wives, then it should be clear to us that we will be unable to properly raise our own children outside God's pre-designed family unit. I am sure that this has been said before, but *it does not take a village to raise a child; it takes a mother and a father.*

Application: Now, you may not be contemplating polygamy, but are you contemplating divorce? Are you contemplating an affair? Are you contemplating sex outside of marriage? Are you contemplating marriage with the idea, "If it doesn't work out, I can divorce her"? All of these are Satanic attacks upon marriage and the family unit, which God has designed and maintained throughout human history.

2Samuel 3:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b ^e kôwr (בָּכֹר)	<i>firstborn</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1060 BDB #114
Am ^e nôwn (אַמְנוֹן)	<i>faithful; transliterated Amnon</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #550 BDB #54
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

His full and proper name is 'Āmîynôwn (אַמִּינֹן) [pronounced uhm-ee-NOHN].

⁸ Paraphrased from *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 422.

2Samuel 3:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘Āchîynô’am (אֲחִינָם) [pronounced uh-khee-NOH-ǵam]	<i>my brother is delight, and is</i> transliterated Ahinoam	proper noun	Strong's #293 BDB #27
Yiz̄r̄’ēlīyth (יִזְרֵלִית) [pronounced yiz̄-r̄-ǵay-LEETH]	<i>God will sow; that which God planted;</i> it is transliterated Jezreelitess	gentilic adjective; feminine form; with the definite article	Strong's #3159 BDB #283

Translation: His firstborn is Amnon, [born to] Ahinoam the Jezreelitess. David married two women when on the run from Saul, and one of them was Ahinoam. Amnon means *faithful*. Amnon will rape⁹ his half-sister, Tamar, in 2Sam. 13. Because he rapes his half-sister, Absalom, his half-brother will kill him. This is a man who would have been heir to David's throne.

And his second, Chileab to Abigail a woman of Nabal the Carmelite. And the third Absalom a son of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur. 2Samuel 3:3

His second [son was] Chileab by Abigail the widow [lit., wife] of Nabal the Carmelite. The third [was] Absalom, the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur.

His second son Chileab was born to Abigail, the former wife of Nabal the Carmelite. His third son was Absalom, born to Maacah, who was the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And his second, Chileab to Abigail a woman of Nabal the Carmelite. And the third Absalom a son of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur.

Septuagint

And his second son was Daluia, the son of Abigaia the Carmelitess; and the third, Abessalom the son of Maacha the daughter of Tholmi the king of Gessir.

Significant differences:

The Greek adds the additional words *the son of*. The Greek will also differ from the Hebrew when it comes to proper names; however, note that the Greek read *Daluia* and keep that in mind when we compare this to 1Chron. 3:1.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV David's second son was Chileab, whose mother was Abigail, who had been married to Nabal from Carmel. Absalom was the third. His mother was Maacah, the daughter of King Talmai of Geshu.

The Message ...Kileab, born of Abigail of Carmel, Nabal's widow--his second; Absalom, born of Maacah, daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur--the third;...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

⁹ Euphemisms by commentators and in Bible dictionaries abound at this point. Smith says Amnon dishonors his half sister; Fausset says he forced his half-sister (but it does not say exactly in what way); Easton calls it a great crime; ISBE say he committed a great outrage. I have not come across the word rape yet.

God's Word™

The second was Chileab, born to Abigail (who had been Nabal's wife) from Carmel. The third was Absalom, whose mother was Maacah (the daughter of King Talmai) from Geshur.

HCSB

...his second was Chileab, by Abigail, the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; the third was Absalom, son of Maacah the daughter of King Talmai of Geshur;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB

And his second was Chileab, of Abigail the former wife of Nabal of Carmel. And the

Young's Updated LT

third was Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai the king of Geshur.
and his second is Chileab, of Abigail wife of Nabal the Carmelite, and the third is
Absalom son of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur.

What is the gist of this verse? David's second and third sons are named: Chileab, David's son by Abigail, former wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and Absalom, David's third son, born to Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur.

2Samuel 3:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mish ^e neh (מִשְׁנֶה) [pronounced mish ^e -NEH]	double, copy, second	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4932 BDB #1041
Kâl ^e âb (כָּלָב) [pronounced kil-AW ^B V]	restraint of his father; like his father; transliterated Chileab	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3609 BDB #476

The Greek reads *Daluia* here instead; the parallel passage, 1Chron. 3:1, reads *Daniel*. Furthermore, it is interesting that the final three consonants in *Chileab* match the next 3 consonants which follow. It is almost as if, the text is unreadable at this point to a copyist, and he does not know what to do, so he repeats these 3 letters at the beginning to indicate that the text is unreadable (this is the contention of ISBE¹⁰).

lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'Ābîygayil (אָבִיְגַּיֵּל) [pronounced a ^b -vee-GAH-yil]	my father is joy (or, joyous); or my father's joy; and is transliterated Abigail	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #26 BDB #4
'îshshâh (הִשְׁהָה) [pronounced eesh-SHAWH]	woman, wife	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
Nâbâl (נָבָל) [pronounced naw-BAWL]	foolish, stupid; impious, wicked; and is transliterated Nabal	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #5037 BDB #615

¹⁰ The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Chileab.

2Samuel 3:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kar ^ə m ^ə ly (כַּרְמֵלִית) [pronounced kar ^ə -m ^ə -EE]	garden, plantation and is transliterated Carmelite	gentilic adjective; masculine form; with the definite article	Strong's #3761 BDB #502

Translation: His second [son was] Chileab by Abigail the widow [lit., wife] of Nabal the Carmelite. We have already studied how David met his wife Abigail. Abigail was an intelligent woman who acted to protect her husband and family from David by providing David with what was due to him for work that he had done for Nabal. Nabal, when he realized what he had done and how close he came to buying the farm, bought the farm, apparently by heart failure. We studied all of this in 1Sam. 25. Beyond that chapter, the mention of her as David's wife in Ziklag and in Hebron, and the mention of her son here, there is nothing else which we learn about Abigail in Scripture.

The name *Daniel* is given in 1Chron. 3:1 rather than *Chileab*. There could be a variety of reasons for this, but the simplest and most reasonable is, *Chileab* was this boy's name and *Daniel* was the adult name (I have at least two friends like this). Time sometimes has an effect on a person's name—prior to the year 2003, any art historian who referred to Leonardo Da Vinci with one name invariably used the name *Leonardo*; however, since the book *The Da Vinci Code* came out (which is a work of fiction based upon so-called facts which are chiefly fictional), we have a generation of people who refer to Leonardo as *Da Vinci*. The book of Samuel was composed very close the time of the events which are herein recorded, and the book of Chronicles was written several hundred years later based upon other documents (including this one). There are clear clues which imply that the writer of Chronicles was looking at this book of Samuel when writing his book.

In 2Sam. 3:3, this son of David is called *Chileab*; and in 1Chron. 3:1, he is called *Daniel*. Theories about this difference of names abound.

Explanations as to Why Chileab is also called Daniel

Commentator	Explanation	Comment
Barnes	Barnes has a different explanation, which confuses me somewhat: <i>In the duplicate passage (1Chron. 3:2) David's second son is called Daniel (God is my judge), a name given to him in commemoration of the death of Nabal (1Sam. 25:39—When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD who has avenged the insult I received at the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from wrongdoing. The LORD has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head." Then David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife).</i> Chileab seems to be made up of the three first letters of the following Hebrew word, through an error of the transcriber, and intended to be erased. ¹¹	I don't see the connection of the passage, nor do I fully get the error that Barnes suggests. Again, I think the simplest explanation is, the youth's name is Chileab and his adult name was Daniel.
Gill	Gill, by the way, tells us that <i>Daniel</i> was his given name at birth, but is unable to explain why we have <i>Chileab</i> here. He writes: <i>why he should be called Chileab is not easy to say; the name is commonly thought to signify "like unto his father", or "all father": had all the features of his father, and was exceedingly like him; the Jews have a fabulous story concerning this, not worth relating.</i> ¹²	

¹¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:3

¹² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:3.

Explanations as to Why Chileab is also called Daniel

Commentator	Explanation	Comment
Kukis	<i>Chilean</i> was his name at birth; as he got older, he took the name <i>Daniel</i> (although we do not know why exactly).	
Bishop Patrick	<i>His first name was Daniel—God has judged me (namely, against Nabal), but David's enemies reproached him, and said, “It is Nabal's son, and not David's,” to confute which calumny Providence so ordered it that, as he grew up, he became, in his countenance and features, extremely like David, and resembled him more than any of his children, upon which he gave him the name of Chileab, which signifies, like his father, or the father's picture.</i> ¹³	I must admit that this is a n i n t r i g u i n g explanation. However, I would have expected that these names would have been in opposite places, if this is the true explanation.
ISBE	The fact that the last three letters of <i>Chileab</i> match the next 3 letters found in this verse in the same order, possibly indicates a textual corruption at this point. ¹⁴	Having the exact same consonants in the same order is reasonably more than coincidence here.

There is no bet riding on this; the idea is, there is probably a very rational explanation for the names being different in the two passages. However, I must admit being surprised as to the large number of theories concerning this point.

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Now, maybe you are more concerned with Abigail being continually called *the wife of Nabal*. This figure of speech is known as an *ampliatio* [pronounced AM-plee-A-tee-oh], which means to call a new thing by an old name.¹⁵ We have the same situation even in Matt. 1:6 where Bathsheba is called the wife of Uriah (your Bible may insert a bunch of words to explain this away, but in the Greek, it reads simply, *by the [one] of Uriah*). In fact, in the Greek, we do not even have the name *Bathsheba*.

2Samuel 3:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sh ^e lishîym (שְׁלִישִׁים) [pronounced sh ^e -li-SHEEM]	<i>third, a third part, a third time; chambers [of the third story]</i>	masculine/feminine adjective/ordinal numeral with the definite article	Strong's #7992 BDB #1026
Ăbîyshâlôwm (אָבִיְשָׁלוֹם) [pronounced ub-ee-shaw-LOHM]	<i>my father is peace and is</i> <i>transliterated Absalom</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #53 BDB #5

¹³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:1–6.

¹⁴ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: *Chileab*.

¹⁵ See *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; pp 689–690.

2Samuel 3:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The abbreviated form is 'Āb ^e shâlōwm (אָבֶלּוֹם) [pronounced <i>ub^e-shaw-LOHM</i>].			
bēn (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Ma'ākāh (מַעֲקָה) [pronounced <i>maw-guh-KAW</i>]	<i>depression; oppression; pressed</i> [lit., <i>she has pressed</i>]; and is transliterated <i>Maacah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #4601 BDB #590
bath (בָּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i>]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
Tal ^e may (תַּלְמֵי) [pronounced <i>tahlmee-MAH-ee</i>]	<i>furrowed, ridge; transliterated Talmai</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #8526 BDB #1068
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>MEH-lek</i>]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
G ^e shûwr (גְּשׁוּר) [pronounced <i>g^esh-OOR</i>]	<i>to join; a bridge, a land of bridges</i> and is transliterated <i>Geshur</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #1650 BDB #178

Translation: The third [was] Absalom, the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. Absalom will play a big part in David's life when David gets out of fellowship with Bathsheba. Absalom will be a part of David's discipline. In fact, we will see a lot of Absalom in 2Sam. 13–18. Often, we find the sins of other believers used to discipline us for things we have done wrong.

Absalom will later avenge the rape of his half-sister Tamar by killing the perpetrator, Amnon. He will later conspire against his father David in order to make himself king.¹⁶

Although there are several *Maacah*'s mentioned in Scripture, this wife of David is only found here and in 1Chron. 3:2.

Talmai is mentioned in both of these places, but he is also named as the man that Absalom flees to in 2Sam. 13:37 (which will be covered when we get there). Although there is another Talmai mentioned in Num. 13:22, they are separated in time by about 400 years, and in distance, about 200 miles. Now, there might be a familial relationship here, as the Jews referred to the sons of Anak as giants ("We are grasshoppers in their sight!") and Bashan, who once ruled in the general area of Geshur, was one of the last of the giants (Deut. 3:11). There does appear to be another connection between the peoples of these two areas, as David is said to have made raids against the Geshurites when he was living in Ziklag (which is next door to southern Judah; 1Sam. 27:8). That we have such a relationship should not strike us as odd, as the tribe of Dan left their territory in central Israel and moved up into the far north (Judges 18). The only point that you should walk away with here, is that we are not dealing with territories or peoples which remain static over hundreds of years. So, if in one passage, we run into a people living in city A; we should not have a fit if, 100 years later, there are traces of them in city B.

The mention of Geshur is interesting, as it is small principality of Syria, northeast of Bashan. Recall that David has spent all of his time in Judah. Going northward from there is central Israel, partially controlled by the Philistines. Going northward from there is northern Israel, which will follow after Ishbosheth. Going eastward from there is

¹⁶ Paraphrased from *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 422.

eastern Israel, Transjordan, also controlled by Ishbosheth. And directly above Transjordan is Syria and Bashan. So, in the ancient world, this woman Maacah lived a pretty far distance from David. How their paths crossed, how they met, would be a fascinating story, but one, unfortunately, not found in Scripture. It would be reasonable that, as Ishbosheth began to take in more area, that Talmai decided to ally himself with David, and such an alliance would be established by marriage. This alliance would benefit Talmai in the north, if Ishbosheth moved against him; and it would benefit David in the south, as he now had Ishbosheth flanked from the north and the south. Absalom, because he is Talmai's grandson, will later seek refuge with him.

Given that there are probably ties between Talmai in the north and the Geshurites whom David wiped out in the south, David's meeting and marriage to Maacah would be a fascinating read, I would guess. Perhaps Talmai sought to insure peace with David once David took control of Judah. The best we can do here is speculate.

Gill reasonably speculates that David wanted such an alliance, as Ishbosheth was the territory between them.¹⁷ Jamieson, Fausset and Brown suggest the same thing: *This marriage seems to have been a political match, made by David, with a view to strengthen himself against Ish-bosheth's party, by the aid of a powerful friend and ally in the north. Piety was made to yield to policy, and the bitter fruits of this alliance with a heathen prince he reaped in the life of the turbulent Absalom.*¹⁸

Matthew Henry suggests: *Absalom's mother is said to be the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur, a heathen prince. Perhaps David thereby hoped to strengthen his interest, but the issue of the marriage was one that proved his grief and shame.*¹⁹

There are those who suppose that contradictions abound in Scripture, and one set of those often refers to one man called by different names in different places; and another set of those is, a group of people is found in one territory, and then, suddenly, in another passage, they are found elsewhere. The Bible may or may not give us a full explanation as to exact reasons; however, that does not mean that there is some kind of a contradiction in these areas. As you have seen in this verse, we are able to come up with reasonable theories as to why Chileab is called Daniel, and also reasonable explanations as to why David might have married Maacah, even though her father is fairly far northeast of David. It would not be difficult for us to come up with possible circumstances under which Maacah and David met. Even though the Scripture does not give us any direct information on these things, this is not enough to warrant the allegation that there are contradictions in the Word of God.

And the fourth Adonijah son of Haggith. And the fifth Shephatiah son of Abital.

2Samuel
3:4

The fourth [son was] Adonijah, the son of Haggith. The fifth [son was] Sephatiah, the son of Abital.

David's fourth son was Adonijah, by Haggith. His fifth son was Shephatiah, by Abital.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text
Septuagint

And the fourth Adonijah son of Haggith. And the fifth Shephatiah son of Abital.
And the fourth was Ornia, the son of Aggith, and the fifth was Saphatia, the son of Abital.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

¹⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:3.

¹⁸ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, 2Sam. 3:3.

¹⁹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:1–6.

- CEV** The fourth was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith. The fifth was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital.
- The Message** ...Adonijah, born of Haggith—the fourth; Shephatiah, born of Abital—the fifth;...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

- HCSB** ...the fourth was Adonijah, son of Haggith; the fifth was Shephatiah, son of Abital;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- MKJV** And the fourth was Adonijah, the son of Haggith. And the fifth was Shephatiah, the son of Abital.

- Young's Updated LT** And the fourth is Adonijah son of Haggith. And the fifth is Shephatiah son of Abital.

What is the gist of this verse? .

2Samuel 3:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
רַבִּיעֵי (רַבִּיעֵי) [pronounced r ^e -bee-GEE]	a fourth	masculine singular adjective; numeral; with the definite article	Strong's #7243 BDB #917
‘Ādōnîyyâh (אֲדֹנִיָּה) [pronounced uh-doh-nee-YAW or uhd-ohn-ee-YAW]	my Lord is Yahweh; transliterated Adonijah	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #138 BDB #11
The alternate spelling is ‘Ādōnîyyâhûw (אֲדֹנִיָּהוּ) [pronounced uh-doh-nee-YAW-hoo or uhd-ohn-ee-YAW-hoo].			
bēn (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Chaggîyth (חַגִּית) [pronounced khahg-TEETH]	festive and is transliterated Haggith	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #2294 BDB #291

Translation: The fourth [son was] Adonijah, the son of Haggith. Adonijah was David's fourth son, also mentioned in the list in 1Chron. 3, but known more for his attempt to succeed David instead of Solomon in 1Kings 1–2. Solomon will put him to death.

Haggith is David's 5th wife and mentioned only in connection with her son Adonijah.

2Samuel 3:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
chāmîyshîy (חָמִישֵׁי) [pronounced khuh-mee-SHEE]	<i>fifth</i>	masculine singular numeral ordinal; with the definite article	Strong's #2549 BDB #332
Sh ^e phat ^e yâh (שְׁפָתֵיָה) [pronounced sh ^e t-ah ^e -YAW]	<i>Yah is judge; Yah has judged, Yah has vindicated; transliterated Shephatiah</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #8203 BDB #1049
bēn (בֶּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
'Ābiy ^e ṭâl (אֲבִיְלָה) [pronounced ubh-ee-TAWL]	<i>my father is [the] dew; father of dew and is transliterated Abital</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #37 BDB #4

Translation: The fifth [son was] Sephatiah, the son of Abital. The name *Shephatiah* is almost identical to the name *Jehoshaphat*, with the *Yah* at the end instead of the beginning. They both mean *Yah is judge; Yah has judged*. David's fifth son, Shephatiah, is only mentioned here and in the family line in 1Chron. 3:3. His mother, Abital, is only found in these two places. These two lists, by the way, are almost identical. Chronicles is in a slightly abbreviated format.

And the sixth Ithream to Eglah a woman of David. These were born to David in Hebron. 2Samuel 3:5

And the sixth [son], Ithream, [was born] to Eglah, David's wife. These [sons] were born to David in Hebron.

And the sixth son born to David was Ithream, by his wife Eglah. These sons were all born to David while he resided in Hebron.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And the sixth Ithream to Eglah a woman of David. These were born to David in Hebron.

Septuagint

And the sixth [was] Jetheraam, the son of Ægal the wife of David. These were born to David in Chebron.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

The Message

The sixth was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, another one of David's wives. ...Ithream, born of Eglah—the sixth. These six sons of David were born in Hebron.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

The sixth was Ithream, born to David's wife Eglah. These sons were born to David while he was in Hebron.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**MKJV**

And the sixth was Ithream, by Eglah, David's wife. These were born to David in Hebro.

Young's Updated LT

And the sixth is Ithream, of Eglah wife of David. These have been born to David in Hebron.

What is the gist of this verse? The sixth son of David, Ithream, is named here; and we are told these were the sons born to David while he lived in Hebron.

2Samuel 3:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shishshîy (שִׁשְׁיָה) [pronounced shish-SHEE]	<i>sixth</i>	masculine singular numeral ordinal; with the definite article	Strong's #8345 BDB #995
Yith ^{רֶ} âm (יְתַרְּאֵם) [pronounced yith ^{רֶ} -r ^{eh} -GAWM]	<i>excellence of people; profit of the people; transliterated Ithream</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3507 BDB #453
lâmed (לָמֵד) (pronounced l ^{eh} med)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'Eg ^{לָהּ} (אֲגַلָּה) [pronounced g ^{eh} lh-LAW]	<i>heifer; chariot; round</i> <i>transliterated Eglah</i>	proper singular feminine noun	Strong's #5698 BDB #722
'ishshâh (אִשְׁשָׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAWH]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

Translation: And the sixth [son], Ithream, [was born] to Eglah, David's wife. Ithream (which means *excellence or profit of the people*) is found only here and in David's line in 1Chron. 3:3. His mother, Eglah (which means *heifer; chariot; round*) is also named only in these two passages.

It is interesting that we have the final phrase *wife of David* tacked on here (as well as in 1Chron. 3:3, where it reads *his wife*). This suggests to me that this portion of these two books either had the same source, or the writer of Chronicles used the book of Samuel, as well as other sources, to complete his own book. I do not really understand the significance of Eglah being called David's wife here, although the other women were David's wives as well. One explanation which is offered is, this is the final wife of this list, and therefore, the list is completed with the phrase *wife of David*. Although I do not find that explanation to be completely satisfying; I do not have an

alternate one. Gill suggests²⁰ that there was nothing else which distinguished her, so this phrase was thrown in. That explanation strikes me as being particularly lame, which Gill agrees with, citing the previous two wives as equally undistinguished in Scripture.

You may find it interesting that Jewish tradition²¹ believes Eglah to be equivalent to Michal, which means, I suppose, she took on an alternate name when she returned to David (which does not square with 2Sam. 5). In this chapter, David will see to it that Michal is taken from her husband, who apparently loves her very much (we do not know how reciprocal her feelings are). However, it will be clear that Michal takes little pleasure in David when we come to 2Sam. 6. Whether she is bitter over his behavior concerning the Ark of God, or whether she is jealous of his other wives, or whether she did not like being uprooted and taken to him—we really don't know how much these factors play into hers and David's relationship; however, I would think it very likely that she and David did not have children for several years after this chapter.

You may wonder, *did the Rabbis of old simply pull this notion that Eglah = Michal out of their...hat?* Not really. Here, Eglah is called David's wife, and the Rabbis take this to mean his principle wife, which they see as Michah, his first wife.²² In case you have no concept of logic, this by no means constitutes a proof of their position; simply an explanation as to where they came up with this notion (which, still seems very unlikely).

There is another Jewish tradition²³ that this is Saul's widow. Neither of these traditions is very likely.

2Samuel 3:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
’êlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced ALE-leh]	<i>these, these things</i>	demonstrative plural adjective	Strong's #428 BDB #41
yâlad (תַּلְדִּ) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to be born, to be born to; to be created</i>	3 rd person plural, Pual perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (לָמֵד) [pronounced lamed]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
b ^ə (בְּ) [pronounced b ^ə]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Cheb ^ə rôwn (חוּרֹן) [pronounced khe ^ə -ROHN]	<i>association, league, joined; transliterated Hebron</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #2275 BDB #289

Translation: These [sons] were born to David in Hebron. While David lived in Hebron, he had 6 sons born to him, all listed here and at the beginning of 1Chron. 3. Although David possibly had daughters born to him as well (e.g., Tamar, who may or may not have been born to David while he was in Hebron—1Chron. 3:9).

²⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:5.

²¹ Taken from Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:5. He cites T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 1. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 77. F.

²² Briefly explained by Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:2–5.

²³ Taken from Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:5. He cites Kimchi & Ben Gersom.

That David has the sons, almost as if there is no war going on, is a testament to the fact that *David's house grew stronger and stronger*. The house of Saul grew weaker and weaker (Ishbosheth is not said to have multiple wives or children during this time period); only Abner seems to making himself a man a great power (as we will see in the next verse).

In other words, these few verses dealing with David and his wives and sons is not just thrown in here, without purpose, without a thought to literary cohesion. This is an illustration as to how David's house continues to grow stronger (1Sam. 3:1 reads: *Now there was a long war between the house of David; and [the house of] David grew steadily strong, but the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker*). Similarly, what follows, an argument between Abner and Ishbosheth over a former mistress of Saul's, clearly indicates that the house of Saul is growing weaker and weaker. Vv. 2–11 illustrate the truth of v. 1.

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Abner and Ishbosheth Throw Down

And so he is in is the war between a house of Saul and between a house of David, and Abner has strengthened in a house of Saul.

2Samuel
3:6

And it is [that] while [there] was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner was strengthened [and became more powerful] in the house of Saul.

And as the war continued between the house of David and the house of Saul, Abner began to increase his power and authority within the house of Saul.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	Now while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner the son of Ner ruled the house of Saul.
Masoretic Text	And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul.
Peshitta	And so he is in is the war between a house of Saul and between a house of David, and Abner has strengthened in a house of Saul.
Septuagint	And it came to pass while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abenner was governing the house of Saul.

Significant differences: The final verb is questionable in its meaning; the Greek gives one interpretation of it. The problem with the Greek is they leave out the preposition. The Latin is in agreement with the Greek; the Syriac is closer to the Hebrew. In any case, we do not have a serious difference.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	As the war went on between the families of David and Saul, Abner was gaining more power than ever in Saul's family.
The Message	Abner took advantage of the continuing war between the house of Saul and the house of David to gain power for himself.
REB	As the war between the houses of Saul and David went on, Abner gradually strengthened his position in the house of Saul.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Barnes	And it came to pass, while the war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted, that Abner assisted the house of Saul. [Barnes is usually more literal than this; however, this translation gives a good sense of the verse].
God's Word™	During the war between the families of Saul and David, Abner strengthened his position in Saul's royal family.
HCSB	During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner kept acquiring more power in the house of Saul.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	While there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul.
LTHB	And it happened while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was making himself strong for the house of Saul.
Young's Updated LT	And it comes to pass, in the war being between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner has been strengthening himself in the house of Saul.

What is the gist of this verse? As the war continues, Abner increases his authority and respect in the house of Saul (i.e., among those in central and northern Israel).

2Samuel 3:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered *when [such and such happens]*. It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.

mil ^e châmâh (מִلְחָמָה)	battle, war	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4421 BDB #536
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced bane]	in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	house, household, habitation as well as inward	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

2Samuel 3:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁׁאַוְל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced bane]	in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
bayith (בֵּית) [pronounced BAH-yith]	house, household, habitation as well as inward	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	beloved and is transliterated David	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

Translation: And it is [that] while [there] was war between the house of Saul and the house of David,... We have the verb *to be* used twice in this first half of the verse. The first time it is used, we are speaking of something which has come to pass or has happened. The second is a reference to the civil war going on. This simply reintroduces us to the narrative which deals with the civil war between northern and southern Israel.

2Samuel 3:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Ăb ^e nêr (אֲבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v̄-NAYR]	my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
châzaq (חָזַק) [pronounced khaw-ZAHK]	to be confirmed, to be established; to strengthen oneself, to take courage; to show oneself to be strong or energetic; to aid, to assist	Hithpael participle	Strong's #2388 BDB #304
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
bayith (בֵּית) [pronounced BAH-yith]	house, household, habitation as well as inward	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

2Samuel 3:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁׁוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

Translation: ...that Abner was strengthened [and became more powerful] in the house of Saul. Because we have primarily seen Abner pick up Ishbosheth and set him up as king in eastern Israel, we tend to think of him as the primary force here in the house of Saul. This indicates that his power and authority possibly even threatened that of Ishbosheth, as it continued to grow as the war continued.

Now, you may recall that the Bible has already told us that the house of David was increasing in strength and the house of Saul was decreasing—this is completely true. However, within northern and eastern Israel, Abner's fame and power and authority continued to grow. The idea is, even without him doing anything about it, he could be seen as a possible threat to the crown of Ishbosheth. Abner apparently negotiated alliances between Ishbosheth and the elders of the northern and eastern territories; Abner is the one who is out front in this war against David. Ishbosheth appears to be little more than a figurehead, deserving of his position simply by his birth.

Clarke believes that Abner is taking steps to put himself up as king over northern Israel.²⁴ I personally see this as unlikely because, when he and Ishbosheth have a serious argument, instead of taking steps to tout himself as king over Israel, Abner will go over to David's side instead. And, in support of David, Abner makes contact with a great many of the elders whom he would have made contact with anyway, if he was looking to rule over northern and eastern Israel. In other words, I don't think that Abner has any intention of setting himself up as king at any point in time. His loyalty to Ishbosheth is based upon his loyalty to Saul; when Ishbosheth breaks this bond, Abner will move his support to David, rather than attempt to establish himself on his own.

We've just examined David's line which developed in Hebron, albeit somewhat volatile in the future. This will be compared to Saul's line through Ishbosheth. So, while David has a multitude of wives and children within a few years of establishing himself in Hebron, all we will hear about Ishbosheth is, he will obsess over one of his father's mistresses, as we will see in the next verse.

And to Saul a mistress and her name Rizpah daughter of Aiah. And so he says unto Abner, "Why have you gone in unto a mistress of my father?"

2Samuel
3:7

And Saul had a mistress [lit., to Saul a mistress] and her name [is] Rizpah, daughter of Aiah. So [Ishbosheth] said to Abner, "Why have you had sex with [lit., gone in unto] my father's mistress?"

And Saul had a mistress whose name was Rizpah (she was the daughter of Aiah). So Ishbosheth asked Abner, "Why have you had sex with my father's mistress?"

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And to Saul a mistress and her name Rizpah daughter of Aiah. And so he says unto Abner, "Why have you gone in unto a mistress of my father?"

Septuagint

And Saul had a concubine, Respha, the daughter of Jol; and Jebosthe the son of Saul said to Abenner, Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?

²⁴ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:6.

Significant differences:

The Septuagint, Vulgate and Peshitta all have *Ishbosheth said to Abner*; the LXX adds *the son of Saul*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	He had even slept with a wife of Saul by the name of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah. But Saul's son Ishbosheth told Abner, "You shouldn't have slept with one of my father's wives!"
<i>The Message</i>	Saul had had a concubine, Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. One day Ish-Bosheth confronted Abner: "What business do you have sleeping with my father's concubine?"
REB	Now Saul had a concubine named Rizpah daughter of Aiah. Ishbosheth challenged Abner, 'Why have you slept with my father's concubine?'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	Saul had a concubine named Rizpah (Aiah's daughter). Ishbosheth asked Abner, "Why did you have sex with my father's concubine?"
HCSB	Now Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah daughter of Aiah, and Ish-bosheth questioned Abner, "Why did you sleep with my father's concubine?"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB	And Saul had a concubine, and her name was Rizpah the daughter of Aiah. And <i>Ishbosheth</i> said to Abner, Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?
Young's Updated LT	And Saul has a concubine, and her name is Rizpah daughter of Aiah, and <i>Ish-Bosheth</i> says unto Abner, "Why have you gone in unto the concubine of my father?"

What is the gist of this verse? Ishbosheth accuses Abner of sleeping with Rizpah, Saul's mistress. What he is really accusing Abner of is, an attempt to consolidate power to himself.

2Samuel 3:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lāmed (לָמֶד) (pronounced l ^r)	to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁׁעַוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
pîylegesh (פִּילְגֵשׁ) [pronounced pee-LEH-gesh]	mistress, paramour, illicit lover, live-in lover, concubine	feminine singular construct	Strong's #6370 BDB #811
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

2Samuel 3:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Rits ^e phâh (רִצְפָּה) [pronounced <i>rists-PAW</i>]	<i>a hot stone [coal], a live coal; a glowing stone;</i> transliterated <i>Rizpah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #7532 BDB #954
bath (בָּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i>]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
'Ayyâh (אֱיָה) [pronounced <i>ah-YAW</i>]	<i>hawk, falcon;</i> transliterated <i>Aiah</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #345 BDB #17

Translation: And Saul had a mistress [lit., to Saul a mistress] and her name [is] Rizpah, daughter of Aiah. Rizpah is going to be mentioned twice in Scripture: here, where Abner is accused of having an affair with her (with the end result of gaining power over Ishbosheth); and the second time is when David turns her sons over to the Gibeonites in 2Sam. 21. Given that her sons are named in Scripture as being men of significance, we may reasonably conclude that she was a favorite of Saul's (we do not have a full list of his mistresses).

Fausset says²⁵ that she is a Hivite, descended from Gibeon through Aiah, and quotes Gen. 36:14. In Scripture, most often when someone is called the *son [or, daughter] of Charlie Brown*, this indicates that *Charlie Brown* is generally well-known to the reader and is probably the father or, at most, the grandfather. Therefore, he is probably wrong in this regard. He goes on to make a few comments about foreign wives, saying that they were often chosen as inferior wives by Solomon, Rehoboam, etc.

There are several things which could be at play when dealing with foreign wives in general: (1) Union with a foreign wife could represent a political treaty, and children produced as a result of this union could be seen as an enforcement of that treaty; (2) the Old Testament indicates that the Jews should not be united with non-Jews primarily because they might be swayed by the gods of these women (which would result in a foreign woman being a mistress rather than a wife); and (3) the man involved can be simply attracted to foreign women, and that the foreign wives/mistresses have no political significance.

2Samuel 3:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (לְאָ) [pronounced <i>eI</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

²⁵ Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*; from e-Sword, topic: Rizpah.

2Samuel 3:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Ābənēr (אָבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^ə -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp</i> , and is transliterated Abner	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
maddu'a (מַדְעָה) [pronounced mah-DOO-ah ^g]	<i>why, wherefore, on what account</i> , and it is probably a contraction of a word which means <i>what being known</i>	adverb	Strong's #4069 BDB #396
bōw' (בּוֹ) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
<p>Owen mistakenly lists this as a 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect; however, it appears to have a 2nd person masculine singular form with a 3rd person feminine singular suffix. However, these two end forms together seem to indicate a 3rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect verb with a 3rd person feminine singular suffix.</p>			
’el (אֵל) [pronounced e/ ^l]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
pîylegesh (פִּילְגֵשׁ) [pronounced pee-LEH-gesh]	<i>mistress, paramour, illicit lover, live-in lover, concubine</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #6370 BDB #811
’âb (בָּ) [pronounced aw ^b v]	<i>father, both as the head of a household or clan</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3

Translation: So [Ishbosheth] said to Abner, “Why have you had sex with [lit., gone in unto] my father’s mistress?”

As far as the immediate text goes, it is unclear to me (and to most other exegetes) whether or not Abner had an affair with Saul’s mistress. However, such a move can be seen as an attempt to consolidate political power. Ishbosheth is naturally concerned, because he sees himself as king, and seems to have become concerned about Abner, just as Saul was concerned about David. Ishbosheth here is not taking some sort of a moral stand, saying that it is wrong, somehow, for there to be any sort of a union between Abner and Rizpah; he is concerned that this is a power-play, which concern Abner reads loud and clear.

Ishbosheth seems to be overly concerned about Abner’s sexual proclivities; therefore, it is reasonable to ask...

What is Ishbosheth so Concerned about with Regards to Abner?

1. Ishbosheth is Saul’s son. Therefore, we should not be surprised if he begins feeling insecure and concerned about his position as king.
2. Saul’s madness came upon him at a very early stage in his kingship, before he even met David (remember that David was originally brought into the palace to soothe Saul with his music).
3. Ishbosheth is no doubt at least the age of his father when his father became paranoid and raving.
4. Ishbosheth did not really do much to become king; Abner was the driving force behind making Ishbosheth king. Ishbosheth may not realize this, and feel that, as Saul’s son, he should of course be king over Israel; however, it was Abner’s moving him to eastern Israel and then garnering support for him which put Ishbosheth into power.
5. There is a legitimate concern which some have when a man with some power has sex with a current or

What is Ishbosheth so Concerned about with Regards to Abner?

previous king's wives and/or concubines, something which is made clear in 2Sam. 12:8 16:21–22 1Kings 2:17 21–22. This is sometimes a route used to consolidate power. So, in some circumstances, it would be reasonable for Ishbosheth to worry. However, also bear in mind, Saul also had a concern about David and his popularity, which led to David's exile and Saul's eventual death. I am by no means giving Ishbosheth a pass here.

6. Even though, power is sometimes seized or consolidated by sexual union with a current or previous king's wives and/or concubines, it is unlikely that Abner has a sexual involvement with Rizpah for this reason. Still, this fact does help to explain Ishbosheth's concern.
7. It is Abner who has garnered support for Ishbosheth among the elders of the various tribes; it is Abner who is at war with Judah; Abner probably is better known throughout northern and southern Israel than is Ishbosheth. So, in some circumstances, this would be cause for Ishbosheth to be concerned.
8. However, Abner is not power-hungry; he appears to be content with his position (which is, after all, second in all Israel). What is happening here is, Ishbosheth is more reacting to Abner's popularity and charisma than he is to any legitimate concern; just as his father Saul reacted to David's popularity.

How do we know that Abner is loyal and not after Ishbosheth's job? That is the next doctrine.

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As has been noted, sometimes a man takes the wife or mistress of a living or dead king (or prince) in order to gain power or as the first move in a power play. Whether this sorted affair is going on or not, we do not know; however, Abner is not making a bid for additional power over Israel.

Ishbosheth Worries for no Reason about the Loyalty of Abner

1. We have reasonably deduced that Abner has set Ishbosheth up as king over Israel as a favor to Saul, the father of Ishbosheth.
2. During their trip eastward to find a secure place to rule from, Abner possibly could have killed Ishbosheth; he obviously chose not to.
3. Abner was head of the army of Israel, making him more powerful, in some ways, than Ishbosheth; Abner never appeared to use this against Ishbosheth.
4. As we have read, Abner was involved in a lot of preparation to make Ishbosheth king. This did not occur overnight. He traveled to meet elders all over northern, central and eastern Israel. Abner could have used this opportunity to build up his own power base; however, he used this time to build up Ishbosheth as king.
5. Just as Saul did not recognize the great loyalty of David, it is apparent that Ishbosheth does not recognize Abner's great loyalty—an observation which is not lost on Abner.
6. When Abner separates from Ishbosheth, it will be unequivocal and his loyalties will be transferred to David. At no time is there an indication that Abner thinks of taking northern Israel for himself.
7. Abner will again have meetings with those in northern, central and eastern Israel, setting forth David as the true king of Israel. He will be so persuasive, that, even after his death, thousands of men will flock to David from these areas to pledge their support (1Chron. 12:23–40).

Whether Abner's involvement with Rizpah was real or just a rumor, Ishbosheth did not have to worry about Abner's fidelity to him.

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Of course, you are more interested in whether Abner really had sex with Rizpah or not. Abner does not, at least in the pages of Scripture, unequivocally deny this. Whether there is a relationship or not and whether or not that relationship had progressed to a sexual one is information not known to us. However, interestingly enough, Abner will go to David, and there will be no mention of taking Rizpah with him. Abner's real concern is that this [real or imagined action on the part of Abner] is a political move; and Abner responds to that accusation with no little

emotion. What is clear is, Ishbosheth is no leader; all the initiative throughout has been on Abner's shoulders; and now, Ishbosheth questions the loyalty of perhaps his most loyal subject. Clearly, Ishbosheth is not making any connection between his actions and what the results of his actions might be. He probably has an expected outcome, but has not prepared himself for the way Abner will actually react.

And so he burns to Abner very [much] over words of Ishbosheth and so he says, "[Am] a head of a dog I that to Judah the day? I make grace with a house of Saul your father, unto his brothers and unto his friends and I have not caused you to find in a hand of David. And so you have visited upon me an iniquity of the woman the day.

2Samuel
3:8

And it evoked great emotion in Abner over the words of Ishbosheth, and he said, "Am I a dog's head with regards to Judah this day? I manufacture grace to the house of your father Saul, [and] to his family and to his friends, and I have not caused you to be found by the hand of David. Yet [lit., and], you confront me [with some] iniquity of this woman today?

The words of Ishbosheth evoked great emotion in Abner, and he retorted, "Am I the lowest thing in your sight today? I have continued to show loyalty to the house of your father Saul, to his family and to his friends; I have not caused you to be found by David. Yes, you confront me today with these charges of immorality?

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

And he was exceedingly angry for the words of Isboseth, and said: "Am I a dog's head against Juda this day, who have shown mercy to the house of Saul your father, and to his brothers and friends, and have not delivered you into the hands of David, and have you sought this day against me to charge me with a matter concerning a woman?

Masoretic Text

And so he burns to Abner very [much] over words of Ishbosheth and so he says, "[Am] a head of a dog I that to Judah the day? I make grace with a house of Saul your father, unto his brothers and unto his friends and I have not caused you to find in a hand of David. And so you have visited upon me an iniquity of the woman the day.

Peshitta

Then Abner was exceedingly displeased at the words of Ashbashul, and Abner said, "Am I the leader of vicious men in Judah? This day I show kindness to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David, and yet you charge me today with this iniquity concerning a woman?

Septuagint

And Abenner was very angry with Jebosthe for this saying; and Abenner said to him, "Am I a dog's head? I have this day wrought kindness with the house of Saul your father, and with his brothers and friends, and have not gone over to the house of David, and do you this day seek a charge against me concerning injury to a woman?

Significant differences:

This is a long verse, and Abner is speaking in great anger, so we would expect some difficulties in the translation of this verse. Like the English translations, the Greek found it easier to make Abner the subject of the first verb, and therefore leaves out the preposition. The Latin leaves out *to Abner* altogether, although he is clearly the subject of the sentence.

Both the Greek and Latin include an *and* before *his brothers*, which is reasonable. I suspect that Abner did not use the *and* as he was speaking with great emotion. In the Hebrew, an *and* should be there; that is common Hebrew construction; but Abner, speaking with great anger, leaves it out.

The verb in the second to the last sentence has to be carefully translated. I think that the Greek is an approximation, but it is not a good translation (and I doubt that there was a different verb in their Hebrew manuscripts).

The final sentence shows a disagreement in what happened with the woman. I don't think that there is a problem with the original Hebrew but how it was interpreted. The words found here are very different.

The Peshitta is almost exactly what we find in the Hebrew, with the exception of the one sentence where Abner asks (in the Peshitta), "Am I the leader of vicious men in Judah?" This shows only a slight resemblance to what we find in the other 3 texts.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Abner was very angry at what Ishbosheth had said, and he told Ishbosheth: Am I some kind of worthless dog from Judah? I've always been loyal to your father's family and to his relatives and friends. I haven't turned you over to David. And yet you talk to me as if I've committed a crime with this woman.
<i>The Message</i>	Abner lost his temper with Ish-Bosheth, "Treat me like a dog, will you! Is this the thanks I get for sticking by the house of your father, Saul, and all his family and friends? I personally saved you from certain capture by David, and you make an issue out of my going to bed with a woman!
NLT	Abner became furious. "Am I a Judean dog to be kicked around like this?" he shouted. "After all I have done for you and your father by not betraying you to David, is this my reward—that you find fault with me about this woman?
REB	Abner, angered by this, exclaimed, 'Do you take me for a Judahite dog? Up to now I have been loyal to the house of your father Saul, to his brothers and friends, and I have not betrayed you into David's hands; yet you choose this moment to charge me with an offence over a woman.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	Ishbosheth's question made Abner very angry. "Have I been behaving like some Judean dog?" he asked. "Until now I've been faithful to your father Saul's family, to his relatives and friends, and I haven't handed you over to David. But now you charge me with a crime because of this woman."
HCSB	Abner was very angry about Ish-bosheth's accusation. "Am I a dog's head who belongs to Judah?" he asked. "All this time I've been loyal to the house of your father Saul, to his brothers, and to his friends and haven't handed you over to David, but now you accuse me of wrongdoing with this woman!"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then Abner was very angry at the words of Ishbosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head [despicable and hostile] against Judah? This day I keep showing kindness and loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and his friends; and have not delivered you into the hand of David; and yet you charge me today with a fault concerning this woman?
Keil and Delitzsch (updated)	"Am I a dog's head, holding with Judah? Today (i.e., at present) I show affection to the house of Saul your father, towards his brothers and his friends, and did not let you fall into the hand of David, and you reproach me today with the fault with the woman?" [This is all the verse which Keil and Delitzsch rendered].
LTHB	And Abner was exceedingly angry over the words of Ishbosheth. And he said, Am I a dog's head, that I deal with kindness with the house of your father Saul <i>in regards</i>

to Judah today, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not caused you to be found in the hand of David, and you charge a stroke against me with this woman today?

MKJV

And Abner was very angry over the words of Ishbosheth, and said, *Am I a dog's head, who shows kindness against Judah this day to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David? Am I a dog's head that you charge me today with a fault concerning this woman today?*

Young's Updated LT

And it is displeasing to Abner exceedingly, because of the words of Ish-Bosheth, and he says, "The head of a dog am I—that in reference to Judah to-day I do kindness with the house of Saul your father, unto his brothers, and unto his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David—that you charge against me iniquity concerning the woman to-day?"

What is the gist of this verse? Abner is extremely upset because of the accusations of Ishbosheth, and responds with great emotion. He asks if Ishbosheth sees him as the lowest form of creature and then makes it clear that Ishbosheth should know of his faithfulness to Saul's house, so that such an accusation is meaningless (he does not actually deny the allegation, but its implication).

2Samuel 3:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
chârâh (חָרָה) [pronounced khaw-RAWH]	<i>to burn, to kindle, to become angry, to evoke great emotion</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2734 BDB #354
lâmed (לִמֵּד) (pronounced l̄M̄D)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ăbēnêr (אֲבָנֵר) [pronounced ābē-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4

One would expect the subject of the verb to be *Abner* (which is how most translations interpret this, except for Young).

m ^e ôd (מָאֹד) [pronounced m ^e -ODE]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547
'al (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
dâbâr (דְּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, reports</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
'Iysh-Bôsheth (אִישׁ-בּוֹשֶׁת) [pronounced eesh-BOH-sheath]	<i>man of Baal; transliterated Ishbosheth</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #378 BDB #36

Translation: And it evoked great emotion in Abner over the words of Ishbosheth,... This is a difficult portion to render (although the overall meaning is easy to comprehend). Abner is not really the subject of the verb, even though this is how most English Bibles render it. What is actually the subject of the verb is *the accusation of Ishbosheth*. This accusation causes great emotion to well up in Abner. What Ishbosheth says makes Abner extremely angry.

Now, the implication of Ishbosheth's accusation is, Abner is attempting to consolidate some political power through sleeping with Saul's mistress, Rizpah. However, Abner is upset primarily because his loyalty should be clear to Ishbosheth. Ishbosheth should not be the least confused by his loyalty.

I hope that you notice a parallel here; King Saul was also extremely paranoid about his power, and, as David's popularity grew, Saul's suspicions also increased, until he made it his mission to destroy David. Ishbosheth has the same suspicions (probably fostered by someone else in the palace, sucking up to Ishbosheth, to gain a little more power himself). Had Ishbosheth just stopped to think this through, he would not be concerned about Abner's actions in the least. Abner was as faithful to him as David was to Saul.

What Abner will say is fascinating. Do you recall that, when in a difficult situation with Joab and his small army that Abner guided their confrontation and said just the right thing in order to extricate himself and his men? Abner was, of course, sincere; but he was still very cool under fire. Abner will lose this coolness; he will lose control here. It is not that he says things which are not true; but he does paint himself into a corner. However, bear in mind, Abner can read people; he was able to read and calm Joab, even though he had just killed Joab's brother minutes previous. Abner will sense Ishboseth's fear; he will sense his weakness; so, even though he paints himself into a corner, Abner still retains the upper hand.

2Samuel 3:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
‘amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hă (הָ) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong's #none BDB #209
rō’sh (רֹשׁ) [pronounced rohsh]	<i>head, top, chief, front, choicest</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7218 BDB #910
keleb (כְּלֵב) [pronounced KEH-leb]	<i>dog</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3611 BDB #476
‘ânôkîy (אֲנוֹכִי) [pronounced awn-oh-KEE]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59

2Samuel 3:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
`ăsher (אשר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, so that, in that; for that, since; which; when, at what time; who, whom; where, wherever; the fact that = how; because that, because; as, like as; yea, even, yea even; until that; then, so [in an apodosis]</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lāmed (ל) (pronounced l̄)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Yəhûwdâh (יהודה) [pronounced yəhoo-DAW]	<i>possibly means to praise, to be praised; and is transliterated Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
yôwm (יום) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: ...and he said, “Am I a dog’s head with regards to Judah this day? I don’t know if we have had this expression before (I don’t recall it); however, a dog is one of the lowest creatures in the eyes of the Jews. They were not the loyal pets that we know of today, but they were mangy, angry, ugly animals who would roam into the cities and eat the scraps of food which had been thrown out (or left out); and when it came to meat, they would be downright protective, whether they stole this meat or not. In case you don’t know what I am talking about, throw a piece of steak down by your dog, and then try to take it away. If your dog is the least bit little hungry, this is not going to be seen by him as a game. The result is going to be a whole lot different than the tug of war that you both engage in with your socks. Bear in mind that your dog is also tame.

This refers to the lowest possible creature in the eyes of the Jews (see Deut. 23:18 1Sam. 24:14–15 2Sam. 9:8 16:9 2Kings 8:13). Furthermore, when Abner says, *with reference to Judah*, he is asking, “Do you see me as a traitor, loyal to Judah?” Abner is being called a *dog’s head with loyalties to Judah*. That is, Abner is this debased thing, and part of the reason is, his loyalty is with the territory of Judah.

Another interpretation might be, there is nothing lower than a dog, unless it is just a dog’s head; and there is nothing lower than a dog’s head, unless it is a dog’s head from Judah (which territory is loyal to David rather than to Ishbosheth).

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge gives us a similar phrase; however, they do not identify the time frame of that phrase: *This was a proverbial expression among the Hebrews to denote whatever was deemed worthless and contemptible. Something similar to this was the answer of the Turkish commander at Beer, on the Euphrates, to a request made to see the castle. “Do they,” said he, “take me for a child, or an ass’s head, that they would feed me with sweet meats, and dupe me with a bit of cloth? No, they shall not see the castle.”*²⁶

After playing around with this phrase a little, and seeing what all the other translators have done, I am thinking that the gist of this phrase is, Abner asks, “Am I some Judean dog’s head?” However, several see the reference to *Judah* as belonging with the next phrase, and have placed it there instead (I will give you a side by side comparison when we cover the next portion of this verse).

²⁶ Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey, courtesy of E-sword, 2Sam. 3:8.

2Samuel 3:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'âsâh (הָשַׁע) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
cheçed (חֶסֶד) [pronounced KHEH-sed]	<i>grace, benevolence, mercy, kindness</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2617 BDB #338
'îm (אִם) [pronounced géem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
bayith (בֵּית) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁׁウָל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	<i>which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
`âb (בֵּאֵב) [pronounced awb̄v]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
`el (אֵל) [pronounced eI]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
`âch (אֲחָ) [pronounced awhk]	<i>brother, kinsman or close relative</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
`el (אֵל) [pronounced eI]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
mêrêa` (מֵרֵאָ) [pronounced may-RAY-ahḡ]	<i>friend, companion, confidential friend</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4828 BDB #946

Translation: I manufacture grace to the house of your father Saul, [and] to his family and to his friends,... Abner is angry and he leaves out the *and*. I do not think that this is a scribal error, but simply indicates how exasperated Abner is at this time. "I cannot believe that, after all I have done, that you call me into the palace and make these kinds of accusations." The *house of Saul* essentially refers to Ishboseth and the royal line of Saul. *His family* refers to anyone related to Saul. There are going to be wives, in-laws, mistresses, uncles, cousins, etc., most of whom are not really in line for the throne, but come as a package deal with the throne. That is, Saul's family is a royal family, as long as someone in Saul's line is on the throne.

I mentioned how, it is unclear whether the phrase *in regards to Judah* belongs with this or the previous phrase; therefore, I am going to list some of the more literal renderings below, to give you an idea as to how they see this.

Most Translations Place *that to Judah* with the Previous Phrase

"Am I a dog's head of Judah? I am this day doing all in my power for the cause of your father Saul and for his brothers and his friends, and have not given you up into the hands of David,..." (BBE)

Am I some kind of worthless dog from Judah? I've always been loyal to your father's family and to his relatives and friends. (CEV)

"Am I a dog's head against Juda this day, who have shown mercy to the house of Saul thy father, and to his brethren and friends,..." (Latin)

"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,... (ESV)

"Have I been behaving like some Judean dog?" he asked. "Until now I've been faithful to your father Saul's family, to his relatives and friends,..." (God's Word™)

"Am I a dog's head who belongs to Judah?" he asked. "All this time I've been loyal to the house of your father Saul, to his brothers, and to his friends..." (HCSB)

"Am I a dog's head from Judah? Here I have been loyally serving the House of your father Saul and his kinsfolk and friends,..." (JPS, the Tanakh—and they footnote that the meaning of *from Judah* is uncertain)

"Am I a dog's head—on Judah's side? This very day I am loyal to the house of your father Saul and to his family and friends." (NIV)

"Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I show loyalty to the house of Saul your father; to his brothers, and to his friends,..." (NKJV).

"Am I a Judean dog to be kicked around like this?" he shouted. "After all I have done for you and your father..." (The Open Bible)

Some Translations Place *that to Judah* with the Second Phrase

Am I a dog's head, that I deal with kindness with the house of your father Saul in regards to Judah today, to his brothers, and to his friends,... (LTHB)

Am I a dog's head, who shows kindness against Judah this day to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends,... (MKJV)

"The head of a dog am I—that in reference to Judah today, I do kindness with the house of Saul your father, unto his brothers, and unto his friends,..." (Updated Young's literal translation)

The Message leaves this phrase out completely: "Treat me like a dog, will you! Is this the thanks I get for sticking by the house of your father, Saul, and all his family and friends?"

It is interesting that 3 of the more literal renderings of the Hebrew place *that to Judah* with the second phrase.

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2Samuel 3:8d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô` (אַל or אֶל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mâtsâ` (מִצָּא) [pronounced <i>maw-TSAW</i>]	<i>to attain, to cause to find [to detect, to happen upon, to encounter, to come upon], to come upon, to present</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil perfect; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b eh</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	<i>generally translated hand</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i>]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

Translation: ...and I have not caused you to be found by the hand of David. There is some difficulty with this verb for some, and results in some similar, but inaccurate translations in the Greek and Latin. However, Abner is simply saying that he has never done anything to cause Ishbosheth to be found by David. He moved Ishbosheth to a secure location—secure from both David and the Philistines—and this exact location has never been betrayed to David.

Abner's point is, "Had I wanted you to fall into David's hand, so that I could become king of northern Israel, I could have easily done it; however, I did not." This is something which is clearly known to Ishbosheth. What Abner is charged with is difficult to dispute—at best, he could say, "No I didn't;" or "I did not have sexual relations with that woman!" But, at this point, it is then Abner's word against whoever his original accuser is. However, Abner, despite his anger, responds with something that Ishbosheth knows for a fact: "I have never betrayed you over to David."

Abner is angry, but he is not stupid. Abner is brilliant under pressure. There is none of this, "Hmm, let me see, how should I answer this accusation?" Ishbosheth's concern is, "Are you trying to develop a political base from which to overthrow me?" After all, as this civil war continues, even though Abner's army is getting weaker, Abner is becoming more and more exalted in the public eye. Ishbosheth knows this, and Abner cannot deny that. He could deny the charge that he slept with Rizpah, but how do you prove that you haven't? However, it is absolutely clear that Abner has never betrayed Ishbosheth in a way which would have been easy. Ishbosheth knows that this is absolutely true. Abner brings the accusation to the arena which concerns Ishbosheth the most, and shows that even Ishbosheth knows that what he fears at this time is not something he should fear. Throughout the chapters where we find Abner, it is amazing as to how quick he can think on his feet when under pressure.

2Samuel 3:8e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pâqad (תָּקַדְּ)	<i>to go to a person, to visit, to have personal contact with, to sort out, to visit a person, to commit, to charge to the care of, to fall upon, to attack, to number, to take a census</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6485 BDB #823
'al (הָעֵ)	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
'âvôwn (אֲוֹן)	<i>iniquity, crime, offense, transgression, depraved action, guilt, punishment from wrongdoing</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #5771 BDB #730
'îshshâh (נִשְׁׁחָה)	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #802 BDB #61
yôwm (יֹמֶן)	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: Yet [lit., and], you confront me [with some] iniquity of this woman today? Abner does not deny the charge, nor does he admit to this charge. The idea is, some men would do this for political gain. That is, Abner would consolidate some power by sleeping with Saul's mistress. Whether there is a concern over the immorality here is unclear; however, the word that Abner uses means *iniquity, crime, offense, transgression, depraved action, guilt*. That seems to indicate that the morality of his actions are in view as well as this being a political move on his part. His answer, overall, deals with his faithfulness to the house of Saul, which negates the implied political charge. Nowhere in Abner's answer to we have any reference to the immorality involved in doing this; and, insofar as I can tell, nowhere do we find any indication of whether Abner is guilty of this charge or not (that is, the actual relations with Rizpah).

I want you to recognize what is going on here. Abner served Saul faithfully for probably most of 40 years. He recognized Saul's paranoiac delusions, and suffered them for much of that time. Perhaps the fact that Saul never accused Abner of disloyalty that Abner remained loyal. However, suddenly, Ishbosheth begins to display the same paranoiac delusions that his father had. Now Ishbosheth was suddenly concerned with actions that he sees as threatening his position as king. Ishbosheth now sees Abner as a political threat to him. Abner, no doubt, is sitting there with his dropped jaw unable to believe what he is hearing (I am speaking metaphorically). He has an epiphany; Abner recognized Saul's behavior and just how irrational that it was; and he sees exactly the same thing in Ishbosheth. Suddenly, Abner wonders, *should I be backing Ishbosheth? Is he going to reward me with suspicion and eventual execution?* Abner now sees himself in David's shoes, perhaps an identification which he never really made before. Now, it is clear to him, and clear as to the disturbing traits which are apparent in Ishbosheth; and Abner knows that his suspicions are not going to be quelled nor will they subside with time; he knows that what Ishbosheth is saying now, and how Ishbosheth feels is only going to escalate. Abner must immediately reevaluate his loyalties, and he must take a stand at this point, which he will.

Application: I hope that it is obvious to you that Abner has made two mistakes up to this point in time: he backed the wrong horse to begin with (Ishbosheth); then he involved himself in an armed conflict with David's army. Abner is finally allying himself with the right man—David. However, this will not completely wipe out what has happened in the past. Abner will have to live with his bad decisions which he has made up until this time. Be aware that sin is not without consequences. Bad decisions are not without consequences. You cannot wait for the last possible moment, and then repudiate your mistakes, and figure there will be no fallout, boy. There are always repercussions.

So does Elohim to Abner and so adds to him that as which swore Y^{eh}owah for David that so I do to him:...

2Samuel
3:9

[And] so will Elohim do to Abner and so will he add to him for in the manner that Y^{eh}owah swore to David, I will do for him:..

I ask that God does to me and will add suffering to me, if I do not do for David as Jehovah has sworn to him, to wit:...

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

So God will do to Abner, and more also, unless as the Lord hath sworn to David, so I do to him...

Masoretic Text

So does Elohim to Abner and so adds to him that as which swore Y^{eh}owah for David that so I do to him:...

Septuagint

God do thus and more also to Abenner, if as the Lord swore to David, so do I not to him this day;...

Significant differences:

Quite frankly, we struggle with rendering this oath into English, so it is reasonable that the Greeks (and others) had a difficult time finding the right words which both translated and conveyed the meaning herein. The biggest actual difference is the addition of the words *this day* in the Greek.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

I ask God to punish me if I don't help David get what the LORD promised him!

The Message

What GOD promised David, I'll help accomplish--transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and make David ruler over the whole country, both Israel and Judah, from Dan to Beersheba. If not, may God do his worst to me." [This is vv. 9–10].

NJB

May God bring unnameable ills on Abner, and worse ones, too, if I do not bring about what Yahweh has sworn to David:...

REB

But now, so help me God, I shall do all I can to bring about what the LORD swore to do for David:...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

May God strike me dead unless I do for David what the LORD had promised him with an oath:...

HCSB

May God punish Abner and do so severely if I don't do for David what the LORD swore to him...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David what the Lord has sworn to him;...

MKJV

So may God do to Abner, and more also, if I do not do to David as Jehovah has sworn,...

WEB

God do so to Abner, and more also, if, as Yahweh has sworn to David, I don't do even so to him;...

Young's Updated LT

Thus does God to Abner, and thus He does add to him, surely as Jehovah has sworn to David—surely so I do to him:...

What is the gist of this verse? Abner makes an oath to Ishbosheth, calling upon God to do evil to him if he does not fulfill his oath; the oath concerns David and what God promised David.

2Samuel 3:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kôh (כוּה) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
'âsâh (אָשַׁה) [pronounced ásh-ÁH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; apocopated form	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים)	<i>gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
lâmed (לְמֵד) (pronounced l̄med)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ăbənêr (אֲבָנֵר) [pronounced āb-n̄-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
w̄ (or v̄) (וְ) (pronounced weh)	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôh (כוּה) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
yâçaph (יָצַף) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414
lâmed (לְמֵד) (pronounced l̄med)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: [And] so will Elohim do to Abner and so will He add to him... This phrase is most difficult to translate, but the idea is simple: this is an oath, and it is an oath where Abner calls upon God to do evil to Abner, if he does not fulfill the oath. In fact, not only is God call upon to do evil to Abner, but to continue to add to this, if Abner does not fulfill this oath. Now, even though this oath is difficult to translate and to fully understand, the Old Testament is filled with its use, so that we can get the gist of this statement. See Ruth 1:17 1Sam. 3:17 14:44 25:22 2Sam. 3:35 19:13 1Kings 19:2.

2Samuel 3:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
kaph or k ^e (כָּפֹה) [pronounced k ^e] ²⁷	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
<p>Together, ka’asher (כְּאַשֵּׁר) [pronounced <i>kah-uh-SHER</i>] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner</i>. Back in 1Sam. 12:8, I rendered this <i>for example</i>.</p>			
shâbva' (שָׁבַע) [pronounced shaw ^b -VAH ^G]	<i>to swear, to imprecate, to curse, to swear an oath, to take a solemn oath, to swear allegiance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #7650 BDB #989
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lāmed (לָמֶד) [pronounced <i>LAHM</i>] ²⁸	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i>]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

Translation: ...*for in the manner that Y^ehowah swore to David,...* It is well-known, apparently—at least to Abner and Ishbosheth—what God had promised David. God had promised David that he would be next in line for the throne.

Clarke asks²⁷ the very good question, *And why did he not do this before, when he knew that God had given the kingdom to David? Was he not now, according to his own concession, fighting against God?*

Application: One of the areas in which we are hard-hearted (or hard-headed) is to know the will of God, and then just go ahead and do just the opposite. This is what Abner had been doing, and he unquestionably admits to it here. As I have said before, sin does have its consequences, and in the course of human events, Abner will pay for the choices which he has made. In fact, there were be mistakes on the part of several believers which will result in Abner's death. I don't want you to become confused at this point—Abner was caught up in a difficult situation. Many commentators accuse him of base ambition;²⁸ however, I think that he simply fell into these circumstances, and that the choices he made were wrong due to the desires of his old sin nature; I just don't believe that inordinate ambition was necessarily the old sin nature trigger in this case.

Application: You are going to find yourself in very tricky situations and you will have to navigate your way through these circumstances. With doctrine, you have some real guidance; with human viewpoint and the lusts of the old sin nature, you can expect to make the wrong choices. Let me give you an example of choices made by the past couple generations: a huge percentage of families have made the choice for the husband and wife to both work outside the home. I have heard hundreds of times people convincing themselves that they are doing this for the

²⁷ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:9.

²⁸ For instance, Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:9.

children; or that they cannot financially make both ends meet without two incomes. However, what I have observed in almost as many cases is, a husband and wife, at some point, have really more money than they need. It is not unusual for their children to have material possessions which I could not have even imagined as a child. In fact, it is not unusual for some children to get more *things* in a year than I received in my entire childhood. I think what we find in two income families is a high divorce rate, broken homes, and/or children who get raised by day care centers rather than by one or both of the parents. Having been a teacher for nearly 30 years, I can testify that these kinds of choices made by a couple of generations of parents have destroyed the youth of today—these children were raised without clear-cut boundaries and moral guidelines, and today (and in the near future) society will pay for the lack of training and guidance which these children were subjected to. Even if your child gets a not much more than a candy bar or an inexpensive book for Christmas each year, due to financial constraints; and even if this child must go to an inferior college because of financial constraints; if this same child receives the proper guidance and training that only a parent can give, one-on-one, then that child will be a thousand times better off.

Application: I have also become aware of people who have taken assistance from the government who do not really need it. Their children receive way more things than I received as a child; but they do not always receive the training and guidance.

Application: I do not want to set myself up as an example of the perfectly raised child; I was willful, independent, headstrong and stubborn. Raising me was not a very easy job, and I benefitted greatly by having a mother there daily to guide, comfort, discipline and love me. By no means, do I want to assert that I turned out to be some great human being or anything like that; however, I turned out a lot better than I would have, had I been raised in day care. One of the great differences which has occurred in the mind of young people over the past 20 years is this: 20 years ago, a child/teenager would cite his parents as the great influence in his life; in the past 10 years, a child/teenager will cite his friends and contemporaries as being the greatest influence in his life (when you are raised in a group, what do you expect?). No contemporary can provide your child with a clear moral compass or with decisions based upon wisdom; only parents can do that. That influence begins when the child is out of the womb and continues for at least the next 20 years of the life of the child. Parents can choose to see that they have the strongest hand in guiding children; or they can choose to give this over to group institutions.

Application: Let me give you another area where society has failed today due to bad decisions: the extremely high divorce rate in the United States. Now, of course, no woman should subject herself to physical abuse; and no woman should allow her children to be sexually abused. So, of course, a woman ought to separate under those circumstances; however, women who work develop an independence where they divorce for very poor reasons and their children pay the price.

Application: One of the biggest problems in a marriage is choosing the wrong person to begin with. Women choose men who will abuse them or their children. Any man can hide his true nature for a few months; and, when an unmarried man and woman are having sex, they both disregard a great many incompatibilities; even for a period of years. However, when they get married, and when sex is no longer the primary expression of their love (or lust), then their souls collide and the result is, they find that they have very little in common. All these things are a result of making bad decisions; and compounding bad decisions with more bad decisions.

Application: It may seem that we have gone pretty far afield from our text, but we are dealing with the same set of circumstances: making bad decisions either based upon no doctrine or based upon a rejection of doctrine. At some point, these decisions will catch up to you, and the results are not pretty.

2Samuel 3:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (ך) [pronounced kee]	for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

2Samuel 3:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kēn (קָנֵן) [pronounced kane]	so, thus; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted;	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
I do not find a listing for these two together in BDB. However, in 1Sam. 5:7, they are rendered as follows: <i>how things were, that [it was] so, what was happening, how it was.</i>			
'âsâh (הָשַׁעַת) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lāmed (לְמִדְבָּר) (pronounced ləm)	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: ...I will do for him... Abner tells Ishbosheth, what God swore to David, he, Abner, would do for David. And this is no idle threat, as Abner apparently set all the wheels in motion for Ishbosheth as king. Recall that there was a process which must have taken place, by which Ishbosheth became king over eastern and northern Israel, and that Abner was no doubt the force which made him king.

Matthew Henry comments: *Proud men will not bear to be reproved, especially by those whom they think they have obliged. With the utmost degree of arrogance and insolence he lets him know that, as he had raised him up, so he could pull him down again and would do it. He knew that God had sworn to David to give him the kingdom, and yet opposed it with all his might from a principle of ambition; but now he complies with it from a principle of revenge, under colour of some regard to the will of God, which was but a pretense. Those that are slaves to their lusts have many masters, which drive, some one way and some another, and, according as they make head, men are violently hurried into self-contradictions. Abner's ambition made him zealous for Ish-bosheth, and now his revenge made him as zealous for David. If he had sincerely regarded God's promise to David, and acted with an eye to that, he would have been steady and uniform in his counsels, and acted in consistency with himself. But, while Abner serves his own lusts, God by him serves his own purposes, makes even his wrath and revenge to praise him, and ordains strength to David by it.²⁹* I think that Henry, like most every other commentator, misreads Abner, and does not get his actual motivation. They accuse Abner of pride and power lust; but Abner is simply a man with great loyalty, and when his loyalty is questioned after all of these years, he simply blows a fuse.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown comment: *It is not clear whether the accusation against Abner was well or ill founded. But he resented the charge as an indignity, and, impelled by revenge, determined to transfer all the weight of his influence to the opposite party. He evidently set a full value on his services, and seems to have lorded it over his weak nephew in a haughty, overbearing manner.³⁰* I essentially agree with the bulk of this comment, except for the end. I don't think that Abner is *lording his power over his nephew*; Abner has shown tremendous loyalty to the house of Saul, and for him to suddenly be treated like some lying, sneaking, unprincipled underling caused Abner to lose his temper.

²⁹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:7–21.

³⁰ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, 2Sam. 3:6–11.

Application: We all have circumstances which get to us; Abner could be in the most dangerous of circumstances and retain a cool head, as we observed when he faced Joab and his small army. However, to have his loyalty questioned; to be treated like some underling, *that* got to him; that caused him to lose his temper. If you are married, do you ever wonder why it is that no one can push your buttons like your husband or wife? They know you and they know what gets to you. They know the right words to take you off your game; few other people know you that well. Ishbosheth is not needling Abner; he is not trying to take him off his game; he is questioning Abner's loyalty and intentions, which accusation pushes Abner's buttons like nothing else. How do you apply this to yourself? Someone out there will either knowingly or accidentally push your buttons. That is when you need to take a moment; count to 10, rebound, and do not react. You quietly and quickly name your sins to God, and then respond, realizing that you are walking through your own personal mine field. What you do not need to do, under these circumstances, is to lose your temper, and say things that you will later regret saying (especially with a spouse, you know the buttons to push right back).

...to cause to pass over the kingdom from a house of Saul and to cause to stand a throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan and as far as Beer-sheba."

2Samuel 3:10 **...to transfer over the kingdom from the house of Saul and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beer-sheba."**

...to facilitate the transfer of the kingdom from the house of Saul to David and to establish the throne of David over Israel and Judah, from Dan to Beersheba.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	...to cause to pass over the kingdom from a house of Saul and to cause to stand a throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan and as far as Beersheba."
Peshitta	...to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beer-sheba.
Septuagint	...to take away the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to raise up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah from Dan to Bersabee.

Significant differences: The first verb is more of a matter of interpretation; what we find in the Greek is a loose rendering of the Hebrew, but not entirely inaccurate. Apart from that, the ancient texts are almost identical.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	God said that he wouldn't let anyone in Saul's family ever be king again and that David would be king instead. He also said that David would rule both Israel and Judah, all the way from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south.
The Message	What GOD promised David, I'll help accomplish--transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and make David ruler over the whole country, both Israel and Judah, from Dan to Beersheba. If not, may God do his worst to me." [vv. 9-10].
NJB	...to take the sovereignty from the House of Saul, and establish David's throne over Israel as well as Judah, from Dan to Beersheba!
REB	...I shall set to work to overthrow the house of Saul and to establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	...I, the LORD, will transfer the kingship from Saul's family and establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba."
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HCSB

...to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish the throne of David over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beer-sheba."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB

...to cause the kingdom to pass over from the house of Saul, and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah from Dan even to Beer-sheba.

MKJV

...to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba.

Young's Updated LT

...to cause the kingdom to pass over from the house of Saul, and to raise up the throne of David over Israel, and over Judah, from Dan even unto Beer-Sheba.".

What is the gist of this verse? What Abner promises to do is to do everything in his power to transfer the rulership from Saul's house to David's, and to establish David over all of Israel, from the north to the south.

2Samuel 3:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lāmed (ל) (pronounced <i>lahmed</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
‘âbar (עַבָּר) [pronounced <i>gaw'-VAHR</i>]	<i>to cause to pass over, to cause to pass through, to bring [over, to]; to transmit, to send over; to pass by sin, to remit, to forgive</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
mam̄lākâh (מַלְכָה) [pronounced <i>mahm'-law-kaw</i>]	<i>kingdom, sovereignty, dominion, reign, dynasty; used to refer to both the royal dignity and to the country of a king</i>	feminine singular noun with definite article	Strong's #4467 BDB #575
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bayith (בֵּית) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
Shâ’ûwl (שָׁׁוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i>]	<i>which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

Translation: ...to transfer over the kingdom from the house of Saul... This appears to be an elliptical statement. What we would expect is, ...to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul to the house of David;... When you transfer something, it goes from point A to point B, so to speak. To where the kingdom will be transferred to is not given in this passage, but it is implied by the next phrase. Although this could have been left out by the historian who writes these words (which is probably David, having heard them directly from Abner); I suspect that what we have here is ellipsis; and that Abner is too angry and upset to properly complete the thought.

2Samuel 3:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (לֵם) (pronounced l ^e מֵ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qûwm (קָוָם) [pronounced koom]	<i>to cause to raise up, to cause to stand, to establish, to fulfill; to uphold, to perform [a testimony, a vow, a commandment, a promise]</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
‘êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kiççê` (קִצְצֶה) [pronounced kis-SAY]	<i>throne, seat of honor; seat of judgment</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3678 BDB #490
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
‘al (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
Yis’râ’êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	<i>transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
‘al (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
Y ^h hûwdâh (יְהֻדָּה) [pronounced y ^h oo-DAW]	<i>possibly means to praise, to be praised; and is transliterated Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397

Translation: ...and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah,... Abner is not kidding around. His oath indicates that this is not an idle threat. Today, we hear the phrase *swear to god* all the time, and today it means, "I am probably lying to you, but I don't want you to think that I am." In ancient time, taking an oath to God meant, this is the truth; this is sacred. Abner says that he will do his part to establish David's control of Israel and Judah. Ishbosheth had hoped to take Judah from David; and now Abner tells him that he will try to see that David controls all of it. He will be emphatic about this in the next phrase.

2Samuel 3:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (ם) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Dân (דָן) [pronounced dawn]	<i>judge</i> and is transliterated <i>Dan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1835 BDB #192
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) (וִ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ad (אַד) [pronounced gahd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition of extent	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
B ^e ér Shâba' (בֵּר שָׁבָעַ) [pronounced b ^e ayr SHAW ^B -vahg]	<i>well of the oath</i> and is transliterated <i>Beersheba</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #884 BDB #92

Translation: ...from Dan to Beer-sheba." This is a saying found in many places in Scripture since the time of the Judges (early into that time period). Beer-sheba is one of the most southern cities in Judah, continually under the control of Judah. Dan left the territory given them by God and conquered a smaller territory far to the north early in the period of the Judges (however, the historical account is near the end of the book of Judges). This marked the northernmost territory controlled by Israel. When this saying is used, all of Israel is being noted, from to the furthest south to the furthest north (see Judges 20:1 2Sam. 17:11 24:2 1Kings 4:25). In the US, we might say, from Bangor, Maine to San Diego, California.

Abner was proposing to make sure that David controlled over all of this area, half of which was in the control of Ishbosheth at this time.

And he could not again to cause to return [to] Abner a word from his fear of him. 2Samuel 3:11 **And [Ishbosheth] was yet unable to respond [even] a word to Abner from his fearing him.**

And Ishbosheth was unable to answer Abner again because he was now in fear of him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text
Septuagint

And he could not again to cause to return [to] Abner a word from his fear of him.
And Jebosthe could not any longer answer Abenner a word, because he feared him.

Significant differences:

In the Greek, we have the proper noun *Ishbosheth*, rather than the pronoun; the final phrase conveys the same meaning and is probably better expressed that way in the Greek.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV
The Message

Ishbosheth was so afraid of Abner that he could not even answer.
Ish-Bosheth, cowed by Abner's outburst, couldn't say another word.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™
HCSB

Ishbosheth couldn't respond to a single word, because he was afraid of Abner.
Ish-bosheth could not answer Abner because he was afraid of him.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

MKJV

Young's Literal Translation

And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him.

And he is not able any more to turn back Abner a word, because of his fearing him.

What is the gist of this verse? Ishbosheth is suddenly afraid of Abner and is unable to answer him for that reason.

2Samuel 3:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô` (אַל or אֲלֵה) [pronounced low]	not, no	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâkôl (יָכֹל) [pronounced yaw-COAL]	to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3201 BDB #407
With the negative, this means to be unable to, to lack the ability to, to be powerless to, to lack permission to, to lack the power to.			
'ôwd (עוֹד) [pronounced gohd]	still, yet, again, besides, in addition to, even yet	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
lâmed (לָמֶד) [pronounced l ^e med]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	to cause to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to send back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Ăb ^b nêr (אָבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v-NAYR]	my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4

2Samuel 3:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâbâr (דָבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182

Translation: And [Ishbosheth] was yet unable to respond [even] a word to Abner... Ishbosheth, although he is king, did not fully recognize, until just at this point in time, just how powerful Abner is. He could have approached this matter in a different way. He could have ignored it or he could have come to Abner and said, "There is this rumor that..." However, Ishbosheth just took the most loyal man in his kingdom and essentially accused him of sedition.

Application: I have personally been in this position where I have (1) worked my tail off for a particular organization and (2) produced results; and then have been kicked in the teeth (actually, 4 times that I can think of immediately). Now, for my part, I fully realize that injustice is a part of life and that we will all face it from time to time. However, if you choose to come down on a subordinate, a colleague or your boss, you may want to reconsider. There is nothing wrong with tact and there is nothing wrong with holding your tongue. You do not have to say everything that comes into your head; you do not have to repeat every rumor that you hear, even if the source is really, really good (in fact, you should repeat none of them). In this case, Ishbosheth could have investigated the rumor; he could have thought things over; he could have simply ignored the reports that he heard. His confronting Abner in the way that he does, in a way which questions Abner's loyalty, is reminiscent of Saul's treatment of David, and will signal the beginning of his end.

Application: I recall seeing some show where this guy says that what he likes about this girl is, *she says what is on her mind*. Do you know what? We do not need complete access to your thoughts 24-7. God gave you a brain, which no one can see, and a mouth, which cannot possibly keep up with your thinking; and God has made you intelligent enough to consciously filter your speech. No one needs to know your every thought; in fact, if you let fly with your every thought, at best, you'll hurt those who are in your periphery. At worse, the results could be much...well, worse. It is not a good thing that you speak without thinking³¹; it is not a good thing that you share everything that you are thinking (e.g., *boy, did you ever get fat*; or, *that is a really stupid thing to say*; or, *I just now realized just how ugly that mole is*). Most often, as Miss Manners will confirm, much of your unfiltered speech often insults the recipient and, more often than not, deals with things that they cannot easily cure). Part of raising a child is to teach them not to say everything that is on their little minds; certainly, the things a 3-year-old might say without prompting can be pretty hilarious, even at the expense of the relative that she is saying these things to; but this loses its cuteness by age 5. A good parent, even if the child just happens to say what that parent has been thinking for the past 20 years, will take that child aside and teach them not to speak every thought and to hold back on saying things which are insulting and/or hurtful.

Application: When you have a child, be aware that there is a great deal involved with training that child to be a circumspect adult. Those who plan to shuttle their children off to daycare at age 2 or so may want to rethink having children in the first place. Children are going to be faced with temptations that they do not understand at the earliest of ages; they are going to have to learn how to live a balanced life, where there is a balance struck in a number of areas (between playing and working); they are going to have to learn how to make correct decisions when you are not with them; and they are going to have to learn how to control their tongues. Besides all of this, they will need to learn the gospel and some doctrine once (or, *if*) they become believers. Training a child is almost a full-time job; they aren't like a dog, where you can spend a few weeks, and that dog learns what you want him to learn, and manages to behave like a decent dog for the rest of his years. A child has an old sin nature and he will have to be reminded, and rewarded, and disciplined, and guided, and spoken to about new situations and circumstances; and this simply cannot be done in daycare. And speaking of daycare, do not ever think that the most important thing that your child learns is, *how to be social* or *how to interact with his peers*. The very worst mistakes that a child will

³¹ This is a saying, by the way; it means that you speak without stopping to filter your speech.

make are those which he makes at the urging of his peers. When a child is asked to do drugs, it will be by one of his peers. If a child is urged to do wrong in the classroom, or, to break the law in some way (e.g., shoplifting), this is going to be urged by one of that child's peers. If a child who has been through puberty is cajoled to have sex, this will come about at the urging of his peers. I am not saying that, you need to lock your child up in your home and never let him interact with other children; I am just saying, you need to keep a clear head about this, and not thinking that developing this child socially is the highest good (a lazy parent likes to think that, because it involves no effort on the parent's part).

I've gone pretty far afield here; back to the narrative:

2Samuel 3:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (ם) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, away from, out from, out of, from off; on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yârē` (רְאֵ) (י') [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3372 BDB #431

A Qal infinitive construct with a preposition can introduce a purpose clause, a result clause or a temporal clause.

`éth (נְתָ) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	sign of the direct object with a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
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Translation: ...from his fearing him. Ishbosheth is pretty shaken up by what Abner has just said. Ishbosheth is king only because Abner did the preparation for him to become king. Now, Abner is saying that he will do the same for David, and Ishbosheth knows that he can.

Application: You want to be careful about who you turn against and why. Lashing out suddenly against someone is not necessarily the way to go. This will mark the beginning of the end for Ishbosheth.

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Now, with what is about to come to pass, it is reasonable to ask, *why doesn't Ishbosheth do something right now?* Abner has clearly turned against him, and Abner could become his greatest enemy; how can Ishbosheth just let Abner say these things and then walk away?

Why Ishbosheth Allows Abner to Leave after Making These Threats

1. Ishbosheth is not a real leader; Abner put him there. Abner has the power, for all intents and purposes. Ishbosheth is more than a figurehead, but less than a king, and not a leader by any means. Abner can therefore make an oath to him like this, and do so without consequences.
2. Abner is Ishbosheth's lead general, and his army may be more loyal to him than to Ishbosheth.
3. Ishbosheth might attempt to kill Abner then and there, but my guess is, he is not physically able to himself.
4. Ishbosheth is not able to make a decision fast enough at this point; as a king, he has just been threatened by his top general, and Ishbosheth is unable to think quickly enough to determine what he should do.

Why Ishbosheth Allows Abner to Leave after Making These Threats

5. As this verse states, Ishbosheth is afraid of Abner. Not only is he unable to come up with a plan to deal with Abner, but he is afraid as well.
6. Ishbosheth had expected that Abner might lower his eyes to half-mast and say, "Yes, sir, you caught me; I did have this affair. What is my punishment?" Ishbosheth had no plan B; he had no idea what to do if Abner reacted any differently. Furthermore, Ishbosheth is unable to think on his feet, to be able to formulate a plan B suddenly when one is called for.

A king needs to be a leader; a king needs to plan for a variety of outcomes; when dealing with insubordination, a king needs to know what to do. A king also needs to be cognizant of those who are loyal to him and those who are honest with him.

Application: These things are true if you happen to be a person in authority. You need to be able to lead—that is, inspire others to do what needs to be done. You need to plan for a variety of outcomes; you need to know how to deal with insubordination. You need to know who is loyal to you and who you can trust to be honest with you. That brown-nosed suck-up is not the person you want giving you advice. The person who occasionally disagrees with you (and sometimes, with great animation); who lets you know what is going on, who tells you things which no one else tells you—that is often the person to trust, even when they tell you things that you don't want to hear (and I don't mean things like, boy, are you ever getting fat).

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Abner Pledges his Allegiance to David and Brings Michal back to David

And so sends Abner messengers unto David under [or, instead of] him to say, "To whom land?" To say, "Has cut your covenant with me and behold my hand [is] with you to bring round unto you all Israel."

Then Abner sent messengers to David, instead of him [Abner], saying, "To whom [belongs this] land?" Also saying, "Make your covenant with me, and, listen, my hand [will be] with you to bring round [or, to turn over] all Israel to you."

2Samuel 3:12

Then Abner sent his messengers to David instead of Abner, saying, "Whose land is this? Listen, make a covenant with me and my hand will be with you to bring all Israel around to you."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

Abner therefore sent messengers to David for himself, saying: Whose is the land? and that they should say: Make a league with me, and my hand shall be with you: and I will bring all Israel to you.

Masoretic Text

And so sends Abner messengers unto David under [or, instead of] him to say, "To whom land?" To say, "Has cut your covenant with me and behold my hand [is] with you to bring round unto you all Israel."

Septuagint

And Abenner sent messengers to David to Thaelam where he was, immediately, saying, Make your covenant with me, and, behold, my hand is with you to bring back to you all the house of Israel.

Significant differences:

The proper noun found in the Greek is simply a transliteration of the preposition. However, the Greek adds the words *where he was, immediately*. The Latin also had problems with this Hebrew preposition, and rendered it, *to himself*. Like most of the

English translations, the Greek renders the verb as an imperative rather than as a 3rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect (see the Hebrew exegesis on this below).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

- CEV Abner sent some of his men to David with this message: "You should be the ruler of the whole nation. If you make an agreement with me, I will persuade everyone in Israel to make you their king."
- The Message* Abner went ahead and sent personal messengers to David: "Make a deal with me and I'll help bring the whole country of Israel over to you."
- NJB Abner sent messengers on his own behalf to say to David, "...and furthermore, come to an agreement with me and we will give you my support to win all Israel over to you.' [By the way, those three dots are in the New Jerusalem Bible; I did not add them because I was too lazy to type something]."
- REB Abner sent envoys on his own behalf to David with the message, 'Who is to control the land? Let us come to terms, and you will have my support in bringing the whole of Israel over to you.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

- God's Word™ Then Abner sent messengers to David to speak on his behalf. "Who owns this country?" he asked. "Make an agreement with me," he said. "I'll support you and bring all Israel to you."
- HCSB Abner sent messengers as his representatives to say to David, "Whose land is it? Make your covenant with me, and you can be certain I am on your side to hand all Israel over to you."
- JPS (Tanakh) Abner immediately sent messengers to David, saying, "To whom shall the land belong?" and to say [further], "Make a pact with me, and I will help you and bring all Israel over to your side."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- ESV 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."
- WEB Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose is the land? saying also, Make your league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with you, to bring about all Israel to you.
- Young's Updated LT And Abner sends messengers unto David for himself, saying, "Whose is the land?" saying, "Make your covenant with me, and lo, my hand is with you, to bring round unto you all Israel."

What is the gist of this verse? Abner contacts David, asking him, "Whose land is this?" and then saying, "Make a covenant with me, and I will bring all Israel to you."

2Samuel 3:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

2Samuel 3:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
Ābənēr (אָבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^{er} -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
mal ^{וֹ} âk ^ה (מַלְאָקֵה) [pronounced mahl ^o -AWK ^h]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
el (אֵל) [pronounced eL]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
tachath (תָּחַת) [pronounced TAH-kahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065

Translation: Then Abner sent messengers to David, instead of him [Abner],... This gives us a clue as to how Abner operated when setting of Ishbosheth as king. He send out messengers throughout the land with a proclamation or an offer of alliance to the Sauline line. In some cases, he may have gone personally, but, when dealing with 10 tribes, Abner probably used messengers most of the time. This also helps to explain why it took so long for Ishbosheth to be set up as king. David was proclaimed king over Judah almost instantly; because of the tireless work of Abner, Ishbosheth became king over northern and eastern Israel after several years of messages and meetings.

Sending messengers is also circumspect on Abner's part (which we would expect). He has no idea how David will receive him. Even though Abner has burned some bridges behind him, with respect to Ishbosheth; Abner does not saddle up and ride out immediately to David. Abner can read people, and, even though he was upset during this meeting with Ishbosheth, Abner also knows that he has some time. The first thing that he needs to do is to see if he can forge an alliance with David. Recall, Abner personally killed one of David's nephews (and, it is my guess that, even though he was losing the battle, he could have killed David's other two nephews as well). Abner is hoping to reach out to David, without retribution from David.

Here, Abner sends his messengers to David. Abner's approach is interesting. Abner does not speak of Asahel, whom he killed in battle. He offers no excuses and no explanations to David.³² Furthermore, Abner does not flatter David; he does not pander to David. Abner is an extremely shrewd political animal and he knows David. He will not send David some message like, "You are the greatest king Israel has known; I have no idea why I backed this lame Saul-wannabe. We should team up." Notice his approach:

³² Insofar as we know; we do not always receive the entirety of the text of conversations or messages in Scripture.

2Samuel 3:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lāmed (ל) (pronounced <i>lahmed</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
`āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lāmed (ל) (pronounced <i>lahmed</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mîy (מִי) [pronounced <i>mee</i>]	<i>who, whom; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
`erets (אֶرֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, ground, soil</i>	feminine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: ...saying, “To whom [belongs this] land?” This is an interesting question, and one which Abner does not answer. He may have intentionally left this open. Recall that Abner is a brilliant man. Maybe David sees this as, God owns the land; and maybe he sees it as, he, as the ruler of Israel, should rule over all the land. So, Abner leaves out the verb and leaves out his opinion as to whom the land belongs. It is as if he is saying, “We feel exactly the same way about this issue, David” but without having to state David’s exact feelings. And Abner states this in such a way so it does not appear as though he is simply pandering to David. He leaves this question open ended, as if the answer is obvious to both of them, whereas, it may not be obvious to Abner (that is, David’s belief here).

Interestingly enough, most commentators supply the answer at this point, which is what Abner wants to happen. Abner does not pose this question and provide an answer; he allows the answer to be self-evident to David. Gill writes: *The land of Israel, is it not yours, David? verily it is; to whom does it belong but unto you, to whom the Lord has given it? [He did] not [give the land] to any of Saul's posterity: this he ordered the messengers to say in the first place, in order to ingratiate himself to David, and gain his messengers an audience.*³³ Keil and Delitzsch say essentially the same thing—to whom does the land belong except to you?³⁴ John Wesley says essentially the same thing; so, if these great commentators came to this conclusion, without it being written here, obviously David would read here what he wants to read as well. Don’t ever sell Abner short; he is a brilliant tactician.

2Samuel 3:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lāmed (ל) (pronounced <i>lahmed</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
`āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55

³³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:12. I slightly edited some of the text to update it.

³⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:12–21. I slightly edited the text.

2Samuel 3:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kârath (קָרַת) [pronounced kaw-RAHTH]	<i>to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to make a covenant</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503
Although this is clearly the 3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect of this verb, a masculine singular imperative can be formed with the hé ending, which does not affect the meaning. ³⁵			
b ^e rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced b ^e reeth]	<i>pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, covenant</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

Translation: Also saying, “Make your covenant with me,... As discussed above, this verb form can be a 3rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect; and it can also be the masculine singular, Qal imperative form with a hé ending (which does not affect the meaning of the verb). As you no doubt see in your own Bible, this is rendered as an imperative by virtually everyone (even Owen, who points out that this is a perfect tense, still renders it as an imperative).

Abner has sent his messengers to David and requests that David make a covenant with him. This is an interesting request, as he and David have been at war for sometime, and this has included the death of David's nephew, Asahel. Not only does Ishbosheth believe that this is worth the risk, but David will respond to him in the way that he expects. There are some military men who do not know what to say when they are with a bunch of suits; and there are some political animals who can deftly line up a number of opposing factions to support them or their opinions; however, Abner is one of those few men who is comfortable at war and with political types. He is equally brilliant in both situations.

2Samuel 3:12d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

³⁵ See Choon-Leong Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew (Revised Edition)*; Abingdon Press, Nashville; ©1995, p. 146, 241.

2Samuel 3:12d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘îm (עֵם) [pronounced geem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: ... and listen, my hand [will be] with you... Abner is clearly pledging his complete support to David in this time of civil unrest. He is reasonably the man who cause Israel to unite behind David. Although his offer here is legitimate and sincere, this is something which God would handle in His Own time.

The expression *my hand* is a metonym³⁶ for what Abner would do on behalf of David.

2Samuel 3:12e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (לָמֶד) (pronounced <i>lamed</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
çâbab (כָּבָב) [pronounced <i>saw^b-VAH^bV</i>]	<i>to be brought round, to turn, to change, to march around, to walk around, to go partly around, to circle about, to go on a circuitous march, to make a circuit, to surround, to encompass; to turn over?</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #5437 BDB #685
’el (אֵל) [pronounced <i>eI</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
’êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Yisrâ’êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-rá-wale</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

³⁶ See *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; pp 538, 547. I hope that it is obvious that Abner does not actually cut off his hand and give it to David.

Translation: ...to bring round [or, *to turn over*] all Israel to you." Abner's offer here is legitimate. It took him some time, but he managed to turn all northern and eastern Israel over to Ishbosheth. He is a man fully capable of delivering on this promise.

I imagine that we could debate whether or not David should ally himself with Abner at this point. However, we should not hold anything against Abner because he is a brilliant military man and a wily political animal. As I have mentioned before, he is also honest and loyal; and, at no time, do we find him trying to take the top position in Israel. Personally, even though Abner should have figured out what was going on and back David early on; still, I cannot fault him nor say that David should have ignored his message. There is no reason which I can come up with to suggests that David ought to rebuff Abner's offer.

Application: The other day, I was dealing with a person who was extremely self-righteous; who needed some help, but refused to take it from me. She said, "God will take care of me!" God was taking care of her, through me. There are sometimes when God will offer you assistance through someone that you may not really like. You do not get to choose how God will provide for you. if you reject assistance that you need out of pride, don't think that God is going to keep on offering you this assistance. God is a gentleman and you can refuse the gifts which He gives you.

And so he says, "Good; I will cut with you a covenant, but a word one [or, the first (one) thing] I am asking from with you, to say: you will not see my faces for if to faces of your bringing of Michal, a daughter of Saul, in a your coming to see my faces.

2Samuel
3:13

And he [David] said, "Good! I will make a covenant with you, but one thing I require directly from you, namely [lit., to say]: you will not see my face only first, you bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face."

And David replied, "This is good! I will make a covenant with you under one condition: that you bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see me."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

And he said: Very well: I will make a league with you: but one thing I require of you, saying: You will not see my face before you bring Michol the daughter of Saul: and so you will come, and see me.

Masoretic Text

And so he says, "Good; I will cut with you a covenant, but a word one [or, the first (one) thing] I am asking from with you, to say: you will not see my faces for if to faces of your bringing of Michal, a daughter of Saul, in a your coming to see my faces.

Peshitta

Then David said, "Well, I will make a covenant with you; but one thing I require of you: you will not see my face , unless you first bring Malchel, Saul's daughter, with you."

Septuagint

And David said, With a good will I will make with you a covenant: only I demand one condition of you, saying, You will not see my face, unless you bring Melchol the daughter of Saul, when you come to see my face.

Significant differences:

We find David's name in the Greek and Syriac; but not in the Latin and Hebrew. Not a significant difference.

In the Hebrew, David says, "Good." I think the LXX attempts to interpret this (*with a good will*); and that the Latin gives a better idea of its meaning (*very well*). The idea is, a positive response is given, one which indicates that David not only agrees to the covenant, but appreciates the overture by Abner.

The verb I rendered *to ask* could also be rendered *to demand, to require*; so these ancient texts are all in agreement here.

There are 3 particles and a word in the Hebrew which are very difficult to render literally; no modern English translator, apart from myself, does so (insofar as I know); therefore, we should expect a similar treatment in the ancient texts.

The Latin and Syriac both abbreviate the final phrase of this verse, which does not alter the meaning.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	David sent this message back: "Good! I'll make an agreement with you. But before I will even talk with you about it, you must get Saul's daughter Michal back for me." "Great," said David. "It's a deal. But only on one condition: You're not welcome here unless you bring Michal, Saul's daughter, with you when you come to meet me."
<i>The Message</i>	"All right," David replied, "but I will not negotiate with you unless you bring back my wife Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come."
NLT	

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	"Good!" David answered. "I'll make an agreement with you. But there's one condition: You can't come to see me unless you bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come."
HCSB	David replied, "Good, I will make a covenant with you. However, there's one thing I require of you: Do not appear before me unless you bring Saul's daughter Michal here when you come to see me."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

MKJV	And he said, Good! I will cut a covenant with you, but one thing I ask of you, saying, You shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face.
WEB	He said, Well; I will make a league with you; but one thing I require of you: that is, you shall not see my face, except you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face.
Young's Updated LT	And he says, "Good—I make with you a covenant; only, one thing I am asking of you, that is, You do not see my face, except you first bring in Michal, daughter of Saul in your coming into see my face."

What is the gist of this verse? David agrees to the covenant suggested by Abner, but asks that Abner bring Michal, his wife, to him, when he comes to meet David face to face.

2Samuel 3:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
’âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

2Samuel 3:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
תּוֹבֵב (טוֹבֶב) [pronounced tohb'b]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved</i>	masculine feminine singular adjective which can act like a substantive	Strong's #2896 BDB #373

Translation: And he [David] said, “Good! This word *good* is an interesting one in many languages. For those who speak Spanish, this is often the way they answer their phones, which seems to indicate, “I am glad that you called.” Here, David is agreeing to Abner’s request, and agreeing in such a way as to indicate that David appreciates Abner’s request. That is, Abner is not coming to David as a beaten general, and signing an unconditional surrender; Abner is coming to David, even though there is a civil war going on, one which Abner is leading from the other side; and Abner is saying, “I am leaving Ishbosheth and his side, and coming to you, David.” And David thinks about this and remarks, “Good.” This is agreeable to David, even though it will definitely rub his remaining nephews the wrong way.

2Samuel 3:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
אָנָּי (אַנְיָה) [pronounced aw-NEE]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
קָרַת (קָרַת) [pronounced kaw-RAHTH]	<i>to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to make a covenant</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503
אַתָּה (אַתָּה) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
בְּרִית (בְּרִית) [pronounced b'reeeth]	<i>pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, covenant</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1285 BDB #136

Translation: I will make a covenant with you,... David agrees with Abner, and makes it clear that he will establish and agreement with him. David and Abner know one another; they likely served together under Saul for several years. As we have studied in 1Samuel, David had a very good reputation among the other soldiers for his integrity. David also knew Abner well enough to understand that he was a man of his word as well. Obviously, each man is taking a bit of a chance here; however, each man knows that the other is trustworthy and functions with integrity.

2Samuel 3:13c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
’ak ^e (אָקֵ) [pronounced ahk ^e]	<i>surely, certainly, no doubt, only, but; only now, just now, only this once; nothing but</i>	adverb of restriction, contrast, time, limitation, and exception. Also used as an affirmative particle	Strong's #389 BDB #36
dâbâr (דְּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
’echâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity; possibly particular</i>	numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25
’ânôkîy (אֲנוֹכִי) [pronounced awn-oh-KEE]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
shâ’al (שָׁאַל) [pronounced shaw-AHL]	<i>to ask [petition, request, inquire]; to demand [require]; to question, to interrogate; to ask [for a loan]; to consult; to salute</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #7592 BDB #981
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

Together, min ’êth mean *from proximity with, from with, from close proximity to, to proceed from someone*. A good up-to-date rendering might be *directly from*. I believe the idea is, the person here is expected to personally deal with this request.

Translation: ...but one thing I ask directly from you,... There is a combination of articles in this portion of v. 13 which is interesting. I think the idea here is, that David expect Abner to personally handle this request. He does not want Abner to foist this on his top man, and then show up, saying, "I guess that Charlie Brown did not come through. Hey, I am sorry about that." David will clearly require Abner to handle this matter. He has a request and this request must be fulfilled by Abner. Now, despite that inference which I get, things will be done differently.

2Samuel 3:13d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (לָמֶד) [pronounced lamed]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

2Samuel 3:13d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
’âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô’ (אֶל or אֵל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
râ’âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
’êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
pâniym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Translation: ...namely [lit., *to say*]: *you will not see my face...* David's requirement will mean that Abner cannot come to David until one condition is first met. He cannot even come to David and shake hands on this agreement. They cannot meet and both sign documents pledging their mutual support; first, Abner must do something for David.

2Samuel 3:13e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
’îm (כִּי) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49

Together, kîy ’îm (כִּי כִּי) [pronounced kee-eem] act as a limitation on the preceding thought, and therefore should be rendered *but, except, except that, unless and possibly only*. However, these particles are not used in a limiting way *if* they follow an oath, a question or a negative. Then they can be rendered *that if, for if, for though, that since, for if, but if, indeed if, even if; for even*.

lâmed (לְ) (pronounced l') [pronounced l']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pâniym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

2Samuel 3:13e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i>. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i>. This can also mean <i>forwards; the front part [or, the edge of a sword]</i>. לְפָנֵיכֶם (לְפָנִים) can take on a temporal sense as well: <i>before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times</i>.</p>			
<p>These 3 particles plus pâniym do not have a specific meaning. Few translators rendered them literally; most rendered these 4 words as follows: <i>unless</i> (ESV, the Message, MKJV, NIV, NKJV, the Tanakh); <i>except</i> (KJV, LTHB, Rotherham, WEB, Young); <i>before</i> (Douay Rheims).</p>			
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to take in, to bring, to come in with, to carry</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Mîykal (מִיכָּל) [pronounced mee-KAHL]	possibly means <i>brook or stream</i> and is transliterated <i>Michal</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #4324 BDB #568
bath (בָּת) [pronounced baith]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
Shâ'uwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
b' (בְּ) [pronounced b' ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #935 BDB #97
<p>The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered <i>when [such and such happens]</i>. It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.</p>			
lâmed (לַמֶּד) (pronounced l'med)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

2Samuel 3:13e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pânîym (פָנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	face, faces, countenance; presence	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Translation: ...only first, you bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face." There is a great struggle here to give meaning to these words. However, the gist of this portion of v. 13 is fairly simple: David's request is, in order to see him, Abner must bring Michal first. David has not seen Michal for several years. You may recall that Saul first promised David marriage to his eldest daughter, and then gave her to someone else. Then, Michal, Saul's younger daughter, fell in love with David, and Saul allowed David to marry her (thinking that he could have parlayed this mutual desire into David's death). However, when Saul sent men to David's home, Michal knew that this was serious to the point where David needed to escape. So he did, and Michal was left behind. Since then, Michal has remarried; and David has married several women. However, David wants Michal, although we do not have a reason given. David may not know that she is remarried; David may have had a good friendship with her at one time and recalls that fondly; and it is even possible that this was a political move (although I doubt that). So, even though the translation is difficult, the idea is simple: David has imposed upon Abner one condition for their bond: Abner must produce Michal, David's former wife. Whether or not David has a claim on Michal is not really an issue here, as she has remarried. Even if David's feelings at this point were very sincere, and even if he deserved her for the price that he paid, still, Michal has remarried.

Barnes remarks: *David's motive in requiring the restitution of Michal was partly his affection for her, and his memory of her love for him; partly the wish to wipe out the affront put upon him in taking away his wife, by obtaining her return; and partly, also, a politic consideration of the effect on Saul's partisans of a daughter of Saul being David's queen.*³⁷ It is very difficult to look into the soul of David with regards to this thing and figure out why he asked for Michal. In my own opinion, the first two reasons given by Barnes are applicable; and I do not know about the latter ones. Although David does some politically savvy things, I do not believe that David's primary focus is political.

There are certain reasons given in the Word of God which allow a person to divorce his spouse with the right of remarriage. One of the corollaries to these reasons is, if you divorce a woman, and she remarries, then you are not to get back together with her. This is what David is doing, and the end result we would expect to be unsuccessful, which it is.

Clarke, on the other hand, sees this reunion as a political necessity: *Prudence and policy required that he [David] should strengthen his own interest in the kingdom as much as possible; and that he should not leave a princess in the possession of a man who might, in her right, have made pretensions to the throne.*³⁸ Jamieson, Fausset and Brown concur: *The demand for the restoration of his wife Michal was perfectly fair; but David's insisting on it at that particular moment, as an indispensable condition of his entering into any treaty with Abner, seems to have proceeded not so much from a lingering attachment as from an expectation that his possession of her would incline some adherents of the house of Saul to be favorable to his cause.*³⁹ If this was a similar choice made by Abner or Ishbosheth, I could agree that the intentions are political; and that, in this case, this is even a political necessity. After all, David earned his marriage to Michal. However, I do not believe that David simply took her to shore up his

³⁷ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:13.

³⁸ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:13.

³⁹ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, 2Sam. 3:12–13.

political strength. I think that the wide support which David receives (which we will find in the book of Chronicles), did not simply come about because there will be a well-established link between himself and the house of Saul. I doubt that there was any significant political advantage which David enjoyed because of this reunion. Bear in mind, as you study this chapter, that Abner will do a lot of the preliminary work on David's behalf before Michal is returned to David.

It is interesting how these women are referred to. Abigail is continually referred to as the wife of Nabal, even though Nabal is dead; and Michal, instead of being called the wife of David, is called the daughter of Saul. I don't think that we should attach a lot of spiritual meaning to this; I think that these are ways to clearly identify these two women, apart from their relationship to David.

And so sends David messengers unto Ishboseth, a son of Saul, to say, "Give my wife Michal whom I betrothed to me in a hundred foreskins of Philistines."

2Samuel 3:14

Then David sent messengers to Ishboseth, Saul's son, saying, "Give [to me] my wife, Michal, whom I married [lit., betrothed to me] with a hundred Philistine foreskins."

Then David sent messengers to Ishboseth, Saul's son, saying, "Give my wife, Michal, to me; whom I married for the cost of 100 Philistine foreskins."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

And David sent messengers to Isboseth the son of Saul, saying: Restore my wife Michol, whom I espoused to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

Masoretic Text

And so sends David messengers unto Ishboseth, a son of Saul, to say, "Give my wife Michal whom I betrothed to me in a hundred foreskins of Philistines."

Peshitta

Then David sent messengers to Ashbashul, Saul's son, saying, "Deliver to me my wife, Malchel, whom I espoused for 200 foreskins of the Philistines."

Septuagint

And David sent messengers to Jebosthe the son of Saul, saying, Restore me my wife Melchol, whom I took for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

Significant differences:

The Greek adds the pronoun *me*, which is perfectly proper and does not alter the meaning.

The Greek also uses the verb *to take* rather than *to betroth* (and, therefore, leaves off the prepositional phrase *to me*). It is possible that this prepositional phrase was misplaced in the Hebrew, as it does appear to fit better with the verb *to give*. The Peshitta agrees with the Greek; the Vulgate with the Hebrew.

The Syriac indicates that it was 200 foreskins.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

David sent a few of his officials to Ishboseth to give him this message: "Give me back my wife Michal! I killed a hundred Philistines so I could marry her."

The Message

David then sent messengers to Ish-Bosheth son of Saul: "Give me back Michal, whom I won as my wife at the cost of a hundred Philistine foreskins."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Then David sent messengers to Saul's son Ishboseth to say, "Give me my wife Michal. I made a payment of 100 Philistine foreskins for her."

HCSB

Then David sent messengers to say to Ish-bosheth son of Saul, "Give me back my wife, Michal. I was engaged to her for the price of 100 Philistine foreskins."

JPS (Tanakh)

David also sent messengers to Ish-bosheth son of Saul, to say, "Give me my wife Michal, for whom I paid the bride-price of one hundred Philistine foreskins."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV

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."

WEB

David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, whom I pledged to be married to me for one hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

Young's Updated LT

And David sends messengers unto Ish-Boshes son of Saul, saying, "Give up my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself with a hundred foreskins of the Philistines."

What is the gist of this verse? David sends messengers to Ishbosheth telling him to send David his wife, Michal, whom he had married at a cost of 100 Philistine foreskins.

2Samuel 3:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	beloved and is transliterated David	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
mal'âk̄ (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced mahl'-AWK̄]	messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eL]	unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'Iysh-Bôsheth (אִישׁ-בֹּשֶׁת) [pronounced eesh-BOH-sheath]	man of Baal; transliterated Ishbosheth	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #378 BDB #36
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Shâ'uwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

Translation: Then David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son,... This surprises me, and I do not have an immediate explanation for this: David sends a message to Ishbosheth, requesting his wife. I would have expected Abner to return and to bring this woman with him. I suspect what happened is, Abner knew the thinking of Ishbosheth, and knew that he would be willing to send Michal to David, despite the civil war. We can only speculate as to why, but let me suggest that, if Michal has a boy child, then he would be a potential political rival for Ishbosheth. Apart from this, I am surprised that David is sending messengers to Ishbosheth for this reason (I would have expected Abner to whisk her away in the night to bring to David); and I am surprised that Ishbosheth goes along with David's request (again, the only reason I can fathom is Ishbosheth sees any son of Michal's as a potential political rival). On the other hand, would not a union of David and Michal, Saul's daughter, be a potential political union that Ishbosheth should be concerned about?

2Samuel 3:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lāmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lahmed</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
’âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
nâthan (נְתָן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative; with the Voluntative hê	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
’êth (נֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
’îshshâh (וִשְׁחָה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAWH</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
’êth (נֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Mîykal (מִיכָּל) [pronounced <i>mee-KAHL</i>]	possibly means <i>brook</i> or <i>stream</i> and is transliterated <i>Michal</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #4324 BDB #568

Translation: ...saying, “Give [to me] my wife, Michal,... The actual Hebrew construction is interesting. We would expect the prepositional phrase *to me* to be found here, rather than with the verb which follows. The Greek and Syriac translators agree with me; however, the Latin and Hebrew have this phrase below. The meaning is barely altered, but we do not know which reading is correct.

In textual criticism, we choose the poorest-sounding reading, not the best. It makes sense that one would fix a reading (and it may not be done intentionally); but it makes less sense for a person to screw up a reading. There is no similarity with these verbs, so misplacing the prepositional phrase because the verbs look alike is not what happened.

Barnes suggests the following explanation: [*David sends messengers to Ishbosheth and*] Not to Abner, for the league between David and Abner was a profound secret, but to Ish-bosheth who, David knew, must act, feeble as he was, at Abner's dictation. Abner's first act of overt allegiance to David was thus done at Ish-bosheth's bidding; and the effect of the humiliation laid upon Ish-bosheth in exposing his

weakness to his own subjects, and so shaking their allegiance to him, was such that Abner needed to use no more disguise.⁴⁰ The situation which is occurring here is quite interesting. Portions have been left out. I suspect that Abner messaged back to David, "Send your messengers directly to Ishbosheth, and I will see that your request is honored." This move both reveals the weakness of Ishbosheth, as well as Abner's loyalty to David. My opinion would imply that Ishbosheth was probably encouraged by Abner to fulfill David's request.

Gill⁴¹ has a different opinion; that when Abner responded to David's request, it was with a qualified *no*, saying that, under the circumstances, he would be unable to deliver on this promise, but that David could contact Ishbosheth directly in order to receive Michal back.

2Samuel 3:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
’âras (אָרָשׁ) [pronounced aw-RAHS]	<i>to betroth, to marry, to get married to, to espouse, to make one a wife; to become engaged to</i>	1 st person singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #781 BDB #76
lāmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition; with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
b ^ו (ב) [pronounced <i>b</i> ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mê’âh (מֵאָה) [pronounced <i>may-AW</i>]	<i>one hundred, a hundred, hundred</i>	feminine singular numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547

The Syriac and Arabic, at this point, have 200 foreskins, which is the actual amount which David delivered to Saul. However, that the Hebrew, Latin and Greek all agree that the number is 100 makes this the most reasonable reading. Josephus, by the way, says that David had given over 600 foreskins.⁴²

’or ^ל âw (עַרְלָה) [pronounced <i>gohr-LAW</i>]	<i>foreskin</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #6190 BDB #790
P ^ל ish ^ת tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי)	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

Translation: ...whom I married [lit., betrothed to me] with a hundred Philistine foreskins." The cost which Saul had expected from David was 100 foreskins. This would entitle David to marry Saul's daughter, Michal. What David brought to Saul was 200 foreskins. Once an opponent was killed, his phallus was cut off, and this clearly indicated that he was a Philistine, as he would be uncircumcised. David brought to Saul 200 uncircumcised phalluses (see 1Sam. 18:25–27). The number which we find here (which is probably 100) is of no great consequence.

⁴⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:14.

⁴¹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:14.

⁴² Josephus; *Antiquities* I 7. c. 1. sect. 4. I got this from Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:14.

It is interesting that this is taking place. We are in the midst of a civil war; however, Abner has stormed out of Ishbosheth's office swearing that he will support David. This would probably bring the civil war to a halt (Abner and Ishbosheth were the aggressive ones—David was not; so, if Abner's army stopped advancing, and even retreated, then it is unlikely that David would have continued to make war against them. So, we probably have a break in the war between David and Abner, during which Ishbosheth is afraid of Abner, probably totally unsure as to how to react; and David's request seems reasonable to him. It is also possible that, Ishbosheth is easy to manipulate at this point. A poor leader can be manipulated into a course of action by a deft politician. Here, this is simply a sincere request by David for that which belongs to him.

There appears to be legal precedent for David's request here; that in Mesopotamia, it was recognized that a former husband could make a claim on his wife, if they had separated through no fault of his own (e.g., being removed from one's homeland as a prisoner). I did not pursue this, but first heard it from Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 219, who references Z. Ben-Barak, SVT 30 (1979), pp. 15–29.

So there is no misunderstanding—David should not have made this request. Of course, it is wrong what happened and it was very wrong that Saul simply gave his daughter Michal to someone else. This was an injustice. However, David should have been more circumspect concerning this demand, as he already had 6 wives. Now, my opinion is, David found himself more satisfied with one wife than he did with 6; so he assumes the problem is, he does not have the right person, and that Michal is the right person to be with him. However, Michal is not going to change David's life when she comes to him—not for the better.

Application: You are going to face injustice all of your life. Most people could spend every waking moment either going to court to solve this or that injustice; or running around to a number of other people to give their side of the story. God did not intend for us to do that. God did not intend for us to go out and vindicate ourselves before man. There are not enough hours in the day. Being treated unjustly is a part of life; David, losing Michal under these circumstances, was an injustice. David is going to attempt to solve this injustice, which is a mistake. Did you know that it is not your job to make sure that everyone acts according to your standards of behavior? In fact, it is not even your job to make certain that anyone (apart from your own children) acts in accordance of God's standards. People are going to do wrong; and people are going to do wrong to you. Don't spend your entire life trying to fix all these injustices; you just do not have time to do that. God did not put us on this earth to fix up the devil's world. God has not placed us here to solve the problems that Satan cannot.

And so sends Ishbosheth and so he takes her from with a man, from with Paltiel son of Laish. 2Samuel 3:15 **Ishbosheth then sent [a messenger to her] and he takes her from [her] husband, Paltiel son of Laish.**

Ishbosheth then sent a messenger to her and took her from her husband, Paltiel, son of Laish.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so sends Ishbosheth and so he takes her from with a man, from with Paltiel son of Laish.

Septuagint

And Jebosthe sent, and took her from her husband, even from Phaltiel the son of Selle.

Significant differences:

The Greek adds the personal pronoun to *husband*; as does the Aramaic, Syriac and Latin.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Ishbosheth sent some of his men to take Michal away from her new husband, Paltiel the son of Laish.
The Message	Ish-Bosheth ordered that she be taken from her husband Paltiel son of Laish.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	So Ishbosheth sent men to take her from her husband Paltiel, son of Laish.
HCSB	So Ish-bosheth sent someone to take her away from her husband, Paltiel son of Lais.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And Ishbosheth sent, and took her from her [second] husband, from Paltiel son of Laish [to whom Saul had given her].
LTHB	And Ishbosheth sent and took her from the man, from Phaltiel the son of Laish.
WEB	Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Paltiel the son of Laish.
Young's Updated LT	And Ish-Boshes sends, and takes her from a man, from Phaltiel son of Laish.

What is the gist of this verse? Ishbosheth takes Michal from her husband, Paltiel.

2Samuel 3:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
'Iysh-Bôsheth (אִישׁ-בּוֹשֶׁת) [pronounced eesh-BOH-sheath]	<i>man of Baal; transliterated Ishbosheth</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #378 BDB #36

Translation: Ishbosheth then sent [a messenger to her]... I find this interesting. David and Ishbosheth are jockeying for power. The end result could mean death for either man. Their armies are at war (although it is not clear whether they are actually with their armies or not). However, Abner is about to desert (although I don't think Ishbosheth realizes this fully); and, in the midst of this civil war, David sends a message to Ishbosheth saying, "Send me my wife, Michal." I must admit to not exactly understanding the customs here. Recall that Ishbosheth just threw a fit because Abner might be sleeping with Saul's mistress (which could be seen as a political move). However, here, David requests Michal, and Ishbosheth seems to just go along with it. The only explanation I can come up with is, Abner has ordered Ishbosheth to go along with David's request, something he actually has the power to do, as he is over Ishbosheth's army.⁴³ As we will see, this will involve Ishbosheth and Abner both. David sends Ishbosheth the message; Ishbosheth either goes himself or sends someone else to get this woman; however, Abner is there, with Michal and her weeping husband, as we will see in the next verse.

⁴³ I must admit, I will be interested if other commentators deal with this issue.

2Samuel 3:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לְקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>take, seize, take away, take in marriage; send for, fetch, bring, receive</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'îm (בָּיִם) [pronounced geem]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Together, these prepositions mean: *from with, beside, from being with, away from, far from, from among, from the possession of, from the custody of, from the house of, from the vicinity of, out of the power of, from the mind of.*

'îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
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Translation: ...and he takes her from [her] husband,... Michal, as we had noted earlier, had remarried, as David was exiled for a long time. Furthermore, Saul had called the shots (1Sam. 25:44), having his daughter remarry (whether it was at her request or a political favor, we do not know; however, the marriage seems to have been a good one). There was obviously no way that David and Saul were going to be congenial—Michal realized this—and was apparently willing to move on in her life.

What I believe happened here, and the text allows for this, is that Ishbosheth, for reasons which may not seem to be completely clear, sent Abner to get Michal and to deliver her to David. Ishbosheth would not be aware of an existing treaty between Abner and David, and that this delivery of Michal to David is the key to this treaty. This allowed Abner to cross over into Judah and to go directly to David without Ishbosheth realizing what was going on. This bit of political deception indicates just why David contacted Ishbosheth directly; this way, Ishbosheth puts Abner into the loop himself.

2Samuel 3:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'îm (בָּיִם) [pronounced geem]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

2Samuel 3:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Together, these prepositions mean: <i>from with, beside, from being with, away from, far from, from among, from the possession of, from the custody of, from the house of, from the vicinity of, out of the power of, from the mind of.</i>			
Pal ^{תִּיְּ} ’êl (פַּלְתִּיאֵל) [pronounced pah-tee-ale] ALE]	God delivers; transliterated Paltiel	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6401 BDB #812
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Layish (לִישָׁה) [pronounced LAH-yish]	<i>old lion</i> , but the inference is to bravery and strength, rather than to old age; transliterated Laish	proper singular noun	Strong's #3919 BDB #539

Translation: ...Paltiel son of Laish. I don't believe that Paltiel's name was given before, but he seems like a decent sort, even though all we know is his name. His name means *God delivers*, so his parents were probably believers. As we will see, this turn of events was not a good moment for him.

And so he goes with her, her man, going and weeping after her as far as Bahurim. And so says to him Abner "Go; return." And so he returns.

2Samuel 3:16

Her husband went with her, following after her and weeping, as far as Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Leave; return!" So he returned [home].

Her husband followed after her, crying, and went as far as Bahurim. Abner finally told him, "Leave; go back home!" So he returned home.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so he goes with her, her man, going and weeping after her to Bahurim. And so says to him Abner "Go; return." And so he returns.

Septuagint

And her husband went with her weeping behind her as far as Barakim. And Abenner said to him, Go, return; and he returned.

Significant differences:

None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Paltiel followed Michal and the men all the way to Bahurim, crying as he walked. But he went back home after Abner ordered him to leave.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Her husband went with her and cried over her all the way to Bahurim. "Go home," Abner told him. So he went home.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

WEB

Her husband went with her, weeping as he went, and followed her to Bahurim. Then said Abner to him, Go, return: and he returned.

Young's Updated LT

And her husband goes with her, going on and weeping behind her, unto Bahurim, and Abner says unto him, "Go, turn back;" and he turns back.

What is the gist of this verse? Michal's husband followed her, crying as he went, until Abner ordered him to return home.

2Samuel 3:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
’îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun; with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35

Translation: Her husband went with her,... This was sudden and a shock to Paltiel. Out of nowhere, Abner shows up and tells Michal to pack her bags, and that she is being sent to David.

2Samuel 3:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
w ^e (or v ^e) (!) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bâkâh (בָּקָה)	<i>to weep, to cry, to bewail</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #1058 BDB #113
[pronounced baw-KAW]			
’achêr (אֲחֵר)	<i>another, following, other as well as foreign, alien, strange</i>	adjective/substantive with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #312 BDB #29
[pronounced ah-KHEHR]			
’ad (אֶד)	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition of extent	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
[pronounced gahd]			

2Samuel 3:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Bachûrîym (בָּחָרִים) [pronounced <i>bahk-oo-REEM</i>]	<i>young men; young men's village;</i> and is transliterated <i>Bahurim</i>	proper singular noun; location	Strong's #980 BDB #104

Translation: ...following after her and weeping, as far as Bahurim. Michal's husband is obviously very much in love with her, and this turn of events causes him great distress. As she goes, as per the orders of Abner, he follows after her, crying. His following Michal and crying indicates that he was very much in love with her; her bitterness toward David, which we will see in 2Sam. 6:16, 20 (even though she had a reason to be mad in this passage, I believe it to be based upon being taken out of her present marriage as well, as her dislike of David lasted apparently for the entirety of their marriage—2Sam. 6:23).

Barnes on Bahurim: *Best known as the residence of Shimei, and as the place where Jonathan and Ahimaaz were concealed in a well on the occasion of David's flight from Absalom (2Sam. 16:5 17:18). It seems to have been situated in the southern border of the tribe of Benjamin (2Sam. 19:16), and on the route from Jerusalem to the Jordan fords*⁴⁴. Keil and Delitzsch give a similar description of its location: *Bahurim [is] Shimei's home (2Sam. 19:17 1Kings 2:8), was situated, according to 2Sam. 16:1, 5 17:18, upon the road from Jerusalem to Gilgal, in the valley of the Jordan, not far from the Mount of Olives, and is supposed by v. Schubert (R. iii. p. 70) to have stood upon the site of the present Abu Dis, though in all probability it is to be sought for farther north (see Rob. Pal. ii. p. 103).*⁴⁵ *Paltiel had therefore followed his wife to the border of the tribe of Judah, or of the kingdom of David.* Given that Abner is traveling from the Transjordan area, across the Jordan River, and through Benjamin (which Abner probably meets with the elders of Benjamin), this is a reasonable supposition on the part of Barnes and Keil and Delitzsch.⁴⁶

To simplify matters, Bahurim is the last Benjamite city one goes through before entering into Judah on the way to Hebron.⁴⁷

2Samuel 3:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
’amar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

⁴⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:16.

⁴⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:16.

⁴⁶ By the way, if you have a map of Israel in your brain, then when I make mention of this area or that, it is easy to follow along. If you have no idea where the Jordan River is, where the Mediterranean Sea is, where Judah is, etc., then your brain will drift off when I mention any of these geographical regions.

⁴⁷ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 423.

2Samuel 3:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
`el (אֵל) [pronounced eł]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Ăbənēr (אָבְנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^h -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp</i> , and is transliterated Abner	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
hâlak ^e (הַלָּךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
shûwb (שׁוּבּ) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7725 BDB #996

Translation: Then Abner said to him, “Leave; return!” This is also interesting; it appears as though Abner did not send out a lackey to take care of this, but that he went himself. At the very least, he speaks directly to this man at some point (apparently, in Bahurim). Abner orders him to return home.

2Samuel 3:16d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shûwb (שׁוּבּ) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996

Translation: So he returned [home]. This was an order from his king; Paltiel did not really have any choice here.

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Abner Garners Support for David from the Elders of Israel and Benjamin

And a word of Abner was with elders of Israel to say, “Both yesterday and three days ago, you have been seeking David to king over you.

2Samuel
3:17

And the word of Abner was with the elders of Israel, saying, “For some time now, you have been seeking David to rule over you.

Abner sent word to the elders of Israel, and the message read, “For awhile now, you have wanted David to be your king.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And a word of Abner was with elders of Israel to say, "Both yesterday and three days ago, you have been seeking David to king over you.
Septuagint	And Abenner spoke to the elders of Israel, saying, In former days you sought David to reign over you;...

Significant differences: The Greek takes some liberties with the Hebrew, and reads that Abner *spoke* to the elders of Israel. In the Hebrew, this does not have to be direct communication, but this was probably a message sent by Abner to some, a personal appearance before others.

At the beginning of what Abner says, we simply have the Greek attempting to approximate the meaning of the Hebraic saying.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Abner talked with the leaders of the tribes of Israel and told them, "You've wanted to make David your king for a long time now.
The Message	Abner got the elders of Israel together and said, "Only yesterday, it seems, you were looking for a way to make David your king.
NJB	Now Abner conferred with the elders of Israel, 'For a long time now,' he said, 'you have wanted David as your king.'
NLT	Meanwhile, Abner had consulted with the leaders of Israel. "For some time now," he told them, "you have wanted to make David your king.
REB	Abner conferred with the elders of Israel: 'For some time past', he said, 'you have wanted David for your king.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	Meanwhile, Abner sent the following message to the leaders of Israel: "For some time now you've wanted to make David your king.
JPS (Tanakh)	Abner had conferred with the elders of Israel, saying, "You have wanted David to be king over you all along.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	And Abner conferred with the elders of Israel, saying, "For some time past you have been seeking David as king over you.
NASB	Now Abner had consultation [lit., a word] with the elders of Israel, saying, "In times past you were seeking for David to be king over you.
WEB	Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, In times past you sought for David to be king over you:...
Young's Updated LT	And the word of Abner was with the elders of Israel, saying, "Heretofore you have been seeking David for king over you,...

What is the gist of this verse? Abner sends a formal statement out to several sets of elders throughout Israel, and it begins by saying, "I know that for some time, you would have preferred to have David as king over you."

2Samuel 3:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^o (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
dâbâr (דְּבָרָ) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
Ābēnêr (אַבְנֵרְ) [pronounced u ^b v̄-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
hâyâh (הָיָהְ) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
‘îm (עִםְ) [pronounced géem]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
zâkêن (זָקֵןְ) [pronounced zaw-KANE]	<i>elders</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
Yis̄râ`êl (יִשְׂרָאֵלְ) [pronounced yis̄-raw-ALE]	<i>transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

Translation: And the word of Abner was with the elders of Israel,... The way this is written, is it sounds like this was probably a formal message sent out to several sets of elders simultaneously. Given what follows, Abner had to be sending out messages prior to his trip to bring Michal to David. Therefore, following his argument with Ishbosheth and before this trip to bring Michael to David, Abner began to contact the elders of various territories throughout Israel. This does not preclude face to face meetings; however, bear in mind, Abner had to be surreptitious. We know, via 3rd party omniscience (i.e., God the Holy Spirit), that Ishbosheth was afraid of Abner and Abner may have even reasonably suspected this. However, Ishbosheth never said to Abner, "I'm afraid of you, so whatever you do is going to be okay." What I am saying is, Abner does not have complete and total freedom; he does not have the latitude to do just anything that he wants to do. Abner is not moving about with his posse, going from city to city in Israel, and convincing them to support David. He may arrange a couple of personal meetings; but we may reasonably assume that most of this was via messengers carrying correspondence.

2Samuel 3:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced l̄)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
‘âmar (אָמַרְ) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55

2Samuel 3:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
gam (גָם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
tēmōwl (תְמֹול) [pronounced <i>tēMOHL</i>]	<i>yesterday; and is used figuratively for recently, formerly</i>	adverb	Strong's #8543 (and #865) BDB #1069
gam (גָם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
shil'shōwm (שִׁלְשׁוּם) [pronounced <i>shil-SHOHM</i>]	<i>three days ago, the day before yesterday</i>	adverb	Strong's #8032 BDB #1026

Literally, these adverbs read *also yesterday, even three days ago or both yesterday and three days ago*. The lexicons give the meaning as *formerly, so formerly, so more recently*. The more literal translators in our passage render this *in times past* (HNV, MKJV, NASB, NKJV, the Tanakh—1917, WEB); *in the past* (HCSB); *before now* (LTHB); *for some time now* (God's Word™, NLT); *for some time past* (ESV); *all along* (the Tanakh—1985); *for a long time* (NAB); *for a long time now* (NJB); *heretofore* (Young). I think the idea is recently and persistently (or, continuously). Let me add the translation, *for awhile now*.

hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
bâqash (בָּקַשׁ) [pronounced <i>baw-KAHS</i>]	<i>to seek, to search, to desire, to strive after, to attempt to get, to require, to demand, to ask, to seek with desire and diligence</i>	masculine plural, Piel participle	Strong's #1245 BDB #134
‘êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i>]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
lâmed (לֵמֶד) [pronounced <i>lehmed</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>MEH-lek</i>]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity; with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Translation: ...saying, “For some time now, you have been seeking David to rule over you. Abner is making an assumption here that these elders have desired to have David be king over them. This is the statement which he leads with, which is probably, for the most part, true. Recall that it took Abner several years to rally support for

Ishbosheth. During this time, he probably took the pulse of Israel, and many of them expressed an interest in following David instead. Abner, no doubt, had to be very persuasive to get so many to follow after Ishbosheth.

Barnes seems to evaluate this exactly as it is: *It was only by Abner's great influence that the elders of Israel had been restrained hitherto from declaring for David, and this accounts for Ish-bosheth's helpless submission to his uncle's dictation.*⁴⁸

Gill: *At the death of Saul, and not before; for it was pretty generally known throughout the kingdom that David was anointed by Samuel and Saul himself had declared that he knew the kingdom would come to him; so that upon his death it was the general expectation and desire of the people that the government would devolve upon him, as it doubtless would, if Abner had not set up one of Saul's house, and persuaded the Israelites to own him their king.*⁴⁹

You will note that what is said here is also very drawn out, which leads me to believe that this is a message, and a very formal one. We have the 4 adverbs strung together and the addition of the word *to be*, which could have been avoided.

And now do, for Y^ehowah had said unto David, to say, 'In a hand of David My servant he has saved My people, Israel from a hand of Philistines and from a hand of all their enemies.'

2Samuel
3:18

Now, therefore, do [this thing], for Y^ehowah spoke concerning David, saying, 'By the hand of David My servant, I will save [or, the saving of] My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.'

Now, therefore, do this thing, as Jehovah has said, 'By the hand of David, My servant, I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of the rest of their enemies.'

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And now do, for Y^ehowah had said unto David, to say, 'In a hand of David My servant he has saved My people, Israel from a hand of Philistines and from a hand of all their enemies.'

Septuagint

...and now perform it: for the Lord has spoken concerning David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save Israel out of the hand of all their enemies.

Significant differences:

The first major difference is the preposition which precedes the name *David*. However, the Hebrew word found there can be translated in either way.

The tense and person of *to save* is different in the Greek and Hebrew. In the Hebrew, this could be interpreted as a Hiphil infinitive construct; however, that does not explain the Greek. However, the Latin and Syriac both agree with the Greek, which is unusual. That lends much more credence to the Greek.

The Greek leaves out *from the hand of the Philistines*; however, this is found in the Hebrew, Latin and Syriac (which manuscripts are generally in agreement when the Greek differs). As usual, these differences have no real effect on the overall meaning of the verse.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

⁴⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:17.

⁴⁹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:17.

CEV	So do it! After all, God said he would use his servant David to rescue his people Israel from their enemies, especially from the Philistines."
The Message	So do it--now! For GOD has given the go-ahead on David: 'By my servant David's hand, I'll save my people Israel from the oppression of the Philistines and all their other enemies."
NLT	Now is the time! For the LORD has said, 'I have chosen David to save my people from the Philistines and from all their other enemies.' "

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	Do it now, because the LORD said about David: 'I will save my people Israel from the Philistines and all their other enemies through my servant David."
HCSB	Now take action, because the LORD has spoken concerning David: 'Through My servant David I will save My people Israel from the power of the Philistines and the power of all Israel's enemies."
JPS (Tanakh)	Now act! For the LORD has said concerning David: I will deliver [So many manuscripts and versions; most manuscripts and editions have "He has delivered."] My people Israel from the hands of the Philistines and all its other enemies through My servant David."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible	Now therefore, act, for Yahweh spoke unto David, saying, By the hand of David, My servant, will I save My people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines and out of the hand of all their enemies.
ESV	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."
WEB	...now then do it; for Yahweh has spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.
Young's Updated LT	...and now, do it , for Jehovah has spoken of David saying, By the hand of David my servant—to save My people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies."

What is the gist of this verse? Abner's message to the elders of the various places in Israel continues; he points out that God spoke to David, saying that he would save His people Israel by David from Philistines and from all the rest of Israel's enemies.

2Samuel 3:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced gaht-TAWH]	now, at this time, already	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773

When followed by an imperative or an interrogative, w^e + the adverb 'attâh mean *and so, thus, things being so, therefore, now therefore*. Sometimes, the concept of time is lost when this combination is used to incite another.

2Samuel 3:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'âsâh (הָשַׁעַ) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Translation: Now, therefore, do [this thing],... This is an interesting phrase, as it seems to stop. Whether it is elliptical because Abner meant it to be so; or whether it is elliptical because Scripture left out the few words which should follow this statement, we don't know. However, the context is clear: these elders have wanted for some time for David to be their king. Now Abner is giving them the go-ahead.

Now that I reconsider this, maybe the leaving out of these few words is intentional. Abner stops just short of recommending acts of sedition by these elders. Maybe that is intentional on his part; that is, the elders understand that they must take a stand for David, but Abner does not specifically tell them to take a stand for David. That Abner could craft a message which is seditious in nature, but not literally seditious would be within his realm of expertise.

2Samuel 3:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y ^e howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eL]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Dâvid (דָּבִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּבִיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

Translation: ...for Y^ehowah spoke concerning David,... The preposition used here is almost always rendered *unto*; so, how can we get away with rendering it *concerning* in this verse, when that means something entirely different? It is the actual quotation which tells us how to understand this verse. If God speaks to David in the 2nd person (which He does not), then we would understand this preposition to mean *unto*; however, since God speaks of David in the 3rd person, this means that this is a general statement being spoken about David. Furthermore, I do not recall any instance of God speaking directly to David.

2Samuel 3:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (לָמֶד) [pronounced <i>lamed</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
‘âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^e</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

This combination of the bêyth preposition and *hand* means *with me; through me, by me, by means of me; at my hand* [i.e., *before me, in my sight*].

Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיֵּד) [pronounced <i>daw-Veed</i>]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
‘ebed (עָבֵד) [pronounced <i>GE^E-ved</i>]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
yâsha‘ (יָשָׁאֵךְ) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH^G</i>]	<i>to deliver, to save; to set free, to preserve; to aid, to give relief</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect (possibly, a Hiphil infinitive construct)	Strong's #3467 BDB #446

This is a 1st person singular, imperfect tense in the Greek, Latin and Syriac (which manuscripts do not generally agree when there is a difference between the Greek and Hebrew).

‘êth (עֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
‘am (עָם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
Yisrâ`êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

2Samuel 3:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yâd as a construct and the min preposition are literally rendered <i>from a hand of</i> ; together, they can also mean <i>out of the hand of</i> ; <i>out of the power of</i> ; <i>from the power of</i> .			
P ^e lîsh ^e tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּים) [pronounced p ^e -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

Translation: ...saying, 'By the hand of David My servant, I will save [or, *the saving of*] My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines... Although this could very well read *By the hand of my servant David, [there will be] the saving of My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines...* (as per the Hebrew), the other reading is simpler and preferred almost universally in the English translations. However, bear in mind, it is more reasonable for a difficult translation to be accidentally or intentionally turned into an easier translation, rather than the other way around. Therefore, even though most prefer the 1st person singular imperfect here, that is not necessarily how the original text reads. In any case, the difference in meaning is slight.

We know that God is speaking *concerning* David rather than *unto* David, as he is spoken of in the 3rd person. If God were speaking to David, He would say, "By your hand, My servant, I will deliver My people Israel..." Therefore, the interpretation that God is said to be speaking *concerning* David is an accurate understanding. In 1Sam. 9:16, God tells Samuel that Saul will be the man who will deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines (which he did; he went to war against the Philistines repeatedly). However, later Samuel tells Saul that God will transfer the king from him to his associate (that is, *David*) in 1Sam. 15:28, which would carry with it the responsibility of fighting against the Philistines and the rest of Israel's enemies. In the first half of 1Sam. 16, we have Samuel anointing David as the next king, instead of Saul. Therefore, it is reasonable that Abner is simply putting 2 and 2 together here.

Bear in mind, this is included in a letter from Abner to the various elders of Israel. He can say whatever he wants, whether it is true or not. Over the past few years, the Democrats have discovered that, if you say a lie long enough, it becomes the truth in most people's minds. Our current president, George W. Bush, appears to be an honest man; and I have heard several men who know dare anyone to actually dredge up a single confirmable lie uttered by President Bush. However, I have never heard anyone actually come up with a single lie spoken by Bush. Our previous president, William Clinton, lied undeniably during the Monica Lewinsky scandal, and did a very convincing job of it. However, in the public's eyes, Bush continually lies and Clinton only told a little white lie. There are a large number of often-forwarded emails out there with the premise that Bush is a president who lies continually (jokes and whatnot). Now, do I know that Bush is telling the truth all of the time? I have no idea. However, I do know that there is nothing which Bush has said has been ever exposed as being an intentional lie.⁵⁰ Here is the point: Abner is sending this message to several groups of elders. It will become implanted in their minds that God said that David would deliver Israel from their enemies. Simply that Abner's missive is out there in the hands of several groups of men is enough to make it appear as though this was a direct quote from God.

⁵⁰ For those reading this and knowing this particular period of time, the illustration most often given is, Bush lied about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. However, we know that Saddam Hussein had chemical weapons, because he had used them in the 1990's. Furthermore, our intelligence indicated that he had them. President Clinton, in 1998, made an unequivocal statement that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction; around the same time, a former aide to Hussein made statements that he had these weapons and that we would never find them. And, around 2002, Hillary Clinton made a statement that we have known for a long time that Saddam Hussein had these kinds of weapons.

Now let me qualify and possibly even retract that statement. We do not have a quotable verse from Scripture which says this; that is, which says that David is the next king and will rule over Israel and that he would deliver Israel from her enemies. We have, at best, a private ceremony with David, Samuel and David's family from 1Sam. 16.

Keil and Delitzsch comment on this problem (as did several others): *The word of Jehovah concerning David, which is mentioned in 2Sam. 3:18, is not met with anywhere in this precise form in the history of David as it has come down to us. Abner therefore had either some expression used by one of the prophets (Samuel or Gad) in his mind, which he described as the word of Jehovah, or else he regarded the anointing of David by Samuel in accordance with the command of the Lord, and the marvellous success of all that David attempted against the enemies of Israel, as a practical declaration on the part of God, that David, as the appointed successor of Saul, would perform what the Lord had spoken to Samuel concerning Saul (1Sam. 9:16), but what Saul had not fulfilled on account of his rebellion against the commandments of the Lord.*⁵¹

2Chron. 3:18 reads: Now, therefore, do this thing, as Jehovah has said, ‘By the hand of David, My servant, I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of the rest of their enemies.’” We have an apparent quotation here in Abner’s message, but there is no antecedent quotation for us to go to. This leaves us with 4 possibilities:

The Four Interpretations of 2Sam. 3:18

1. There was a specific promise which God made concerning David, which has been lost to us (not carried down in Holy Writ).
2. Abner is taking the passages which I have named (1Sam. 9:16 15:28 16:1, 12–13) and giving them a reasonable interpretation. Bear in mind that, even though 1Sam. 16:1–13 represents a private ceremony which Samuel held, the results of this ceremony seem to be well-known throughout Israel. We do not know exactly how that came to be.
3. It has become common knowledge throughout the land that Samuel anointed David as king of Israel. The people of Israel were also very aware of David’s military record where he delivered Israel from the Philistines (recall, there were even songs dedicated to David). Furthermore, the primary purpose of having a king was a military one, as you will recall when the elders pleaded their case before Samuel (1Sam. 8). What I am saying to you is, given these reasons, it has become general knowledge that, at some point in time, David would become king over Israel and carry out the mission for which he was hired—to deliver Israel. By the way, that David would rule over Israel was known to Jonathan (1Sam. 20:14–16 23:17) and to Saul (1Sam. 24:20). Furthermore, not only is Abner closely associated with Saul and Jonathan, but he would have been with Saul when he called out to David (speaking in a loud voice so that all with him could hear), “Surely, you will be king and the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand” (1Sam. 24:20).
4. Abner is simply making this quote up in order to transfer the heart of the people from Ishbosheth to David.

There is no reason why we *must* pick one of these interpretations. However, in order for Abner’s message to resonate with the people, they needed to believe it. For this reason, I do not think that Abner simply made this statement up out of thin air. Therefore, I would either go with the first or third interpretation. The third interpretation most clearly lines up with Scripture which has gone before.

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Unfortunately, we cannot give Abner any points for recognizing that God’s will is for David to be king over a united Israel; the problem is, Abner has supported Saul for all these years, including a time period when many others left Israel and came to David to give him support. Whereas, his faithfulness and loyalty are to be commended; his insistence that David’s kingship is God’s will rings hollow, given his continued loyalty to the Sauline family.

⁵¹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:19–20.

2Samuel 3:18d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yâd as a construct and the min preposition are literally rendered <i>from a hand of</i> ; together, they can also mean <i>out of the hand of; out of the power of; from the power of</i> .			
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'âyab (עַיָּב) [pronounced aw-YA ^B V]	<i>enemy, the one being at enmity with you; enmity, hostility</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #340 BDB #33

Translation: ...and from the hand of all their enemies.' " Israel then, as today, was surrounded by hostile peoples. Israel belongs to God; Israel was established by God; therefore, we would expect people who do not believe in Jehovah God to be very antagonistic toward Israel. David would defeat these many enemies while in power, allowing Saul to enjoy a great time of peace and prosperity in the land.

In this quotation, Abner has condemned himself and the past few decades of his life. Abner tells us, "Jehovah has said, 'By the hand of David, My servant, I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of the rest of their enemies.' " At some point in time, Abner recognizes that David is God's man—so why is he waiting until this time, after Saul is dead, after Ishboseth gets on his case, to support David. When Abner realized this, he needed to extricate himself from the house of Saul and back David. The problem is, Abner is not motivated by God's will, but he is motivated by what he wants. Ishboseth offended him greatly, so Abner backs David. Even though it is finally the right move for Abner, it is for the wrong reason.

Below, you will notice many *adjustments* to the second translation. All this is, is clarification as to what is found in the Hebrew. The parenthetical black clarifications can be left out and an accurate, smooth rendition of the verse would be the result.

And so speaks also Abner in ears of Benjamin and so goes also Abner to tell in ears of David in Hebron all that [is] good in [two] eyes of Israel and in [two] eyes of all of a house of Benjamin.

2Samuel
3:19

Abner also spoke to Benjamin [lit., in the ears of Benjamin] and Abner also went to speak to David [lit., in the ears of David] [who was] in Hebron all that [is] good [or, beneficial] in the estimation of Israel [lit., in the eyes of Israel] and in the thinking of the whole house of Benjamin [lit., in the eyes of the whole house of Benjamin].

Abner also spoke personally to the elders of Benjamin and we went back and spoke to David while in Hebron, about all which would be beneficial to Israel and to Benjamin [if David were to rule over all Israel as king].

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so speaks also Abner in ears of Benjamin and so goes also Abner to tell in ears of David in Hebron all that [is] good in [two] eyes of Israel and in [two] eyes of all of a house of Benjamin.
Septuagint	And Abenner spoke in the ears of Benjamin: and Abenner went to speak in the ears of David at Chebron, all that seemed good in the eyes of Israel and in the eyes of the house of Benjamin.
Significant differences:	The Greek lacks the adverb <i>also</i> (found twice in the first two phrases in the Hebrew). Apart from that, the verses are identical.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Finally, Abner talked with the tribe of Benjamin. Then he left for Hebron to tell David everything that the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of the people of Israel wanted to do. Abner took the Benjaminites aside and spoke to them. Then he went to Hebron for a private talk with David, telling him everything that Israel in general and Benjamin in particular were planning to do.
<i>The Message</i>	

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	Abner also spoke specifically to the people of Benjamin. Then Abner went directly to David in Hebron to tell him everything Israel and the entire tribe of Benjamin had approved.
HCSB	Abner also informed the Benjaminites and went to Hebron to inform David about all that was agreed on by Israel and the whole house of Benjamin.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	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.
MKJV	And Abner also spoke in the ears of Benjamin. And Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and all that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.
Young's Updated LT	And Abner speaks also in the ears of Benjamin, and Abner goes also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that is good in the eyes of Israel, and in the eyes of all the house of Benjamin.

What is the gist of this verse? Abner went to the tribe of Benjamin (probably personally) as well as back to David, and spoke to them about the good which would be achieved if the tribe of Benjamin (and the other tribes) allied themselves with David.

2Samuel 3:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
dâbar (דָבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
gam (גָם) [pronounced gahm]	also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Āb ^e nér (אָבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^e -NAYR]	my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
‘ōzen (וֹצֶן) [pronounced OH-zen]	ears	feminine plural construct	Strong's #241 BDB #23
Bin ^e yāmîn (בִּנְיָמִין) [pronounced bin ^e -yāmīn]	transliterated Benjamin, it means son of [my] right hand	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1144 BDB #122

Translation: Abner also spoke to Benjamin [lit., in the ears of Benjamin]... The most difficult tribe to deal with would be the tribe of Benjamin. This is the tribe of Saul, so their natural inclination would be to support any successor to Saul. This is Abner's toughest sell.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown understand exactly what is going on here: *The particular appeal of the Benjamites was a necessary policy; their tribe enjoyed the honor of giving birth to the royal dynasty of Saul; they would naturally be disinclined to lose that prestige. They were, besides, a determined people, whose contiguity to Judah might render them troublesome and dangerous. The enlistment of their interest, therefore, in the scheme, would smooth the way for the adhesion of the other tribes; and Abner enjoyed the most convenient opportunity of using his great influence in gaining over that tribe while escorting Michal to David with a suitable equipage. The mission enabled him to cover his treacherous designs against his master—to draw the attention of the elders and people to David as uniting in himself the double recommendation of being the nominee of Jehovah, no less than a connection of the royal house of Saul, and, without suspicion of any dishonorable motives, to advocate policy of terminating the civil discord, by bestowing the sovereignty on the husband of Michal. In the same character of public ambassador, he was received and feted by David; and while, ostensibly, the restoration of Michal was the sole object of his visit, he busily employed himself in making private overtures to David for bringing over to his cause those tribes which he had artfully seduced. Abner pursued a course unworthy of an honorable man and though his offer was accepted by David, the guilt*

and infamy of the transaction were exclusively his.⁵² I hope you recognize just how slick all of this is: David contacts Ishbosheth about Michal; Ishbosheth enlists Abner's aid to take Michal from her husband and to transfer her to David in Hebron; and this trip just happens to take Abner through the territory of Benjamin. This is a very well-crafted sequence of events.

Gill agrees: *Of the inhabitants of the tribe of Benjamin, of which tribe he was, and among whom he had the greatest influence; and with whom it was necessary to take some pains, because of their attachment to the family of Saul, which was of that tribe; and being near to that of Judah, might give David a good deal of trouble, if they were not won over to him.⁵³*

As has been discussed, Abner probably did not personally meet with the various tribes of Israel to convince them to support David; however, he did have a face to face meeting with the Benjamites. The tribe that Abner must convince above all others, is the tribe of Benjamin.

Why the Benjamites are the Most Important Tribe for Abner to Convince

1. Geographically, the importance of Benjamin cannot be underestimated. The territory of Benjamin sits right in between Judah, eastern Israel and northern Israel. No matter what kind of support that Abner drums up on David's behalf, if these men are antagonistic toward him, then they provide a natural division between David in Judah and the rest of Israel. Almost all travel and commerce between northern and southern Israel would go through Benjamin; having a bunch of angry malcontents in the midst of Israel is going to be divisive and dangerous.
2. Furthermore, much of Saul's army (which is now Abner's army) would have been culled from the tribe of Benjamin. God had seen to it that much of this army was wiped out at Saul's final battle (1Sam. 31); but Benjamites Abner and Ishbosheth would have no doubt culled a standing army primarily from the tribe of Benjamin.
3. The army most likely to resist a Davidic kingship would be the Benjamites; they were hard-headed to begin with; and Saul, Ishbosheth and Abner are all Benjamites. They are going to support their homeboy, Ishbosheth, simply for his lineage.
4. If one takes away the Benjamites who support Ishbosheth, then his army becomes stripped down to almost nothing. Ishbosheth is not a natural leader to begin with; take away his military, and he is nothing.
- 5.

Even though Benjamite support is crucial, Abner is confident that he can convince them. As a Benjamite and as Saul's uncle, Abner is in a unique position to throw support David's way.

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You may ask, *what can Abner say in order to convince these Benjamites?* Recall that Abner is a Benjamite; he is closely related to the house of Saul (he is Saul's uncle). He is in a unique position and he can give these Benjamites a unique perspective on things. He knows Ishbosheth. He can say, "Yes, Ishbosheth is Saul's son; but he is no Saul. Why do you hear about Saul's other three sons and their military exploits, but Ishbosheth is never mentioned? I am his great uncle and I put him into power, as you know; but, I have observed him in power for several years now, and I must back David instead. David is a true king; David is a leader; Ishbosheth is simply Saul's son, without the inherent royalty or leadership qualities."

A portion of the strategy of chess is, to get the other person to make the moves that you want him to make. You need to force him to make this move or that. What Abner is doing is manipulating a great many people to do his bidding. He's gotten David to agree to an alliance; he has gotten Ishbosheth to choose him to take Michal from her

⁵² Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, 2Sam. 3:17–21.

⁵³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:19.

home and to transport her to David; he has quietly convinced the elders of several northern tribes to support David. Abner is expertly manipulating those around him.⁵⁴

2Samuel 3:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
gam (גָּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Ăb ^e nêr (אָבְנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^e -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
lâmed (לִמֶּד) [pronounced l ^m ed]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
dâbar (דְּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
’ôzen (וֹצֶן) [pronounced OH-zen]	<i>ears</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #241 BDB #23
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Cheb ^e rôwn (חוּרָוֹן) [pronounced khe ^b v-ROHN]	<i>association, league, joined; transliterated Hebron</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #2275 BDB #289

Translation: ...and Abner also went to speak to David [lit., *in the ears of David*] [who was] in Hebron... Recall that there were all these supposed problems of Ishbosheth ruling fewer years than David ruled. I suggested that Abner probably went around from tribe to tribe in order to drum up support for Ishbosheth. This lends great credence to my theory, as that is exactly what Abner is doing at this time. He is sending personal messages to some tribes

⁵⁴ This is how I personally read and interpret this series of events.

and speaking directly to others; he checks in with David, to let David know what the progress is (I am assuming that here; it is possible that his only contact with David is the original message, a confirmation of David's terms, and his personal appearance here). I don't think that Abner is allowing David to wait around and wonder if he is doing anything and if there are any results. Abner is not going to get the job done, and then go to David with the results; he is going to check in with David now and again and let him know what the progress is, even if it is by messenger.

Application: I really don't know if this would be considered a spiritual application or not; but, when you are doing work for someone, now and again, you need to stop and tell them what you have done; you need to inform them of the progress which is being made. When someone is settling up a payment of debt to you, then, now and again, you need to let that person know that they are making progress against the debt. This is simply good business sense. This entire process of Abner's might take a few years. He cannot just let David hang there while he works his political magic. Therefore, Abner checks in with David to let him know what is going on. David, therefore, knows that Abner has not changed his mind or his new alliance; and that progress is being made.

2Samuel 3:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
`êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
`âsher (כַּשֵּׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kôl `âsher mean <i>all whom, all that [which]; whomever, all whose, all where, wherever.</i>			
ôtwb (טוֹב) [pronounced towb]	<i>to be good [pleasant, beautiful, delightful], to be delicious, to be cheerful [happy, joyful], to be kind, to be well, to do well, to do right</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect (or a Qal participle)	Strong's #2895 BDB #373

Apparently, the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect is identical to the Qal participle and to the masculine singular adjective as well (which is Strong's #2896 BDB #373). The masculine singular adjective means *pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved.*

b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
‘êyayim (עֵינִים) [pronounced gay-nah-YIM]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

Together, the bêyth preposition and ‘ayin mean *in my eyes* is used, it means *in my opinion, to my way of thinking, as I see it.*

Although Owen lists this as the feminine plural construct, it appears to be the feminine dual construct.

2Samuel 3:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yis̄rā`ēl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

Translation: ...all that [is] good [or, *beneficial*] in the estimation of Israel [lit., *in the eyes of Israel*]... This is slightly elliptical. Because of the sign of the direct object, this portion is the object of a verb, which is, reasonably, *to speak*. This is what Abner is saying to the tribe of Benjamin and to David—he is telling them all the good that would result in an alliance between the tribe of Benjamin and David. Do you recall how Abner manipulated things when he faced David's nephews? He called the shots; he made the suggestions; and even though his army was losing badly, he left much like it was a draw. So, we may reasonably assume that Abner is politically shrewd, extremely intelligent, and that if anyone can broker a deal between David and those who have sworn allegiance to Ishbosheth, it is Abner. Now, there is good which will result to all of Israel. There is no reason that Israel be split up; Israel should be under one king, as Israel is under one God. This would be probably the thrust of Abner's arguments.

2Samuel 3:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w° (or v°) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b° (בְּ) [pronounced <i>bəh</i>]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
‘eyayim (עֵין־עֵין) [pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i>]	eyes, two eyes, <i>literal eye(s)</i> , spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface	feminine dual construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

Together, the bêyth preposition and ‘ayin literally mean *in the eyes of*; it can be understood to mean *in the opinion of*, *in the thinking of*, *in the estimation of*; as _____ sees things to be.

Although Owen lists this as the feminine plural construct, it appears to be the feminine dual construct.

kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
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There does not appear to be any difference between the spelling of this word as a masculine singular noun or as a construct; here, it properly fits in as a construct.

bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
Bin°yâmîn (בִּנְיָמִן) [pronounced <i>bin-yaw-MIN</i>]	transliterated <i>Benjamin</i> , it means son of [my] right hand	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1144 BDB #122

Translation: ...and in the thinking of the whole house of Benjamin [lit., *in the eyes of the whole house of Benjamin*]. Important to the tribe of Benjamin is how this will favorably impact them. That is, this is Abner's primary sell, and

he has to make it good. Benjamin is on the border between northern and southern Israel. If the tribe of Benjamin resists David, they could be caught up in the midst of a constant civil war, and bear the brunt of the losses. Abner could point out how, he was beaten by David's army, and the Benjamites are fully aware of this. They know that Abner was slick in what he did, and escaped further loss only by his great intelligence.

Abner's arguments would be logical, well-thought out, and he would not force them down the throats of the elders of Benjamin. This tribe has a history of being hard-headed (do you recall the book of Judges?); so Abner cannot run roughshod over them. No doubt, there were several semi-public meetings where the pros and cons were hashed out, Abner sometimes holding back in this point and that, allowing those opposed to his ideas to fully explain their position, and then to be able to come back into the debate and list a number of reasons why an alliance with David is good and advantageous, reasons which he may have held back at first. I am, of course, speculating here, but Abner knows how to argue a point, he knows human psychology, and there is no reason to think that he misstepped in his presentation or counter-arguments.

I want you to think for a moment as to what Abner has done and the approach which he has taken. There are times when he made reference to God and God's hand in these things, as we saw in his message to the various Israeli elders (vv. 17–18). This is not necessarily the tact which Abner takes with Ishbosheth, David or with the elders of Benjamin. My opinion is, and this is based upon the abbreviated messages and conversations which are recorded here, is that Abner made reference to Jehovah, the God of Israel, when it suited his purpose; and he made no reference when it did not suit his purpose. I do not know Abner, and I have no idea whether or not he was a believer in Jehovah, God of Israel—Jesus Christ; but I suspect that Abner used the name of God in order to further his own machinations. Abner's motivation appears his anger against Ishbosheth for Ishbosheth's accusations against him. His motivation does not appear to be that God has chosen David to rule over all Israel, and he is therefore just backing the right horse here. This is all speculation, of course; but it fits with what has happened so far, and what will occur at the end of this chapter.

Application: You may be very good at getting your way; however, don't think that the end result is going to be what you want. Everything which Abner puts into motion, falls into place, exactly as he expects—all up until the end of this chapter.

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I tend to read the text rather critically, so when there are things which do not smoothly fit together, then I question exactly what is going on. If you read this text through quickly, you may not see that there are any problems. If someone is looking for contradictions, they may not find any either. However, there are some problems with the narrative of this text.

What are the Potential Problems of 2Samuel 3:6–19?

1. David's army and Abner's army are at war; however, we have messengers being sent from David to Ishbosheth asking for his wife back; furthermore, Abner will take Michal to David himself.
2. Ishbosheth accuses Abner of committing what might be seen as a treasonous act; Abner vehemently promises to support David and God's promises to make David king over all Israel. However, Abner still appears to be under Ishbosheth as Ishbosheth will apparently send Abner to fetch Michal and to deliver Michal to David.
3. David requests from Abner to get his wife, Michal, back. However, David will make a request directly to Ishbosheth, which Ishbosheth will agree to, even though, he and David are apparently at war.
4. Although a child by Michal and her husband could be a potential rival for Ishbosheth (even Michal's husband could be a potential rival); David and Michal would be a possible political force as well.
5. Somehow, in all of this, Abner seems to be able to send out messengers and to make personal contacts himself with the elders of central and northern Israel to realign them under David.

None of these apparent problems are insurmountable; however, in case you did not completely follow the events of this chapter, I felt it would be best to enumerate them.

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Although the narrative is quite clear here, the motivations and even some actions are a little fuzzy. Therefore, let me give you one theory of the events which have taken place.

The Actions and Motivations of David, Abner and Ishbosheth

1. What is very clear is, Ishbosheth accuses Abner of having sex with a mistress of Saul's, which could be construed as an attempt to forge a political alliance to overthrow Ishbosheth. In the eyes of Ishbosheth, Abner is the #2 man in the land, so any political move on his part would be to become king. Ishbosheth is merely manifesting the paranoia which we observed in his father Saul.
2. Abner is the one who placed Ishbosheth in power, probably as a last wish from Saul. Abner has shown no motivation to overthrow Ishbosheth and to take his crown.
3. For Ishbosheth to accuse Abner of what might be construed as treason, pushed the wrong buttons in Abner. Abner has been one of the most faithful men with respect to Saul's house; he was faithful to Saul and he has been faithful to Ishbosheth. Ishbosheth would not be king, apart from the workings of Abner. To accuse this man, who has put it as many as 40 years of faithful service, cuts Abner to the quick.
4. Abner not only lights into Ishbosheth, but he threatens to personally see that God's promises to David are fulfilled. Ishbosheth finds himself afraid of Abner, and is unable to take any action against Abner because of this fear.
5. Abner sends messengers to David to propose that he change sides and join David. David agrees to this, provided that Michal, his wife, is returned to him. At this point in time, Ishbosheth has assumed that his flare up with Abner has blown over; as Abner is still there in eastern Israel.
6. Abner tells David to personally request Michal from Ishbosheth, probably through a messenger.
7. Furthermore, it would have been improper for Abner to bring Michal himself, as he has not that authority. The decision to take Michal to David must rest on the shoulders of Ishbosheth. Abner could spirit Michal out of the country, but such a move would have been too bold and divisive. Abner needs to maintain a relationship with Ishbosheth until the last possible moment, which is what he is doing.
8. David, therefore, sends messengers directly to Ishbosheth, asking for delivery of his wife.
9. There appears to be a temporary cessation around this time of war between David and Ishbosheth. There does not appear to be a treaty drawn up, but Abner is in control of the army. Ishbosheth is afraid of Abner, and, if Abner chooses to stand down, to regroup, to take some time out to train new men, then Ishbosheth is going to go along with this. Ishbosheth is essentially waiting this unresolved blow up to blow over between himself and Abner. He probably has no idea that Abner has already made overtures to David.
10. When messengers from David come to Ishbosheth and request Michal be sent back to David, Ishbosheth no doubt had some misgivings about this. However, David's claims, that he fairly paid Saul the dowry of 100 foreskins (actually, David paid twice the dowry amount required), are well-known to Ishbosheth; Michal's original feelings for David are well-known to Ishbosheth (these may play no part in the decision); and Ishbosheth does not want a confrontation with David right at this time, when there is a falling out with Abner.
11. Abner has previously advanced against David; but there is no indication that David has been advancing against Ishbosheth. So, if Abner stands down, which I believe is the case; then David will stand down.
12. Ishbosheth receives this request from David, within a week of his argument with Abner; Abner's army is standing down; Ishbosheth does not want a confrontation with David's army, as he is unsure of what Abner might do; and David's request is reasonable; therefore, Ishbosheth agrees to David's request.
13. Even though Abner and Ishbosheth had a flare up, it is possible that Abner made no overt movement to go to David; and it is possible that Ishbosheth sees their argument as a temporary flare up of emotions; he clearly does not recognize that Abner is actively involved in garnering support for David.
14. It is even possible that Ishbosheth calls in Abner for his opinion, thinking that, if he asks Abner's opinion on this political matter, that Abner might forget about the argument that they had.
15. It is possible the Ishbosheth consults Abner or someone that Abner has set up as a consultant, and that Ishbosheth is convinced this is the right thing to do. Why would an alliance between David and Michal be better than Michal's relationship with her husband, insofar as Ishbosheth is concerned? David has not advanced against Ishbosheth (as far as we can tell); and Michal lives in the midst of Ishbosheth territory.

The Actions and Motivations of David, Abner and Ishbosheth

If Michal is removed from Ishbosheth territory (northern, eastern and central Israel), then Ishbosheth might better shore up his power and authority in those regions. These are arguments which may have been presented to Ishbosheth.

16. Furthermore, after their falling out, when Ishbosheth realizes that he is afraid of Abner, it is reasonable that he is going to go along with whatever Abner suggests.
17. In any case, Abner is called in and dispatched to get Michal, and to personally deliver her to David. I do not believe that Ishbosheth went to Michal himself.
18. When Abner picks up Michal and delivers her to David, this will fulfill the terms of their treaty; and Abner will go into Judah with the blessing of Ishbosheth, who has no clue that there is now an alliance between David and Abner. This would further suggest that Ishbosheth depended upon Abner's advice in this respect, as he uses Abner to transport Michal.
19. Notice how slick this is: David asks Abner for Michal in order to seal their agreement; Abner instructs David to request this openly of Ishbosheth; Ishbosheth, afraid of Abner, consults him and Abner suggests that Michal be dispatched to David; Abner goes openly to David with Michal, just as they had planned to do.
20. Coterminous with David sending his request to Abner, Abner is surreptitiously sending messengers throughout northern and central Israel to get them to back David; he even speaks to some men himself, either before or during the delivery of Michal to David. Abner probably spoke directly to the men of Benjamin during his trip to deliver Michal to David. It would be logical for him to have done these things together.
21. As we will see, Abner's delivery of Michal to David just happens to take him through the territory of Benjamin, where he will stop and personally drum up support for David.
22. David and Abner meet and finalize their bond with a feast. Abner departs in peace to finalize Israel's support for David.
23. Joab, out of revenge and hatred, will kill Abner later in this chapter.
24. It is likely that the fruition of Abner's work—getting the support of those throughout Israel—will result in thousands of men coming to David in 1Chron. 12:28–39.
25. What we have here is great political strategy on the part of Abner, who orchestrated all of this. However, Abner does not seem to consider the wild card, Joab. In my opinion, I think that Abner did consider Joab, the wild card, and figured things this way: *if he, Abner, drummed up support from all Israel for David, then Joab would have to recognize his loyalty to David and accept Abner as an ally; furthermore, David himself would speak to Joab, to make certain that he knew that he could not take revenge on Abner.* Here is Abner's only misjudgment in this entire affair—David, great man that he is, was not as fatherly as he could have been (recall that his father seemed to, for the most part, take a hands-off approach to David's upbringing). So, even though Abner expected David to speak to Joab and to call him off, as it were; it is apparent that David does not make this clear to Joab. What we find here is very tricky and very intricate; and few have the political wherewithal to pull this off, apart from Abner. However, this one miscalculation on his part cost him his life, as we will see.

About $\frac{3}{4}$ ^{ths} of these points are completely accurate and can be substantiated by this chapter and the verses which we have studied. The remainder of these points are the actions and motivations which are inferred to me by the text. My intention is not to provide a set of actions and motivations which I claim represent exactly how all of these things went down; my intention is to provide a reasonable theory to explain how these events took place and why each person did what he did.

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I am not finding any commentators who deal with the apparent inconsistencies or confusing details of this chapter. However, now and again, there will be a comment here and there. Many of these reflect an incorrect understanding of the situation.

Some Incorrect Notions of the Events of 2Samuel 3

Commentator	Incorrect Notion	Comments
Matthew Henry	<i>Ish-bosheth did not deny his demand, now that he had not Abner to stand by him, but took her from Phaltiel.⁵⁵</i>	Since Abner accompanies Michal to Judah, one might reasonably assume that Ishbosheth thinks that Abner is still under his command, despite their argument and Abner's promise to support David.
Keil and Delitzsch	<i>But it may gradually have become obvious to him, that the house of Saul could not possibly retain the government in opposition to David; and this may have led to his determination to persuade all the Israelites to acknowledge David, and thereby to secure for himself an influential post under his government. This will explain in a very simple manner Abner's falling away from Ishbosheth and going over to David.⁵⁶</i>	This sounds, on the surface, like a reasonable theory—Abner wants to back the right horse and gain the power associated with the strongest power. However, in going over to David's side, Abner is taking a big chance, since he killed a very popular young general, David's nephew, Asahel. Furthermore, there is already a pecking order in play with David, which would put Abner near the bottom of the generals under David. That Abner is responding out of anger and indignation makes a great deal more sense.
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge	<i>Joab was afraid that Abner, after rendering such essential service to David, would be made the general of the army; and therefore, under pretence of avenging the death of his brother, he treacherously assassinated the unsuspecting and too-confiding Abner, and such was the power of this cool-blooded and nefarious murderer, that the king dared not bring him to justice for his crime. But, while Joab's conduct cannot be too severely reprobated, the justice of God is apparent in Abner's punishment; who, from ambition, had pertinaciously, against his conscience, opposed the declared will of God; and was induced by base resentment to desert Ish-bosheth, and offer his services to David.</i>	They are of the same opinion as Josephus, and they are wrong for the same reason. Whereas, this could have been a component of Joab's thinking, Scripture plainly tells us that he was acting out of revenge (on account of the blood of Asahel his brother); and Joab acts so quickly, so that my knowledge of human nature would blame revenge rather than Joab figuring out that Abner might end up with a higher station than he in the military.

I have an advantage over these previous exegetes and commentators; I have a chance to carefully consider the original language; I have the opportunity to examine all that they have written; and, most importantly, it is much easier for me to edit my word than it was for them. I don't have to get everything right the first time. I can later review my work (which I often do), and make necessary changes, which represent a more carefully considered opinion.

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⁵⁵ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:7–21. Slightly edited.

⁵⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:6–39.

Now, along with commentary which was just flat-out wrong, I also read some commentary which, although I may not completely agree with, it at least caused me to think and to allow for the possibility that they are correct in their theories. Some of these opinions are listed below.

Interesting Theories and Notions of Commentators

Commentators	Their Theory or Commentary	Evaluation of Their Theories
Jamieson, Fausset and Brown	<p><i>The demand for the restoration of his wife Michal was perfectly fair; but David's insisting on it at that particular moment, as an indispensable condition of his entering into any treaty with Abner, seems to have proceeded not so much from a lingering attachment as from an expectation that his possession of her would incline some adherents of the house of Saul to be favorable to his cause.</i></p>	<p>We have seen that David was more than willing to wait on King Saul, as he was the anointed of God. Yet, Ishbosheth is not God's anointed. Therefore it would not be out of character for David to oppose Ishbosheth as king; I also think that David is not interested in a full-blown civil war. I think that David is more direct and less political. I don't see him as taking Michal as a political move. Now, if Michal was Abner's idea in the first place, then I would see this as a political move. We already know that Abner is able to manipulate people well. Had Abner and David had a face to face meeting, and had they come to the conclusion that bringing Michal back to David would be a condition, I would suspect that Abner set that up, even if David made the request. However, Abner sent David one message, and David send Abner a message back.</p>
Jamieson, Fausset and Brown	<p><i>Abner spoke the truth in impressing their minds with the well-known fact of David's divine designation to the kingdom. But he acted a base and hypocritical part in pretending that his present movement was prompted by religious motives, when it sprang entirely from malice and revenge against Ish-bosheth.⁵⁷</i></p>	<p>I think their sentiment here is more accurate. David is not a perfect person by any stretch of the imagination; however, when it comes to be politically motivated, I think Abner is more reasonably the one to be seen as guilty of that.</p>

⁵⁷ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, 2Sam. 3:17–21.

Interesting Theories and Notions of Commentators		
Commentators	Their Theory or Commentary	Evaluation of Their Theories
Keil and Delitzsch	<p><i>During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner adhered firmly to the house of Saul, but he appropriated one of Saul's concubines to himself. When Ishbosheth charged him with this, he fell into so violent a rage, that he at once announced to Ishbosheth his intention to hand over the kingdom to David. Abner had certainly perceived the utter incapacity of Ishbosheth for a very long time, if not from the very outset, and had probably made him king after the death of Saul, merely that he might save himself from the necessity of submitting to David, and might be able to rule in Ishbosheth's name, and possibly succeed in paving his own way to the throne.</i>⁵⁸</p>	<p>I personally see Abner is a loyal man who has no problem with being second in command.</p> <p>On the other hand, his reaction to Ishbosheth's accusation of him is reasonably explained as a man who would like to have the power which he exercises through Ishbosheth. For Ishbosheth to do this, means that he no longer can exercise any authority through him.</p>

As I mentioned before, because I can edit my work, it is most helpful to be able to review past opinions of these commentators, and to carefully consider their points of view.

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Abner and David Feast Together and Abner Leaves to Gather Israel to David

And so goes Abner unto David [in] Hebron and with him twenty men; and so makes David for Abner and for men who [are] with him a feast.

2Samuel
3:20

Then Abner went to David along with 20 men; and David made a feast for Abner and the men with him.

Then Abner went to David along with 20 soldiers, and David prepared a feast for Abner and these men.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so goes Abner unto David [in] Hebron and with him twenty men; and so makes David for Abner and for men who [are] with him a feast.

Septuagint

And Abenner came to David to Chebron, and with him twenty men: and David made for Abenner and his men with him a banquet of wine.

Significant differences:

The Greek adds the words of wine; and sometimes the word hear rendered feast can refer to a drunken party. The Latin and Syriac understood this to refer to a simple feast.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

⁵⁸ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:6–39.

CEV	Abner took twenty soldiers with him, and when they got to Hebron, David gave a big feast for them.
The Message	When Abner and the twenty men who were with him met with David in Hebron, David laid out a feast for them.
REB	When Abner, attended by twenty men, arrived, David gave a feast for him and his men.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

HCSB	When Abner and 20 men came to David at Hebron, David held a banquet for him and his men.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	When Abner came with twenty men to David at Hebron, David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him.
Young's Updated LT	And Abner comes in unto David, to Hebron, and with him twenty men, and David makes for Abner, and for the men who are with him, a banquet.

What is the gist of this verse? Abner goes with a small entourage of 20 men to speak with David in Hebron, and David prepares a feast for him.

2Samuel 3:20a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹ) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אֵל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
Cheb'rôwn (חֶבְרוֹן) [pronounced kheb'-ROHN]	<i>association, league, joined; transliterated Hebron</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #2275 BDB #289

Translation: Then Abner went to David... This does not appear to be different from v. 19 above, although it could be. Abner is said to speak to David in v. 19; here it says that he goes to David. Although, it is possible that Abner has gone to David with an update now and again, it is also possible that this is their first face-to-face since Abner sent David his original message. Abner has been sent to David with Michal by Ishboseth; and Ishboseth does not realize that this will fulfill Abner's pledge to David. Abner will also update David on his speaking to the tribes of Israel. He will essentially inform David that his coronation over all Israel is near.

2Samuel 3:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
‘êth (וְתָ) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
‘esrîym (עֶשֶׂרִים) [pronounced ges ^e -REEM]	<i>twenty</i>	plural numeral adjective	Strong's #6242 BDB #797
‘änâsîym (עֲנָשִׂים) [pronounced uh-NAW-seem]; also spelled ‘îyshîym (עֲישִׂים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

Translation: ...along with 20 men;... Note the size here. Abner is not traveling alone; however, he is not traveling with a group of men so large as to be intimidating. His approach with David and with the tribes he is winning over cannot be one of intimidation. 20 men is enough to give him reasonable protection, a small group which can move fast and stay hidden, if necessary; but not so large as to seem confrontational.

These 20 men would be a normal allowance for Abner to take in order to accompany Michal from her previous life to David. These 20 would also be Abner's closest allies in his army, and they would be aware of his scheme.

2Samuel 3:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
‘âsâh (הָשַׁה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
Dâvid (דָּבִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּבִיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
lâmed (לֵמֶד) [pronounced lem ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ăb ^e nêr (אָבָּנֵר) [pronounced ub ^e v ^e -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4

2Samuel 3:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^o (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (לֵד) [pronounced l ^e dm]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
’ānâsîym (אָנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-seem]; also spelled ’îyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
’ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
mishteh (מִשְׁתֵּה) [pronounced mish ^e -TEH]	<i>a feast, a drink, a drinking bout, a party, a banquet</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4960 BDB #1059

Translation: ...and David made a feast for Abner and the men with him. David was quite happy with what Abner had accomplished. David was able to make inroads for himself throughout Judah, but he had limited influence in the north. His biggest problem, of course, would be the Benjamites, who would be swayed more easily by a son of Saul, a Benjamite. Abner, having been the general who put Ishbosheth in charge, was in a unique position to say, "I've served under Ishbosheth, and, quite frankly, he is just not king material. Oh, you're asking me, *why did you put Ishbosheth up for king in the first place?* I did this as a promise to his father Saul, who made me agree to it the day of his death; and I kept my word to him; however, in seeing Ishbosheth in action, I can guarantee you that he is no Saul. Let me pose a question to you: why do you think Ishbosheth never participated in the military? Even his own father Saul knew he was not a leader or a man of courage." Obviously, these statements are conjectures on my part; however, I believe this reasonably represents the gist of what Abner might say to the Benjamites and to leaders of the northern tribes. Although we will not see this in the study of this particular chapter, it will be clear that David will receive widespread support from the north when we examine the latter half of 1Chron. 12. Although opinion about this varies, I believe that this support came because of the interaction of Abner with the elders of the northern tribes.

So David overseas a feast for Abner and the men that he is traveling with. Interestingly enough, Michal is not mentioned, although Abner has brought her to David. Ostensibly, Michal might see the feast as a celebration for her; but it really celebrates the coalition between Abner and David. A feast to mark a covenant was a common occurrence in the Old Testament.

And so says Abner unto David, "I arise and I go and I gather unto my adonai the king all Israel and they will cut with you a covenant and you have reigned in all that desires your soul. And so sends away David Abner and he goes in peace.

2Samuel
3:21

Then Abner said to David, "[With your permission], I will arise and go and I will gather all Israel to my lord the king. They will make a covenant with you and you will reign over all your soul desires. So David sent Abner away and he left in peace.

Then Abner said to David, "With your permission, I will arise and go, and then I may gather all Israel to my lord the king. The tribes will make a treaty with you and you will reign over all your soul's desire. So David sent Abner away in peace.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so says Abner unto David, "I arise and I go and I gather unto my adonai the king all Israel and they will cut with you a covenant and you have reigned in all that desires your soul. And so sends away David Abner and he goes in peace.

Septuagint

And Abenner said to David, I will arise now, and go, and gather to my lord the king all Israel; and I will make with him a covenant, and you will reign over all whom your soul desires. And David sent away Abenner, and he departed in peace.

Significant differences:

In the Greek, Abner is making a covenant (in David's behalf) with northern Israel; in the MT, northern Israel is making a covenant with David. As is most often the case, the Latin and Syriac are in agreement with the Hebrew; and, the difference is very minor.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

After the feast, Abner said, "Your Majesty, let me leave now and bring Israel here to make an agreement with you. You'll be king of the whole nation, just as you've been wanting." David told Abner he could leave, and he left without causing any trouble. Abner then said, "I'm ready. Let me go now to rally everyone in Israel for my master, the king. They'll make a treaty with you, authorizing you to rule them however you see fit." Abner was sent off with David's blessing.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Abner told David, "I must go now so that I can gather all Israel for you, Your Majesty. They will make a treaty with you, and you will rule everything your heart desires." Then David dismissed Abner, who left peacefully.

HCSB

Abner said to David, "Let me now go and I will gather all Israel to my lord the king. They will make a covenant with you, and you will rule over all you desire." So David dismissed Abner, and he went in peace.

JPS (Tanakh)

Abner said to David, "Now I will go and rally all Israel to Your Majesty. They will make a pact with you, and you can reign over all that your heart desires." And David dismissed Abner, who went away unharmed.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible

Then Abner said unto David—

I will verily arise and go, and gather together unto my lord the king all Israel—that they may solemnize with you a covenant. So will you reign over all that your soul desires.

LTHB

Young's Updated LT

And David let Abner go [or, sent Abner away], and he departed in peace. And Abner said to David, let me rise up and go, and gather all Israel to my lord the king. And they shall cut a covenant with you. And you shall reign over all that your soul desires. And David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

And Abner says unto David, "I arise, and go, and gather unto my lord the king the whole of Israel, and they make with you a covenant, and you have reigned over all that your soul desires;" and David sends away Abner, and he goes in peace.

What is the gist of this verse? After the feast, Abner leaves in peace, after confirming that David will be made king over all Israel.

2Samuel 3:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
’âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Ābēnêr (אֲבֹנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^e -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
’el (אֶל) [pronounced eI]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced koom]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
w ^e (or v ^e) (!) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: Then Abner said to David, "[With your permission], I will arise and go... Abner uses 3 verbs, all of which end with the voluntative hê. Essentially, he is asking David's permission to do these things. He is saying, "By your leave, I will arise and go." or "If the king allows, I will arise and go."

There will be a large number of men who will gather to David, which we read about in 1Chron. 12:22–38. This is essentially that which Abner set in motion. His leaving at this point is to go and gather elders or armies from these various tribes and bring them to David.

2Samuel 3:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qâbats (קָבַץ) [pronounced kaw-BATS]	<i>to take, to grasp with the hand; to collect; to congregate</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #6908 BDB #867
’el (אֵל) [pronounced eL]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
’ădōnây (אֲדֹנָי) [pronounced uh-doh-NAY]	<i>lord, master, owner, superior, sovereign; can refer to the trinity or to an intensification of the noun; transliterated Adonai</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #113 BDB #10
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
’êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Yis̄râ’ēl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis̄-raw-ALE]	<i>transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

Translation: ...and I will gather all Israel to my lord the king. We have the voluntative hê here, meaning that Abner was asking permission. He is saying, “By your leave, I will gather all Israel to my lord the king.” It is unclear whether he had begun to drum up support already or not; it is unclear how far along he was in doing this. This feast we are reading about may have occurred at the beginning or part way through this process, or at the very end, when Abner was certain about support. My guess is, this was part way through Abner’s campaign to garner support for David.

2Samuel 3:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kârath (קָרַת) [pronounced kaw-RAHTH]	<i>to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to make a covenant</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503

2Samuel 3:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
b ^e rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced b ^e reeth]	<i>pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, covenant</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1285 BDB #136

Translation: They will make a covenant with you... Abner has spoken to the elders all over Israel, and has got them to line up behind David. In 1Chron. 12, at the end of the chapter, thousands of men from all over Israel are going to show up in support of David. This did not just happen. They did not all simultaneously decide, "You know, David is an alright guy; let's go support him instead of Ishbosheth." Abner set this up; Abner set the wheels in motion.

2Samuel 3:21d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (וְ) (or v ^e) (וֵ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mâlak ^e (מַלְךָ) [pronounced maw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to reign, to become king or queen</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4427 BDB #573
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^e h]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
’âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Together, kôl ’âsher mean *all whom, all that [which]; whomever, all whose, all where, wherever*.

’âvâh (אַוְהָ) [pronounced aw-WAWH]	<i>to desire, to wish for, to crave, to lust</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #183 BDB #16
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced NEH-fesh]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

Translation: ...and you will reign over all your soul desires. Abner may, in fact, be slightly confused at this point. He has functioned under a man who had great power lust (after taking office) and Abner speaks to David as though this is David's great desire. Although we cannot look into David's soul, given his actions in the past, we know that he is not driven by power lust, but by doctrine.

Application: Now, you may not quite understand this, but two people can want the same thing, but for entirely different reasons—and the one desire can be honorable and the other desire can be sinful. In God's eyes, right and wrong is determined just as much by motivation as by the actual act itself. David does not want to rule over all of Israel because he wants the power; he wants to rule over all Israel, as this is his destiny—this is what God has for him. Not everyone is driven by power lust; personally, I have very little desire to have a position of great authority; I was good having authority over a classroom of 20 or 30 teenagers; I had no desire to have authority over the entire staff and student body.

We have an interesting application of this today. I am writing this in early June of 2006. Condi Rice is the secretary of state, and there is a popular, grassroots support for her as the republican presidential candidate. I have also heard her speak on this subject, and, unlike the canned political rhetoric, "I am not really giving any thought to running for the presidency at this point in time; I am just focusing on doing my job," Ms. Rice indicated that, even though she saw her self in service to her country, she did not see it in that capacity; and that she missed teaching. Now, of course, I could be bamboozled here; but I personally believe that this is a person without power lust; who would take the reigns of presidency with great hesitation. Bush had another person in his first cabinet—Colin Powell—who appeared to be the same way. He had no desire to seek the highest office. Either of these two, or both of them, might be the perfect persons for the job because they are rightfully awed by the power and position of the presidency; and probably do not feel up to the challenge of such a position. Anyone in their right mind would have the same hesitancy. The reason I say this is, David, I believe, is this kind of person. He has had opportunity after opportunity to rule over all Israel, and he has shown no little hesitation when it comes to *taking* the reigns of power. He would not kill Saul on two occasions; and he does not appear to be taking the offensive in his war with Ishbosheth and Abner. Although we have indications of previous troop movement by Abner toward Judah; we do not find corresponding troop movements by David's army. When Abner apparently seems to cease aggressions (after his argument with Ishbosheth), there appear to be no continued aggressions by David. My point in all this is, David does not seem to be consumed with power lust. He does not appear to have this burning desire to rule over all Israel. It is a position which he will assume reverently; but will not pursue it as if he is so destined or worthy.

Application: Sometimes, the best people for a position of authority are those who recognize the importance of that position and do not desire that position themselves.

2Samuel 3:21e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
‘êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Ăbénêr (אֲבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
w ^e (or v ^e) (!) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

2Samuel 3:21e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שָׁלֹם) [pronounced <i>shaw-LOHM</i>]	<i>completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022

Translation: So David sent Abner away and he left in peace. Abner politely asked permission to leave, as the verbiage indicates (he used the voluntative hé with the 3 verbs). David sends Abner away, and the idea is, they have a mutual agreement, a pact between one another. David obviously knows that Abner killed his nephew, Asahel, and is apparently able to overlook that, given the circumstances (which would have been relayed to him by his other nephews).

Abner will now leave and gather up either the elders or the armies from the other tribes of Israel and bring them to David. It is possible that David could become king over all Israel apart from a civil war. If all of the tribes give their support to David, and because Abner essentially controls the army which backed Ishbosheth; Ishbosheth will have no recourse when this all comes to pass. He will not have an army with which to oppose David.

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Joab Confronts David about Abner

And behold servants of David and Joab came in from the troop and plunder much with them they brought in. And Abner [was] not with David in Hebron for he sent him away and so he goes in peace.

2Samuel
3:22

Just then [lit., and behold] Joab and the servants of David came in from the division [of soldiers] and [they had] with them considerable loot which they brought in [to place before David]. Abner [was] not with David in Hebron [at this time] for he [David] had sent him away, and he had departed in peace.

Just then, Joab and a portion of David's army came in from pursuing enemies of Judah, and they brought a considerably amount of spoil in with them, which they placed before David. However, Abner was not there with David at that time, as David had sent him away in peace.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

Immediately, David's servants and Joab came, after having slain the robbers, with an exceeding great booty. And Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had now sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

Masoretic Text

And behold servants of David and Joab came in from the troop and plunder much with them they brought in. And Abner [was] not with David in Hebron for he sent him away and so he goes in peace.

Septuagint

And, behold, the servants of David and Joab arrived from their expedition, and they brought much spoil with them: and Abenner was not with David in Chebron, because he had sent him away, and he had departed in peace.

Significant differences:

What Joab and his soldiers arrive from is slightly different in the Greek; however, this may very well be a legitimate meaning of *the troop*. The Greek does add the personal pronoun, however, which is not there. The Latin has Joab and his men *having slain the robbers*; which may be their way of softening what Joab did with his army. Apart from this, the texts are essentially identical.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Soon after Abner had left Hebron, Joab and some of David's soldiers came back, bringing a lot of things they had taken from an enemy village.

The Message

Soon after that, David's men, led by Joab, came back from a field assignment. Abner was no longer in Hebron with David, having just been dismissed with David's blessing.

NAB

Just then David's servants and Joab were coming in from an expedition, bringing much plunder with them. Bern, having been dismissed by David, as no longer with him in Hebron but had gone his way in peace.

NJB

David's retainers were just then coming back with Joab from a raid, bringing a great quantity of booty with them. Abner was no longer with David at Hebron, since David had allowed him to go, and he had gone unmolested.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Just then David's men and Joab were coming home from a raid with a lot of goods. Abner had been dismissed, so he was no longer with David in Hebron.

HCSB

Just then David's soldiers and Joab returned from a raid and brought a large amount of plundered goods with them. Abner was not with David in Hebron because David had dismissed him, and he had gone in peace.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV

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.

LTHB

And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop. And *they* brought much plunder with them. And Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away; and he had gone in peace.

Young's Updated LT

And lo, the servants of David, and Joab, have come from the troop, and much spoil have brought with them, and Abner is not with David in Hebron, for he has sent him away, and he goes in peace.

What is the gist of this verse? Right after Abner leaves, Joab and his officers report directly to David, leaving their army parked outside (probably camped outside of Hebron).

2Samuel 3:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
'ebed (עָבֶד) [pronounced GE ^B -ved]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Yôw'âb (יָוָאָב) [pronounced YOH-aw ^b v]	<i>Yah is father and is transliterated Joab</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3097 BDB #222
bôw' (בָּוֶה) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
g ^e dûwd (גְּדוּדָה) [pronounced g ^e DOOD]	<i>troop, band [of soldiers], division, detachment; an incision, cutting [of the skin]; furrow [of a field]</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1416 (& #1417–1418) BDB #151

Translation: Just then [lit., and behold] Joab and the servants of David came in from the division [of soldiers]...

What is happening here is, Abner has left right before Joab shows up. This is fairly clear in the English, as our narratives tend to be chronological. Hebrew narratives are not always chronological, so we will find various ways that this time line will be clearly established. We have the words here *and behold*. The implication of these words is that, what we find in this verse follows shortly after the previous verse.

Joab and his army have been out making raids against the heathen of the land. I suspect that what is being said here is, Joab and the other high-ranking officers are those who come in to David. They are all called *servants of David*, as they report directly to David. Joab does not walk into the palace with all of his soldiers behind him—recall that his small force is 360 men; when going on a raid, he likely has thousands of men with him. They are the division or the band or the troop who are left outside; possibly even camped outside the city limits.

2Samuel 3:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâlal (שָׁלָל) [pronounced shaw-LAWL]	<i>booty, spoil, plunder, recompense, reward</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7998 BDB #1021
rab (רָב) [pronounced rahv]	<i>many, much, great (in the sense of large or significant, not acclaimed)</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #7227 BDB #912
'îm (עִם) [pronounced géem]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to take in, to bring, to come in with, to carry</i>	3 rd person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97

Translation: ...and [they had] with them considerable loot which they brought in [to place before David]. Something which I have a little bit of difficulty with, and I am sure you as well, is this aspect of the culture of that time: that these Hebrews could legitimately go out, take down a city of people, and take all of their things. This seems to have worked in two ways: (1) the people of a city (or area) and conquered and they become liable for tribute, something which occurred again and again in the book of the Judges, where Israel was always on the receiving end. (2) The people of a city or area are completely wiped out (or mostly destroyed) and all of their possessions are taken. David did this when he was in Ziklag, and it appears as though Joab is essentially doing the same thing. Now, what is legitimate about this is, God told the children of Israel to take the land which He gave them. Joshua took the land in general, and took enough cities to where Israel could settle into the Land of Promise. At the beginning of the period of the Judges, Judah and Simeon continued to take the land wherein they resided; but most of the other tribes seemed to choose coexistence with the indigenous peoples of the land. God knows the hearts of these other people and God knows their negativity. Israel was first to offer to these people peace through subjugation (I don't think that we have an actual recorded occurrence of this), and, if the people refused, then Israel destroyed them.

Now, I know this seems brutal, but bear in mind the following things:

Why it is Legitimate for Israel to Pillage

- God is omniscient; God knows the hearts of these people who live within the land with Israel and He knows the hearts of those who live in surrounding territories.
- God gives every man who is positive at God consciousness the opportunity to believe in Him. In our dispensation, God allows anyone who has believed in Him to have a spiritual life (unless their conversion is during the dying phase of their lives).
- The events which occurred surrounding the exodus were well-known to the peoples of Canaan and to Israel in their history. 500+ years later, men of Israel composed psalms which remember the exodus from Egypt. This event of history carried with it a great deal of momentum; God got a lot of mileage from this event. The God of Israel completely destroyed the gods of Egypt and overpowered Egypt. Egypt's slaves rose up, demanded their freedom, and then left Egypt—an event the likes of which is unprecedented in the history of the world.
- There were Egyptians who believed in the God of Israel and traveled with Israel into the Land of Promise

Why it is Legitimate for Israel to Pillage

(this is the mixed multitude, which probably was a mixture of Egyptians and other previous heathen). Although several commentators blame this *mixed multitude* for their lack of faith, that is unsupportable hogwash. They were no more or no less faithful than the men of Israel.

5. Therefore, the men in Canaan knew about the God of Israel; they knew about the great signs of judgment against Egypt; they knew about the power of the God of Israel. This was their exposure to salvation.
6. The Gibeonites, even though they did not know how to properly express their positive volition, knew that Israel would come in and take their land from them, and they submitted to Israel through deception.
7. Israel's laws provided for their slaves and for people who lived among them and gave them similar rights as those enjoyed by Israel.
8. However, there were always those who remained antagonistic toward Israel, because they were antagonistic toward the God of Israel. As we observed in the book of the Judges, Israel was persecuted by several groups of surrounding heathen.
9. This continues today. Modern Israel is but a tiny spec in the Middle East, and yet, there are thousands, if not millions of people who would love to see Israel completely and totally destroyed. They see Israel as the source of all of their problems, as the bane of their existence. These are Arabic peoples who hate God; who will demand the execution of a Arab who believes in Jesus Christ and will not verbally retract his faith.
10. So, I want you to understand here: these people existed during the time of Moses, during the time of David, and throughout all of Israel's history. They were negative toward the gospel, and therefore negative toward Israel. They wanted to see Israelis dead then, as do millions of Arabs today. God did not simply allow the destruction of such peoples; He mandated their destruction.
11. Therefore, under the steps outlined by God, where a people is given the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ; the Israelites were mandated to take the land from these people who were entrenched in negative volition.
12. David is in Hebron by the will of God; you will recall that he consulted the Ephod of God before coming to Hebron. We may reasonably assume that David continued to take Judah from the unconverted heathen which still remained, often through God's directive will.
13. There is no reason to assume that David is having his army attack helpless people or people who are on positive signals at the point of God consciousness.
14. There is every reason to believe that David's army is attacking groups of people who are openly hostile to Israel because they are openly hostile to Jehovah, the God of Israel.
15. Although there were occasions when Israel's army would not only destroy a people, but all of their things as well (which would have been unheard of in the ancient world), it was common when conquering a people to take that which belonged to them as well.
16. Bear in mind that this is under God's direction; and that God is not giving this type of direction to anyone today.

I know that this seems harsh to our culture; however, if you grew up next to people who hate you and would do anything to destroy you, then destroying them and taking their things is easier to understand.

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Application: I want you to recognize how different this is from today. We, in the United States, have no mandate from God to go into an adjacent territory, offer them the gospel, and then plunder the people if they do not respond to the gospel. You have to recognize that we live in a different dispensation. The United States is a client nation to God; and Israel in the past was a client nation to God. A client nation is a nation made up of a significant number of mature believers, who act as the preservative (salt) of that nation (this may be fewer than 1%, by the way). In this nation, the gospel and Bible doctrine will be made available to the general population; and missionaries will be sent out to evangelize the world. God also will bless any client nation, making these things possible. Maybe, we should examine this as a doctrine:

Client Nation USA versus Client Nation Israel	
Client Nation Israel in the Old Testament	Client Nation United States in the Church Age
Those who left Egypt in the exodus were virtually 100% believers; despite the fact that their hearts were often in rebellion against God.	I have read the estimate that 97% of the men who settled the United States could be classified as Protestants. Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that as high as 80% of the earliest population of the United States were believers in Jesus Christ.
God personally directed many of the policies of nation Israel. He provided them with the Law and He regularly spoke to them through priests and prophets.	God indirectly guides our nation, in part, by the thinking of believers filled with Bible doctrine.
God raised up judges, military men and kings to guide Israel.	God raises up military men, judges and presidents to help guide the United States.
Israel had a clear destiny and a clear territory, well-defined by God in His Word.	Although our destiny was not quite as clearly laid out in terms of God's communicating with us; the Manifest Destiny, that the United States should extend from shore to shore, is no doubt God's will for the United States.
God gave Israel a specific territory (all of which was never conquered by them), and made it abundantly clear—in writing—that Israel was to rid herself of the heathen influence from within.	Like all nations which establish themselves, God had a specific border for the United States (and for Canada and Mexico), which eventually came to pass. The Bible speaks of borders for nations.
Israel was mandated to rid herself of the heathen influences within her borders.	We, as a nation, are not mandated to wipe out mosques, Buddhist temples or cultic compounds within our borders.
Because of these clear mandates, Israel was to continue to take the land which God has given them.	Because we have no such clear mandates, we are not commanded to take pieces of Mexico or Canada.
Israel was guided by direct commands given by God.	We are guided by providence, the doctrine in the souls of the mature believers, and by an understanding of historical trends.
Israel was mandated to present the gospel to cities which she conquered. A nation was first to be allowed to surrender and submit to Israel; and submit to the God of Israel. God provided ample evidence to these other peoples through His taking of Israel out from Egypt and establishing them within the Land of Promise.	The Bible is clear that, any nation which supports the Jew will be blessed by God; therefore, we should welcome all Jews into our nation and provide them peaceful respite; and we should support the nation Israel against her multifarious neighbors.
I mention these things so, even though we can allow for Israel's behavior during the Old Testament; we are not given to the same types of actions—that is, there should be no holy wars initiated by the United States, nor should we involve ourselves in anything akin to the Crusades. There is no mandate for us to seize and hold any holy territory today, apart from our own. That being said, there are Biblical reasons for us to support the nation Israel, as it is a nation of Jews. It is been the general policy of the United States to support this nation, and we have been greatly blessed because of this policy.	

Application: At this point in time, in the history of the US, there are two great issues before us: (1) the overrunning of our borders by illegal immigrants from Mexico and Central America. (2) The establishment of a democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan. What has been left out of this picture is the spiritual dimension. For all that our president does right (President George W. Bush), there seems to be a distinct lack of evangelism occurring in Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, one of the recent news blips was an Iraqi (I think) believer who, during his divorce, it came out that he believed in Jesus Christ. He faced death by their heathen laws; and a European nation gave him refuge (if I am recalling the events properly). In this area, Bush should have stood up, and demanded that a man cannot be persecuted for believing in Jesus Christ. We are having a positive military and political and social affect on those two countries; and yet, if we do not allow them to experience a spiritual rebirth, then we are wasting our time on these short-term human solutions. A non-negotiable axiom of providing freedom for the Iraqi and Afghani people is the freedom to know Who Jesus Christ is and to be able to believe in Jesus Christ. Now, this will occur, to some degree, via cable television; however, we should have evangelists and missionaries on the ground in both countries. There should be a bill of rights which allows for religious freedom in these two countries.

At this point in time, in the history of the US, there are two great issues before us: (1) the overrunning of our borders by illegal immigrants from Mexico and Central America. (2) The establishment of a democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan. What has been left out of this picture is the spiritual dimension.

Application: Of course, people are coming to our country because of the prosperity which we have here. However, there are spiritual forces at work as well. Part of the reason that they come here is so that they can believe in Jesus Christ; so that they can escape the stranglehold that the Catholic religion has on Mexico and the rest of Central America. We need missionaries in these countries; they come here, because we are not sending enough missionaries there. We are not sending enough missionaries there, because there is not enough truth being taught in our churches here. Evangelists and missionaries need a lot more than a simple understanding of the gospel. They need to be spiritually growing themselves, as they have hundreds of decisions to make with regards to their spiritual gift. They may present little more than the gospel and basic doctrine where they go, but they need to have enough spiritual maturity to function as believers in the intense pressure that they live under.

Application: We need numerous Spanish-speaking churches here in the United States for those who have come here illegally. These churches need to give them the truth unequivocally (which includes the fact that they are here illegally, and that is spiritually wrong). And these churches need to give the gospel and unadulterated doctrine so that these people can make the correct decisions. We cannot legislate these people out of our country and we cannot legislate them into becoming Americans. These issues can be solved spiritually more easily than they can be solved politically (in fact, as you will see 10 years from now, all this hoo hah about illegal immigrants and all of the resultant legislation will do little or nothing to deal with the problem).

Application: Now, with this great influx of illegal immigrants, I want you to notice what is occurring simultaneously: Satan is doing everything in his power to eliminate the knowledge and understanding of our own spiritual roots. We have public schools going so far as to outlaw the Easter bunny during Easter; and to outlaw the colors of red and green during Christmas. Now, these are both heathen concepts; but, somewhere in all of that mess, is the message of the resurrection and the message that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world, to save sinners. More seriously, we have great spiritual anthems, e.g., *Silent Night* either being rewritten or left out of the public school system entirely. I recall vividly from my days in the school system singing these hymns, when people actually understood the separation of church and state (the state may not establish a religion). These songs of faith have been sung for decades in our public schools until most recently. You see, as these illegal aliens slowly assimilate into our culture, Satan is doing what he can to make our culture as heathen a culture as possible.

Application: I realize that I am going off on several tangents, but bear with me here: we have an almost frightening historical trend in the United States today—one where history is being literally rewritten. We have people calling George W. Bush a liar because we have not found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, while it is ignored the

former President Bill Clinton told us exactly the same thing in 1998 (along with others). We have our spiritual culture being excised from our schools. We have false statements about President Bush being repeated again and again, so that a huge number of people believe these false statements (the most common at this time is, George W. Bush is a liar). If we can so easily rewrite even contemporary history; if we can remove the great spiritual impact of Jesus Christ in United States' history; then do you see where our nation is headed? Make no mistake about it—our great economic prosperity is tied directly to our spirituality; our freedom is tied directly to our spiritual heritage. Our education is a result of spiritual decisions. If the founders and early educators of Yale and Harvard (just to chose two examples of many) knew the direction these colleges have taken, they would turn over in their graves (they do not reside in their dead bodies, but these men are face to face with the Lord at this time). Our greatest schools were founded by believers in Jesus Christ, not by well-educated heathen. So many people today ignorantly assert that education and science is anti-Christian, when our educational system has great spiritual origins and many of the great scientists believed in Jesus Christ, and had no conflicts whatsoever between their faith and science.

Never try to understand history or culture apart from the spiritual dimension. We have not had to fight a war in our own country for over 150 years; do you realize that is not by accident? Do you know how God has protected us? Don't think that you can turn your back on God and God's Word and that our country will remain the same. Our educational system has been, year by year, turning from its spiritual roots; and now, walk into almost any public school and observe what is happening. Have a conversation with any child graduating in the middle of his class and ask him to find France or Afghanistan on a map; ask him to give two distinguishing events related to World War I, World War II and the Viet Nam war. Our students are some of the most poorly educated students of the industrialized nations, and the reason is spiritual.

Application: Since I am so off on a tangent, let me continue with an historical interpretation which is rarely, if ever made (I am not aware of any pastor who has taught this, by the way). We have illegals flooding our country, primarily from the south; those who desire the opportunities offered them by the United States. These same opportunities have already been given to a whole other class of people—those Blacks who are the progeny of slaves which we brought here by force hundreds of years ago. This is God's will; this is God's foreknowledge. Thousands and tens of thousands of slaves believed in Jesus Christ and provided for their children a rich, spiritual heritage, a hint of which is seen even today. God did not simply allow random Africans to be taken to America; God chose specific men and women to be brought here, and God preserved many of these men and woman, along with their families and descendants. God gave these men and women the gospel and some Bible doctrine. This is cursing turned to blessing. Every African-American should do two things: shed the first half of their hyphenated identity and thank God for His grace in bringing their ancestors to the United States as slaves. A believer who does that understands that God controls history; they understand that God turned the cursing of slavery into blessing by exposing their ancestors to the gospel. A believer who does this recognizes God's hand in his or her racial history and is thankful for all that God had one on their behalf—which includes thankfulness that God brought their ancestors to this country as slaves.

2Samuel 3:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^o (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Ăb ^e nêr (אָבִנֵּר) [pronounced u ^b v ^e -NAYR]	my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4

2Samuel 3:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
’êyn (אֵין) [pronounced ān]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; there is no [none, no one, not]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #369 BDB #34
’îm (םִים) [pronounced géem]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Cheb ^e rôwn (חֶבְרוֹן) [pronounced khe ^b v-ROHN]	<i>association, league, joined; transliterated Hebron</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #2275 BDB #289

Translation: Abner [was] not with David in Hebron [at this time]... This may confuse you, as I am sure you are thinking, "Well, duh! It tells us in the previous verse that Abner is not there; he left." In the Hebrew writing, things are not always presented in a chronological order. That is, Abner could have come, feasted with David, and left in peace. While this feast was occurring, Joab could have shown up with his army and the items which they had taken in war. And then what follows in the narrative, could have been what happened between David, Abner and Joab before Abner leaves in peace. However, the author is making two things fairly clear: (1) Joab arrives after Abner leaves in peace; and (2) the occurrence of these events is fairly close together in time. It is confirming what our natural thinking would have been: Abner and David meet, eat, and Abner leaves; then Joab reports back to David. In an English narrative, this would be taken for granted; in a Hebrew narrative, not so much.

2Samuel 3:22d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

2Samuel 3:22d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שָׁלֹם) [pronounced <i>shaw-LOHM</i>]	<i>completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022

Translation: ...for he [David] had sent him away, and he departed in peace. The repetition here just indicates that, when David and Abner parted, they parted on good terms, as allies. Joab will not see it that way.

And Joab and all the army that [was] with him came and so they made known to Joab, to say, "Had come Abner ben Ner unto the king and so he sent him and so he goes in peace."

2Samuel
3:23

When Joab and all the army [that] was with him had come [to Hebron], they made [the following] known to Joab, saying, "Abner ben Ner has [already] come to the king, and he [David] sent him [Abner] away in peace."

After Joab and his army had come into Hebron, it was told to Joab that, "Abner son of Ner had already been in to speak to the king, and David sent Abner away in peace."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And Joab and all the army that [was] with him came and so they made known to Joab, to say, "Had come Abner ben Ner unto the king and so he sent him and so he goes in peace."

Septuagint

And Joab and all his army came, and it was reported to Joab, saying, "Abenner the son of Ner is come to David, and David has let him go, and he has departed in peace."

Significant differences:

The only difference is, we find the proper noun *David* rather than the pronoun *he* in the fourth phrase. Even prior to examining the LXX, I did essentially the same thing in my nearly literal and my paraphrased translations.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Right after they arrived, someone told Joab, "Abner visited the king, and the king let him go. Abner even left without causing any trouble."

The Message

As Joab and his raiding party arrived, they were told that Abner the son of Ner had been there with David and had been sent off with David's blessing.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

When Joab came back with the whole army, he was told, "Ner's son Abner came to the king, but David dismissed him, and Abner left peacefully."

HCSB

When Joab and all his army arrived, Joab was informed, "Abner son of Ner came to see the king, the king dismissed him, and he went in peace."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB

And Joab and all the army with him had come. And they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner has come to the king. And he has sent him away, and he has gone in peace.

Young's Updated LT

And Joab and all the host that is with him have come, and they declare to Joab, saying, "Abner son of Ner has come unto the king, and he sends him away, and he goes in peace."

What is the gist of this verse? When Joab and his army enter into Hebron, they are told that Abner had been there and that there was apparently an alliance between him and David.

2Samuel 3:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Yôw'âb (יָהָב) [pronounced YOH-aw ^b v]	Yah is father and is transliterated Joab	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3097 BDB #222
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
tsâbâ` (צָבָא) [pronounced tsaw ^b -VAW]	army, war, or warfare	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6635 BDB #838
'asher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	that, which, when, who, whom	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	with, at, near, by, among, directly from	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
bôw` (בָּאֵת) [pronounced boh]	to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97

Translation: When Joab and all the army [that] was with him had come [to Hebron],... Notice that Joab has not yet gone into to David to speak to him. As he arrives into town, he is told what had just happened. The entire city would know about his confrontation with Abner; and that Abner had killed Asahel. A few men would have questioned David's alliance with Abner and, for that reason, even waited for Joab to return in order to tell him what had happened.

2Samuel 3:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (לְמֵד) [pronounced lamed]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Yôw'âb (יָוָבֶּה) [pronounced YOH-aw ^b v]	<i>Yah is father and is transliterated Joab</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3097 BDB #222

Translation: ...they made [the following] known to Joab,... Joab comes into Hebron after fighting with some unnamed group of people. It is well-known throughout Hebron that Abner had come to speak to David. Now, he rode into the city with only 20 men, so he obviously was not a military threat to David. However, his visit there would certainly be the talk of the town, as everyone would know that Abner had come to see David, and everyone would know, if they knew nothing else, that Abner came and then left in peace. The entire city would also be aware that Abner had killed Joab's brother, Asahel. Therefore, most of the city would be aware that this would be information which Joab would want.

2Samuel 3:23c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (לְמֵד) [pronounced lamed]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
Ăb ^e nêr (אֲבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
bêñ (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Nêr (נֵר) [pronounced nair]	<i>lamp and is transliterated Ner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5369 BDB #633
'el (אֵל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572

Translation: ...saying, “Abner ben Ner has [already] come to the king,... Those in the know realized that this would be a very interesting piece of information to Joab, as he and Abner had recently fought in Gibeon, and Abner had killed Joab’s brother, Asahel.

2Samuel 3:23d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (נָלַךְ) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ)	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shâlôwm (שָׁלוֹם) or shâlôm (שָׁלוֹם) [pronounced shaw-LOHM]	<i>completeness, soundness, welfare, peace, safe, secure, tranquil, undisturbed, unagitated</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7965 BDB #1022

Translation: ...and he [David] sent him [Abner] away in peace.” This is quite fascinating, as this is the third time which we have seen this exact same phrase. We find it at the end of v. 21, as a part of the narrative; we find it at the end of v. 22, to indicate that Abner’s leaving and Joab’s arrival were very close in time. We find it here as a part of what was told to Joab. This is almost like the refrain of a hymn. No matter how quickly you read through this chapter, there should be no doubt in your mind that there was peace between David and Abner, despite the fact that Abner had killed David’s nephew Asahel in Gibeon. It is remarkable, in fact, that these two men at peace with one another, and the repetition of this phrase seems to indicate that.

And so goes Joab unto the king and so he says, “What [is] this [that] you have done? Behold came Abner unto you for why this—you sent him away and so he goes, going?

2Samuel
3:24

Then Joab went into to the king and he said, “What have you done? Listen, Abner came to you, [so], for what reason did you send him away, so [that] in going, he departs?

Then Joab, incensed, went in to the king, and he complain, “What have you done? Abner came to you, so for what reason did you allow him to leave, so that he could depart without incident?

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so goes Joab unto the king and so he says, "What [is] this [that] you have done? Behold came Abner unto you for why this—you sent him away and so he goes, going?

Peshitta

Then Joab came to King David, and said to him, "What have you done? Behold, Abner came to you; why have you sent him away, and he is gone from you?

Septuagint

And Joab went in to the king, and said, "What is this that you have done? Behold, Abenner came to you; and why have you let him go, and he has departed in peace?

Significant differences:

The final word or two is slightly different in the Greek, Syriac and Hebrew (the Latin agrees with the Hebrew). The Greek continues the repetition, and Abner left *in peace* (which could be based upon a scribal error on the manuscripts which they used). The Syriac instead has the prepositional phrase *from you*. The Hebrew and Latin both have a repetition of the verb, which simply emphasizes the action. "He just walked out of here? Are you serious?" might be how this is to be understood. As in almost every other case that we have examined, the difference in the texts has little or no impact on the narrative itself.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Joab went to David and said, "What have you done? Abner came to you, and you let him go. Now he's long gone!

The Message

Joab went straight to the king: "What's this you've done? Abner shows up, and you let him walk away scot-free?

NJB

Joab then went to the king and said, 'What have you done? Abner comes to you and you let him go away and now he has gone—why?

REB

Joab went in to the king and said, 'What have you done? You have had Abner here with you. How could you let him go and get clean way?

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Then Joab went to the king and asked, "What have you done? Abner came to see you. Why did you dismiss him and let him get away?

HCSB

Joab went to the king and said, "What have you done? Look here, Abner came to you. Why did you dismiss him? Now he's getting away.

JPS (Tanakh)

Joab went to the king and said, "What have you done? Her Abner came to you; why did you let him go? Now he has gotten away!

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

WEB

Then Joab came to the king, and said, What have you done? behold, Abner came to you; why is it that you have sent him away, and he is quite gone?

Young's Updated LT

And Joab comes unto the king, and says, "What have you done? Behold, Abner has come unto you! Why is this—you have sent him away, and he is really gone?

What is the gist of this verse? Joab runs in and confronts David, asking him, "What have you done? Do I have my facts straight? Did you really let Abner walk in here and walk out without detaining and executing him?"

2Samuel 3:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
Yôw'âb (יָהָבּ) [pronounced YOH-aw ^b v]	<i>Yah is father and is transliterated Joab</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3097 BDB #222
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eI]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572

Translation: Then Joab went into to the king... Joab is one of the few men who can walk right in to speak to David. Joab is David's nephew, and he has always looked up to his uncle, until now.

2Samuel 3:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mâh (מָה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
'âsâh (הָשַׁעַ) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Translation: ...and he said, "What have you done? Joab understands the gist of what has happened. He does not know why it happened. He does not know how Abner, their enemy, could walk in, have a conversation with David, and then walk out. First, Joab asks David, "What have you done?" Then he is going to make certain that he has his facts straight. However, even given that, notice Joab's insolence—he is speaking to the king of Judah, and taking a tone that no one should take with a king.

2Samuel 3:24c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
bôw' (בָּוֶה) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
Āb'ñér (אֲבֹנֵר) [pronounced <i>uh-bñ'-NAYR</i>]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
'el (אֵל) [pronounced <i>eI</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: Listen, Abner came to you,... Joab is now telling David what he knows. He knows that Abner was just there; Abner had just come in, probably within hours, and had spoken with David. Essentially, Joab is making sure that he has his facts straight. This verse may seem to be a little repetitive, but bear in mind, a part of what Joab is saying is, "Okay, my lord, let me see if I understand what just happened here...Abner—our enemy, the man who killed my brother—walked in here, chatted with you for awhile, had a meal with you, and then he just left? Am I understanding this correctly?"

2Samuel 3:24d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (לְמַד) [pronounced <i>l'mad</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâh (מָה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
Lâmed + mâh can be rendered <i>why, for what reason, to what purpose, for what purpose</i> , indicating an interrogatory sentence.			
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel perfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018

Translation: ...[so], for what reason did you send him away,... In Joab's mind, Abner is the #1 target of Judah and of David's army. In today's world, it is as if Osama Ben Laden walked into George Bush's office, and was allowed to walk out without incident. Joab cannot begin to grasp the politics here which must have taken place for David to allow the killer of his own nephew to walk in, chat, and walk out.

No doubt, David knows exactly what happened when Joab and Abner met; knew every detail of this incident, and understood the position which Abner was in. He also understood that Abner could have killed everyone (or, at least put up a good fight, and definitely taken out Joab and Abishai—remember, they were pursuing Abner, and Abner went over the hill, and the stood there, backed up by a small army of Benjamites). This told David that Abner was not out for blood; and Abner did not want this civil war to go any further. David had a past relationship with Abner, which, although not necessarily close, there was clearly mutual respect between these men. When David met Abner, he knew he could trust him.

2Samuel 3:24e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: ...so [that] in going, he departs? The idea is, in Joab's mind, is Abner walked in, spoke to David, and then just walked right out and departed, without any trouble, without being stopped, without being detained. In Joab's mind, this is the #1 guy on the wanted list in the post office, and he walked into a police precinct, identified himself, shot the bull, and walked out. Joab is beside himself. He cannot believe that David allowed this.

The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge makes a very astute observation at this point: *Joab and his brother Abishai, David's nephews, had been very faithful and highly useful to him in his distresses; and, from gratitude and natural affection, he had inadvertently permitted them to assume almost as much ascendancy over him as Abner had over the pusillanimous Ishbosheth. David trusted and feared them too much, and allowed them all the importance they claimed; which had emboldened them, especially Joab, to a high degree of presumption.*⁵⁹ The truth of these words will be born out in the remainder of this chapter.

You have known Abner ben Ner that to deceive you came and to know your going out and your coming in and to know all that you are doing."

2Samuel
3:25

You know [don't you] that Abner ben Ner came to deceive you, to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing."

You realize, of course, that all Abner son of Ner is coming in to do is to deceive you, so that he can know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

⁵⁹ Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, 2Sam. 3:24.

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	Know you not Abner the son of Ner, that to this end he came to you, that he might deceive you, and to know your going out, and your coming in, and to know all you do?
Masoretic Text	You have known Abner ben Ner that to deceive you came and to know your going out and your coming in and to know all that you are doing."
Septuagint	Don't you know the mischief of Abenner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive you, and to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all things that you do?"
Significant differences:	The Greek seems to take a less literal approach to the translation of the Hebrew. The Syriac and Latin also add a negative here. The Greek, Latin, Syriac and Arabic all treat this verse with a question.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	You know Abner--he came to trick you. He wants to find out how strong your army is and to know everything you're doing."
<i>The Message</i>	You know Abner son of Ner better than that. This was no friendly visit. He was here to spy on you, figure out your comings and goings, find out what you're up to."
NAB	Are you not aware that Abner came to deceive you and to learn the ins and outs of all that you are doing?"
NJB	You know Abner son of Near! He came to trick you, to discover your every move, to find out what you are doing.'
NLT	You know perfectly well that he came to spy on you and to discover everything you are doing!"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	Certainly you must know that Ner's son Abner came to deceive you, to find out about your movements and learn everything you're doing!"
HCSB	You know that Abner son of Ner came to deceive you and to find out about your activities and everything you're doing."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV	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."
Young's Updated LT	You have known Abner son of Ner, that to deceive you he came, and to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing."

What is the gist of this verse? Joab suspects Abner of meeting David just to determine his future actions—his negative attitude toward Abner is obvious.

2Samuel 3:25a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâda' (יְדָא) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393

The Latin, Greek and Syriac all have a negative here, which would also make sense in the English.

‘êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Ābənêr (אָבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^h -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Nêr (נֵר) [pronounced nair]	<i>lamp and is transliterated Ner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5369 BDB #633
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
lâmed (לַמֶּד) [pronounced l ^m ed]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pâthâh (הַתֵּחַ) [pronounced paw-THAW]	<i>to persuade [anyone]; to beguile [with words], to deceive [delude] [anyone]; to entice, to seduce</i>	Piel infinitive construct with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6601 BDB #834
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97

Translation: You know [don't you] that Abner ben Ner came to deceive you,... Joab now hates Abner; it is taken awhile for his brother's death to sink in, but now that it has, Joab wants revenge against Abner. All that Abner does is tainted by this. Therefore, Joab suspects all of Abner's motives and actions.

2Samuel 3:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (לַמֶּד) [pronounced l ^m ed]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

2Samuel 3:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâda' (יְדָא) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
môwtsâ' (מֹוֹצָא) [pronounced mow-TSAW]	<i>a going out, a sun rise, the place from which one goes out, that which goes out, that which is produced, origin, stock</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4161 BDB #425
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
môwbâ' (מֹוּבָא) [pronounced moh ^b -VAW]	<i>incoming, entrance, entering; going in</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4126 BDB #100

This is only found in 2Sam. 3:25 and Ezek. 43:11 and appears to be a form of Strong's #3996, intentionally changed in order to match môwtsâ' above (Strong's #4161 BDB #425). This could very well be a part of phrase popularly used at this time).

Translation: ...to know your going out and your coming in,... This is Abner's plan—according to Joab—to come in and speak to David, but to use this to figure out all that David is doing; when he comes and goes (which is a phrase to indicate all of David's activities). Joab assumes the worst of Abner, justified or not.

2Samuel 3:25c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (לֵם) (pronounced l ^e ')	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
yâda' (יְדָא) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3045 BDB #393

2Samuel 3:25c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
`éth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
`âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kôl `âsher mean <i>all whom, all that [which]; whomever, all whose, all where, wherever.</i>			
`attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced aht-TAW]	<i>you (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
'âsâh (הָשַׁע) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>doing, making, constructing, fashioning, forming, preparing</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Translation: ...and to know all that you are doing." Abner did not come for any other reason, in Joab's mind, but to know all of David's plans. Bear in mind that, after the natural shock of his brother's death wore off, Joab is now very angry at Abner. He thinks that Abner played him (which he did to some degree; but there was some sincerity in his final words as well).

Now, what we can get out of Joab's words is that he is angry. There are two options at this point: (1) he actually believes that Abner came to David strictly as a spy, in which case, he obviously is a man outside of the loop; or (2) Joab really has no idea whether Abner's conversion is sincere; however, he cannot simply accept it because of his brother's death; therefore, he needs to verbally bash Abner, regardless of whether the charges are true or not and regardless of whether Joab believes the charges to be true or not. I have observed exactly the same thing occur over the past several years with regards to Bush 2000—there were a number of people who took a strong dislike to Bush, and therefore, excoriated him for a number of things, whether true of false (Bush lied about WMD's in Iraq; Bush hates black people, which is why so many died in New Orleans; etc.). These things were repeated so many times that, they came to be believed by a large number of people. However, David is not as easily swayed by gossip, rumors or lies; he is going to base his opinions on the facts which he knows, meaning he will, insofar as we know, completely ignore this statement by Joab. There is no reason to give it any credence; and David probably recognizes that Joab is simply expressing his extreme anger.

We do not know whether David had a response or not. I suspect that David, who was probably overindulgent with his nephews, did not spend a lot of time correcting Joab. Joab may have simply stormed out after saying these things, or David may have said very little. It is at this point when David should have stopped Joab, or had him stopped, and then sweated his shadow into the wall for his impertinence and total lack of respect. Then David should have made it clear to Joab that no harm was to come to Abner. Not only is this David's prerogative, but it is his responsibility to Joab to set him straight. However, we see none of this. Joab will take matters into his own hands, which is not what should be done here.

It is David's responsibility to set Joab straight at this point, and to let him know that Abner is now their ally.

Theories About David's Response to Joab

Joab stomped out of David's office too quickly for David to set him straight. David figured, Abner was gone; Joab was angry to a point that he could not be reasoned with; so he would just let Joab calm down, bring him back into his office, and set him straight in the next few days. After all, Joab and Abner would not meet face to face, in David's mind, for another several weeks.

This could simply be David's weakness. Joab is his nephew and looks up to him, but David does not give him enough guidance and direction. We will observe this with David's sons, who act as laws unto themselves. David appears to have been brought up with a fairly hands-off approach, given that he spent so much time with his father's flocks. He may have used these same techniques with his nephews and sons.

A third theory is, David did make his policy to Joab clear; we just don't find that recorded here.

Whatever David did or did not say to Joab; it will be clear that it did not dissuade Joab from acting on his own.

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Joab Deceives Abner and then Kills Him/David asks for Divine Retribution

And so Joab goes out from with David and so he sends messengers after Abner; and they bring him back from a cistern of Sirah, but David does not know.

2Samuel
3:26

Then Joab went from being with David and sent out messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern of Sirah—[which] David did not know [about].

Joab left David's office and, unbeknown to David, sent messengers out to Abner, who caught up with Abner at the cistern of Sirah (not too far outside of Hebron) and brought him back.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so Joab goes out from with David and so he sends messengers after Abner; and they bring him back from a cistern of Sirah, but David does not know.

Septuagint

And Joab returned from David, and sent messengers to Abenner after him; and they bring him back from the well of Seiram: but David knew it not.

Significant differences:

There may be some question as to the first verb. The Syriac, Latin and Hebrew are in agreement. The verb we find in the Septuagint is the same verb found at the beginning of the next verse. This would suggest a scribal error in the manuscript which they used. In the second phrase, there is some slight differences in the phrasing of the Greek, which essentially means the same as the Hebrew (*to Abenner after him* as opposed to *after Abner*). The remainder of the verse is identical.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Joab left David, then he sent some messengers to catch up with Abner. They brought him back from the well at Sirah, but David did not know anything about it.

The Message

Joab left David and went into action. He sent messengers after Abner; they caught up with him at the well at Sirah and brought him back. David knew nothing of all this.

- NJB Joab left David's presence and sent messengers after Abner and these, unknown to David, brought him back from the storage-well at Sirah.
- REB Leaving David's presence, Joab sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the Pool of Sirah; but David knew nothing of this.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

- God's Word™ After leaving David, Joab sent messengers after Abner. They brought him back from the cistern of Sirah without David knowing about it.
- HCSB Then Joab left David and sent messengers after Abner. They brought him back from the well of Sirah, but David was unaware of it.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- ESV 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.
- Young's Updated LT And Joab goes out from David, and sends messengers after Abner, and they bring him back from the well of Sirah, and David knew not.

What is the gist of this verse? Joab leaves David and lures Abner to him, apart from David's knowledge.

2Samuel 3:26a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsâ` (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
Yôw'âb (יֹהָב) [pronounced YOH-aw ^b V]	<i>Yah is father and is transliterated Joab</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3097 BDB #222
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
‘îm (בְּיַם) [pronounced geem]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâviyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

Together, these prepositions mean: *from with, beside, from being with, away from, far from, from among, from the possession of, from the custody of, from the house of, from the vicinity of, out of the power of, from the mind of.*

Translation: Then Joab went from being with David... As Joab leaves David, he is probably fuming and filled with hatred and revenge against Abner. He possibly is even forming a plan in his head as he leaves David. This does not mean that David realizes what he is doing.

2Samuel 3:26b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
mal ^e âk ^e (מַלְאָךְ) [pronounced mahl ^e -AWK ^e]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
'achârêy (אַחֲרֵי) [pronounced ah-kuh-RAY]	<i>hinder parts; behind, after; following; after that, afterwards</i>	preposition; plural form	Strong's #310 BDB #29
Ăb ^e nêr (אָבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^e -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4

Translation: ...and sent out messengers after Abner,... Joab is not going to go after Abner himself. He has to out think Abner. He knows that David and Abner have just met and that there is doubtless a treaty of some sort worked about between the two of them. We are not privy to the entire conversation between David and Joab, but Joab picks up enough information to formulate a plan. These messengers which he sends are going to represent themselves as coming from David, rather than from Joab, I would suppose. The message may mention something about Joab, but it is a message which will cause Abner to return.

2Samuel 3:26c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (!) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to cause to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to send back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to, toward</i>	affixed to a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bôwr (בּוֹר) [pronounced bohr]	<i>pit, cistern, well</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #953 BDB #92

2Samuel 3:26c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Sirâh (סִרָּה) [pronounced sih-RAWsee-RAW?]	<i>a turning, a departure;</i> transliterated Sirah	proper noun, singular; location; with the definite article	Strong's #5626 BDB #92

Translation: ...and they brought him back from the cistern of Sirah... Abner had left, but apparently was not too far out of Hebron. He was probably heading north, and he had been with David so recently, that Abner could send his messengers to catch up with him. This cistern of Sirah is mentioned nowhere else; however, we may reasonably assume that it is located north of Hebron (which is the direction that Abner would have been traveling). Furthermore, given the narrative, it is very likely right outside of Hebron, as it sounds like Joab just missed Abner. Josephus calls it Besira places it 2.5 miles outside of Hebron.⁶⁰

2Samuel 3:26d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
lô` (אַל or אֶל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâda` (יָדָא) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #3045 BDB #393

Translation: ...—[which] David did not know [about]. We are witnessing a little political intrigue; Joab is luring Abner to him, but without David knowing that this is going on.

And so returns Abner [to] Hebron and so turns him Joab unto a midst of the gate to speak with him in privacy. And so he strikes him there to the belly and so he dies in blood of Asahel his brother.

2Samuel
3:27

So Abner returned [to] Hebron but [lit., and so] Joab turned him toward the middle of the gate to speak with him privately. Then he [Joab] struck him there [in] the belly and he died because of the blood of Asahel his brother.

So Abner returned to Hebron, but Joab motioned for him to speak with him privately near the middle of the gate. Then Joab struck him in the belly and Abner died for the blood of Asahel, Joab's brother.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

⁶⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:26. Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:26. Josephus, Antiquities I. 7. c. 1. sect. 5

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so returns Abner [to] Hebron and so turns him Joab unto a midst of the gate to speak with him in privacy. And so he strikes him there to the belly and so he dies in blood of Asahel his brother.
Peshitta	And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside to a secret place within the gate to speak with him quietly, and he struck him there in his abdomen, and he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.
Septuagint	And he brought back Abenner to Chebron, and Joab caused him to turn aside from the gate to speak to him, laying wait for him: and he smote him there in the loins, and he died for the blood of Asael the brother of Joab.

Significant differences: I think that we have a serious problem with the LXX text. There is no indication in this context that Joab brings Abner back himself to Hebron. It is possible that the idea is, *Joab lures Abner back to Hebron*; however, Joab is not with Abner at the time.

The Syriac makes mention of a particular secret place in the gate, which might simply indicate that this is sort of a private area, like a booth in the middle of the gate, rather than some secret entrance which leads to a trap door, etc. In the Greek, Abner is turned aside *from* the gate, rather than being urged toward the middle of the gate.

Finally, instead of *his brother*, the LXX has *the brother of Joab*.

So far, these are some of the greatest differences that we have found in the texts (the Hebrew and Latin are almost identical). Even with these differences, which portray a slightly different set of circumstances, there is nothing here which affects any doctrine, major or minor.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab pretended he wanted to talk privately with him. So he took Abner into one of the small rooms that were part of the town gate and stabbed him in the stomach. Joab killed him because Abner had killed Joab's brother Asahel.
<i>The Message</i>	When Abner got back to Hebron, Joab steered him aside at the gate for a personal word with him. There he stabbed him in the belly, killed him in cold blood for the murder of his brother Asahel.
NJB	When Abner reached Hebron, Joab took him aside in the town-gate, as if to have a quiet word with him, and there struck him a mortal blow in the belly to avenge the blood of his brother, Asahel.
NLT	When Abner arrived at Hebron, Joab took him aside at the gateway as if to speak with him privately. But then he drew his dagger and killed Abner in revenge for killing his brother Asahel.
REB	On Abner's return to Hebron, Joab drew him aside in the gateway, as though to speak privately with him, and there, in revenge for his brother Asahel, he stabbed him in the belly, and he died.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gateway as if to talk to him privately. There he stabbed Abner in the belly. Abner died because he spilled the blood of Joab's brother Asahel.
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HCSB

When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab pulled him aside to the middle of the gateway, as if to speak to him privately, and there Joab stabbed him in the stomach. So Abner died in revenge for the death of Asahel, Joab's brother.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV

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.

WEB

When Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him quietly, and struck him there in the body, so that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

Young's Updated LT

And Abner turns back to Hebron, and Joab turns him aside unto the midst of the gate to speak with him quietly, and strikes him there in the fifth rib —and he dies—for the blood of Asahel his brother.

What is the gist of this verse? Abner is lured back to Hebron, and Joab manages to meet him at the gate, and asks to speak with him privately. When they move to the center of the gate (possibly to a small control station at the center of the gate), Joab kills Abner, taking revenge on him for the death of Asahel, Joab's brother.

2Samuel 3:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shûwb (שׁוּבּ) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
Āb ^e nér (אָבְנֵרּ) [pronounced u ^b v-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
Cheb ^e rôwn (חוּרֹןּ) [pronounced khe ^b v-ROHN]	<i>association, league, joined; transliterated Hebron</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #2275 BDB #289

Translation: So Abner returned [to] Hebron... The message sent to Abner was, no doubt, to have him return to speak to David, rather than to Joab. Had Abner thought that Joab was going to be waiting there for him, then he would have had time—several hours at least—to think about Joab and what he might want. However, I would speculate that Abner did not even think about Joab, but that his mind was on the politics of his situation and his alliance with David. He might be over thinking, *now what does David want to see me for, all of a sudden? We just spoke; what is on his mind?*

2Samuel 3:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâtâh (נָתָה) [pronounced naw-TAWH]	<i>to extend, to stretch out, to spread out, to expand; to incline downwards; to turn, to turn away [aside, to one side]; to push away, to repel, to deflect; to decline; to seduce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5186 BDB #639
Yôw'âb (יָוָב) [pronounced YOH-aw ^b V]	<i>Yah is father and is transliterated Joab</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3097 BDB #222
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eL]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); expanded meanings given	Strong's #413 BDB #39
tâvek ^e (תַּוְקֵה) [pronounced taw-VEK ^E]	<i>midst, among, middle</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8432 BDB #1063
sha'ar (שַׁעַר) [pronounced SHAH-gahr]	<i>gate [control of city can be implied]; area inside front gate; entrance</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8179 BDB #1044

Translation: ...but [lit., and so] Joab turned him toward the middle of the gate... The entrance to the city had many functions. There could be a checkpoint here for those going in and out (which would be very likely, considering that this was the capitol city). Joab may have been standing guard there with his men, which would not be an unusual thing. Some translations suggest that there might be a booth of some sort at the middle of the gate. In modern gated communities, sometimes there is a booth at the gate, with an entry road on one side and the exit on the other. At this check point, a rent-a-cop might check you as you enter into the community. It is not unreasonable to suppose that this was the scenario here.

It is at the gate of the city where court is often held and where town meetings are held. I would speculate that none of these things are going on at this time. Joab had probably seen to it that things were relatively quiet at the gate, however, doing so in such a way as to not arouse suspicion or to alert David.

Gill makes an interesting suggestion at this point that Joab chose the gate because this is a relatively public area, and that Abner would not expect Joab to act in a public area like this. Gill: *Joab took him aside in the gate: where he was waiting for him, and met him; this was a public place, where people were continually passing and repassing, and where courts of judicature used to be held; wherefore Abner might think himself safe here with Joab, and have no suspicion at all of his design, and shows how fearless Joab was of God or men.*⁶¹

⁶¹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:27.

Gordon gives us some insight concerning the city gate of an ancient city: *The gate...of an ancient city could be a quite substantial construction with screen walls and bays; compare the six-chambered gateways at, for example, Megiddo and Hazor.*⁶²

Freeman tells us: *The expression...in the midst of the gate...probably refers to some dark corner in the vaulted gateway where two persons might retire and converse unseen. To some such recess Joab invited Abner, avowedly for conversation, but really to kill him.*⁶³

2Samuel 3:27c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lāmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lahmed</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
dâbar (דָבָר) [pronounced <i>daw'-VAHR</i>]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b'eh</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shelîy (שְׁלִיָּה) [pronounced <i>shehl-EE</i>]	<i>quiet, quietness; private, privacy; silence, tranquility</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7987 BDB #1017

Translation: ...to speak with him privately. This would be Joab's reason that Abner hears. Speculation is the best we can do here. Perhaps Joab had a dagger hidden, perhaps in a belt behind him. Perhaps he held his arms out, to show that he was unarmed (had no belt for a sword and no apparent weapons on him). Perhaps he said, "David has told me to speak with you" or "We should talk, and clear the air" or "Could I have a short word with you before you go in to speak to David?" or something along these lines.

Here, the student has become the teacher. It is clear that Abner could think on his feet and under pressure, and that he was able to steer the events of his meeting with Joab exactly as he had wanted (he would have preferred not to kill Asahel, but he had no choice). However, this time, Joab is taking the initiative and getting Abner to go along with him. Why Abner was caught off guard here, we do not know. How Joab could lure him without Abner recognizing what was going on, we do not know. Recall that Abner was highly upset with Ishbosheth, and that he had been campaigning with the other tribes to make David king over all Israel. It is possible that these trips had tired him out, and it is possible that his peace with David, which had gone on for several months, if not a year, had made him complacent. Abner was probably more suspicious of those who were potentially allied with Ishbosheth. In any case, Joab lures Abner aside under the guise of having a few words with him in private.

⁶² Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 220.

⁶³ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; reprinted in 1972 by Logos International; p. 142.

2Samuel 3:27d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâkâh (נַקֵּה) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat, to conquer, to subjugate	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong #5221 BDB #645
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
chômesh (חוֹמֶשׁ) [pronounced KHOH-mesh]	belly, abdomen, stomach; fifth [rib]; fifth [part]	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2569 & #2570 BDB #332

BDB seems to struggle with this word, but, in my estimation, without cause. 4 times it clearly refers to the *belly*, *stomach* or *abdomen* (2Sam. 2:23 3:27 4:6 20:10); one time, it refers to the *fifth part* of produce—i.e., it refers to a tax (Gen. 47:26). Its cognates, for the most part, are related to the numeral 5. What is likely the case is, this word was understood to mean the *fifth rib*; but was used commonly and metaphorically for the *stomach* or *abdomen*. The idea could have come from the idea of stabbing a person above or below the fifth rib was likely to result in a quick death for that person, so that became the target area in battle (this is only a guess; it seems like the stomach and neck would have been better targets). Given what happens in this context, one could reasonably argue that this word came to be used even in reference to the *stomach* below the ribs.

Translation: Then he [Joab] struck him there [in] the belly... Joab apparently had some privacy there at the midst of the gate. We can only speculate here as to why. Joab is not going to know exactly when Abner is going to walk through this gate, and the entrance to a city is often a very busy place, where there may or may not be a check point and where court cases were often heard and where public meetings were held. Let me speculate that Joab worked things out so that he could be the checkpoint at this gate. Whether he went to David to do this, or whether he spoke to the men who were there, and said, “I’ll take over for awhile” we don’t know. We do know that he is at the gate and that it appears as though he has some privacy there.

By the way, this is well-planned out and clearly pre-meditated. Joab striking Abner in the stomach was not a sudden act of passion, but he sought to kill Abner in the same manner that Abner killed Asahel (see 2Sam. 2:23). We will find out in the future that Joab is a cool, calculated killer; and this will not be the last man that he kills apart from war.

Incorrect Notions Part II

Theologian	Theory	Comments
Josephus	Josephus theorizes that Joab will kill Abner not just for revenge, but also because <i>he was fearful if Abner was received into the friendship of the king, he would be preferred unto him, and take his place as general of the army, as being an older and more experienced officer.</i> ⁶⁴	When I first read this, I rejected it outright, as I assumed that the reason of revenge is clearly given in 2Sam. 3:27; this does not eliminate professional jealousy as a second motivating factor. However, given how quickly Joab acted when given the chance, I think that revenge far outweighed any other consideration. Had Abner been an ally for awhile and had Joab thought things through, then I could agree with the opinion of Josephus here.
Jamieson, Fausset and Brown	<i>Joab...stabbed him unawares; not within Hebron, for it was a city of refuge, but at a noted well in the neighborhood.</i> ⁶⁵	Jamieson, Fausset and Brown make a serious mistake here, by alleging that Joab was careful to kill Abner outside of the city limits. There is no reason to assume that Joab paid any attention to the fact that Hebron was a city of refuge; he is taking the law into his own hands here; he is avenging his brother; I doubt that his location would change his mind.

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A reasonable question to pose at this time is, *why did Abner not realize what Joab was doing? Why was he at least not suspicious, having his guard up?*

How is it that Joab is able to Catch Abner Off-Guard?

1. Abner expects to go back and to iron our a detail or two with David. His mind did not have time to process the idea that he was facing any sort of a trap (with his small force of 20 men, David could have killed Abner at any time, so Abner has no reason to be suspicious of a message from David).
2. Abner had spent a great deal of time at war; he had spent a great deal of time organizing Israel behind David; he had just made a long trip to bring Michal to David, which culminated with a long feast; and he was on the go again, to complete the details for bringing all Israel under David. He was, no doubt, exhausted after all this (bear in mind that Abner is an old man—at least 60 and possibly 70).
3. Abner's keen instincts are honed for war; he has just feasted, possibly drunk a bit, and his instincts are not as keen as they normally are.
4. Joab meets Abner in a very public place. Even though Abner is called aside privately by Joab, Joab could have said, "David would like us to work together" or "We should clear the air, as we are working together" or "We should call a personal truce, as we are now on the same side" or words to that effect. The public place, seeing Joab suddenly, but hearing the few words from Joab put Abner at ease. No doubt, he is thinking, "Joab is not going to kill me here, in a public place, with David not but a few hundred yards away."
5. No doubt, one of the topics discussed by David and Abner during the feast was Joab; David probably gave Abner assurances, like, "I'll take care of Joab. He is my nephew after all." The problem is, as we have observed, David did not take care of his nephew (recall that I presented several theories concerning what

⁶⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 2:27. Gill references Josephus; Antiquities I. 7. c. 1. sect. 5.

⁶⁵ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, 2Sam. 3:24–27.

How is it that Joab is able to Catch Abner Off-Guard?

David did or did not say to Joab when Joab confronted him).

These are all theories, of course, simply offered to make the fact of Abner relaxing his guard here reasonable.

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2Samuel 3:27e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mûwth (מוֹתֵה) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

Although the bêyth preposition is primarily a preposition of proximity, it can also mean *in, among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; because of; by means of, about, concerning*.

dâm (דָם) [pronounced dawm]	<i>blood, often visible blood; bloodshed, slaughter; bloodguilt; blood of the grape [wine]</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1818 BDB #196
‘Asâh’êl (אֲשָׁהֵל)	<i>God has made; transliterated Asahel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #6214 BDB #795
’âch (נָخַ) [pronounced awhk]	<i>brother, kinsman or close relative</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26

Translation: ...and he died because of the blood of Asahel his brother. Joab killed Abner because Abner had killed his brother in battle a few months earlier (I am guessing at the time frame). Joab was eaten up by revenge. You must

In reading this, you must bear several things in mind. Therefore, here is a list as to why...

Joab is Wrong

1. Joab was filled with mental attitude sins. He wanted revenge, he hated Abner, he was bitter toward Abner. No matter what the circumstances, acting out of rage or acting with mental attitude sins as being your motivation will result in sin. You cannot do anything in a wrong way and for the result to be good.
2. David was the recognized authority at this time. David could have, as the judge of the land, executed Abner. David had most of the facts, and they were from the perspective of Joab and his brother; therefore, any decision that David made with regard to Abner would be naturally weighed in favor of Joab's desire. However, David chose not to execute Abner or to even suggest such a thing. This indicates that, despite

Joab is Wrong

- Joab's description of what happened,* David did not seek the death of Abner.
3. It was also probably clear to David that Abner could have killed his other two nephews as they came up over the hill and stood before Abner and a small army of Benjamites (2Sam. 2:24–25). This indicates to David that Abner did not kill Asahel for sport or to make a point, but out of necessity.
 4. David, as the law of the land, has the authority to excuse Abner for this incident, and apparently, this is what David did. When Joab chose to kill Abner, he was taking the law into his own hands.
 5. David is the authority in Judah; therefore, Joab is under his authority. There was obviously a truce between David and Abner and Joab should have observed this truce.
 6. Although killing in war is allowed, murder apart from war is not. Joab and Abner, despite Joab's hatred for Abner, are allies now. Joab does not get to treat Abner as an enemy combatant.
 7. Joab obviously acted on his own. He sent messengers to bring Abner back to Hebron, and David was unaware of this; he privately pulls Abner aside as he is about to enter into Hebron. All of this speaks of duplicity and secrecy. Joab is acting on his own as judge, jury and executioner, and he has no such authority.
 8. We have to distinguish when killing is allowed and when it is not. Had Joab chose to continue the fight against Abner and had Joab killed Abner when they first met, that would have been legitimate. David might still mourn, but this would have been a legitimate killing. However, since Abner defected to David's side, Joab no longer has the authority to kill Abner.
 9. The Bible clearly allows for killing in war and as capital punishment; and the Bible just as clearly forbids murder outside of these two situations. Joab is not at war with Abner, nor has Abner been tried for and convicted of a capital offense; for this reason, Joab has murdered Abner, and should actually be tried and executed himself.
 10. Finally, even Scripture condemns Joab; in 1Kings 2:5, David, in his last instructions to his son Solomon, says that Joab should pay for what he has done, and that Solomon needs to take care of that.
 11. Let me come to a close, and quote two Scriptures: Deut. 27:24: **Cursed is the one who kills his neighbor in secret.** Psalm 55:20–21: **He acts violently against those at peace with him; he violates his covenant. His buttery words are smooth, but war is in his heart. His words are softer than oil, but they are drawn swords.** It sounds just as if David is thinking about Joab as he pens these few words.
 12. David will curse Joab and his house in v. 29 for this act, indicating that what Joab does is reprehensible.

No matter what you do, when you act on mental attitude sins, your action will be wrong. Now, I want you to keep your eye on Joab over the next several chapters, and see if it is right for David to give Joab a pass here.

Now, you may think, *you're a lot harder on Joab than on Abner.* Both of these men have serious failings; however, being as close to David as Joab is, Joab should know better.

* I am assuming that Joab told David exactly what happened when his brother Asahel was killed by Abner on the battlefield (see 2Sam. 2:19–23).

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Matthew Henry comments: *[Joab murdered Abner] in the gate, openly and avowedly, as one who was not ashamed. The gate was the place of judgment and the place of concourse, and Joab acted in defiance of justice, both the just sentence of the magistrates and the just resentment of the crowd, as one that neither feared God nor regarded men, but thought himself above all control: furthermore, Hebron was a Levites' city and a city of refuge.⁶⁶*

The phrase *the blood of Asahel, his brother* simply refers to the fact that Asahel had been killed by Abner. What is implied here is revenge (which should be fairly obvious).

⁶⁶ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:22–39. I freely edited Henry's text, but retained his thoughts.

Although Abner seems to be primarily a war hero, as well as being an adept political animal, he does seem to bypass the spiritual aspects of his life, for the most part. I personally do not have a problem with Abner, given the circumstances—he is no David, but David has seen fit to bring Abner into his fold without retribution, which is a good enough recommendation for me. However, not every commentator sees it this way.

Matthew Henry: *Abner had maliciously, and against the convictions of his conscience, opposed David. He had now basely deserted Ish-bosheth, and betrayed him, under [the] pretense of regard to God and Israel, but really from a principle of pride, and revenge, and impatience of control. God will not therefore use so bad a man, though David might, in so good a work as the uniting of Israel. Judgments are prepared for such scorners as Abner was.*⁶⁷

My primary answer to Henry here is, all men are flawed. From what we have observed, Abner did not look to God enough for guidance; this is Joab's problem as well. I'm not letting Abner off the hook here; he essentially condemns himself and his own decisions back in 2Sam. 3:18, where he recognizes that David is the true heir to the throne of Israel—but I disagree heartily with Henry when he says that, uniting Israel is too good of a work to allow such a bad man as Abner to be a part of it. In case you do not realize this, Abner is a part of the reunification of northern and southern Israel. What he has done over the past several months is take steps to unify Israel. He will not be alive to see the result of his work; but God did use Abner to bring about this reunification process.

Furthermore, the worst aspect of Henry's comment above is its blatant legalism; God uses all kinds of men to further His ends—God, in fact, even uses some unbelievers in His plan.

Application: Abner was brilliant, a great man of war, and a master politician. However, there is nothing in his deeds which indicate that he followed the guidance of God (although he mentions God back in vv. 9, 18—in the first instance, it is an oath; and in the second, it could simply be Abner politicking). Abner has crafted a rather brilliant set of circumstances to bring David to power (and much of what occurs, we are not even privy to); however, he will die before any of his plans come to fruition. Politics, to some, is interesting, if not downright fascinating; however, there are no true answers in politics. All real solutions are spiritual solutions.

And so David hears from following so and so he says, "Clean, I; and my kingdom from with Y^ehowah as far as forever from bloods of Abner ben Ner.

2Samuel
3:28

Afterward, David heard [of Abner's death] and he said, "I and my kingdom [are] forever innocent before [Heb., from the power of] Y^ehowah from the blood of Abner ben Ner.

Afterward, David heard of Abner's death, and he publically announced, "I and my kingdom are forever innocent from judgment of Jehovah with regards to the death of Abner son of Ner.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so David hears from following so and so he says, "Clean, I; and my kingdom from with Y^ehowah as far as forever from blood of Abner ben Ner.

Septuagint

And David heard of it afterwards, and said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord even for ever of the blood of Abenner the son of Ner.

Significant differences:

The Greek supplies the words *of it* (which appear to be implied). The preposition used in the Hebrew with *Jehovah* is not what we would have expected, and the Greek gives more of what we would have expected in this passage. This time, the Latin and Syriac are in agreement with the Greek. No telling if the Hebrew is a copyist error, or whether there is a slightly different sort of meaning for these two

⁶⁷ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:22–39.

prepositions which we find here. The remainder of the Greek verse matches up exactly with the Hebrew.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

- CEV** David heard how Joab had killed Abner, and he said, "I swear to the LORD that I am completely innocent of Abner's death!
- The Message** Later on, when David heard what happened, he said, "Before GOD I and my kingdom are totally innocent of this murder of Abner son of Ner."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

- God's Word™** Later when David heard about it, he said, "As far as the LORD is concerned, my kingdom and I are forever innocent of spilling the blood of Ner's son Abner.
- HCSB** David heard *about it* later and said: "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- WEB** Afterward, when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before Yahweh forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner:...
- Young's Updated LT** And David hears afterwards and says, "Acquitted am I, and my kingdom, by Jehovah, unto the age, from the blood of Abner son of Ner."

What is the gist of this verse? David proclaims himself and his kingdom guiltless for this death of Abner.

2Samuel 3:28a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma' (שָׁמַא) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
`achar (אַחֲר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition	Strong's #310 BDB #29
kêن (קֵן) [pronounced kane]	<i>so, thus; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted;</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485

Together, `achar and kên mean *after so* (literally) or *afterward, afterwards*.

Translation: Afterward, David heard [of Abner's death]... Abner is lying dead at the city front gate. It is obvious that someone is going to come across his body at some point. Therefore, David is going to hear about his death soon after Joab does the deed.

2Samuel 3:28b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
’âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
nâqîy (נִכְיָה) [pronounced naw-KEE]	<i>acquitted, clean, cleared, free from, unpunished, innocent</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #5355 BDB #667
’ânôkîy (אָנוֹכִי) [pronounced awn-oh-KEE]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
w ^o (or v ^o) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mam ^o lâkâh (מַלְכָּה) [pronounced mahm ^o -law-kaw]	<i>kingdom, sovereignty, dominion, reign, dynasty; used to refer to both the royal dignity and to the country of a king</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4467 BDB #575
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
’îm (בַּיִם) [pronounced géem]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Together, these prepositions mean: *from with, beside, from being with, away from, far from, from among, from the possession of, from the custody of, from the house of, from the vicinity of, out of the power of, from the mind of.*

The Greek, Latin and Syriac have the preposition *before* here instead. Generally speaking, the Syriac and Latin are in agreement with the Hebrew instead of the Greek. This could suggest some textual problems in the Masoretic text.

YHWH (יהָה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y ^o howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
’ad (עַד) [pronounced gahd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
’ôwlâm (עוֹלָם) [pronounced gó-LAWM]	<i>long duration, forever, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

Together, they mean *and from everlasting to everlasting, from eternity past to eternity future or from antiquity to everlasting, forever; for a lifetime (?); from a point in time to far into the future; to the end of this age.*

Translation: ...and he said, “I and my kingdom [are] forever innocent before [Heb., *from the power of*] Y^howah... What David is doing here is proclaiming his innocence; he is publically announcing that he had nothing to do with the death of Abner and that he did not order his death either (which is why David says that his kingdom is innocent as well). This would be a question which would come up, and rumors would possibly start to fly that David got Abner to come to him and then had him killed; however, David is making it clear that he never did this and took no part in his murder. Josephus claims that David cried aloud this statement, while stretching his right hand toward God.⁶⁸

2Samuel 3:28c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (ם) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
dâm (דָם) [pronounced dawm]	<i>blood, often visible blood; bloodshed, slaughter; bloodguilt; blood of the grape [wine]</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1818 BDB #196
<i>Blood</i> in the plural refers to a lot of blood or to a violent death. ⁶⁹			
Āb ^h nér (אַבְנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^h -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
bêñ (בֶן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Nêr (נֵר) [pronounced nair]	<i>lamp and is transliterated Ner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5369 BDB #633

Translation: ...from the blood of Abner ben Ner. This simply tells us exactly what David is claiming to be innocent of—he is innocent of the death of Abner son of Ner; he did not execute him nor did he have someone else do it.

Gill sums this up nicely: *[David realized that] it would be known that Abner had been with him, and that Joab his general had killed him; and therefore it might be suspected that he had an hand in it, and that it was done by his order, with his privy council; and therefore, to purge him and them from it, he made this public declaration, that neither he nor his council knew anything of it; and that it was not done with their knowledge and consent, and by their order, but through the resentment of a single person; and therefore hoped that no man would impute the shedding of this blood unto them, or that God would punish them for it; and he was the rather led to make this public declaration, because he knew that the death of Abner in this way would be resented by the friends of Saul's family, and be an obstruction to the union of the two kingdoms, which it was known Abner was endeavouring to bring about.*⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Josephus; *Antiquities* I. 7. c. 1. sect. 6.

⁶⁹ See *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 529.

⁷⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:28.

They turn around upon a head of Joab and unto all a house of his father, and not cut off from a house of Joab a discharge and an epidermal disorder and a holding fast in the crutch and a striking down in a sword and lacking of bread.

2Samuel
3:29

[These things] dance in a circle upon [or, encircle] the head of Joab and against the entire house of his father: that will not be cut off from the house of Joab discharges, epidermal [or, skin] disorders, holding fast to a crutch, being struck down by the sword and lacking in food.

May the following things encircle the head of Joab and his father's house; and may these not be cut off from Joab's house: discharges, epidermal disorders, reliance upon crutches; being struck down by the sword and lacking in food.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Dead Sea Scrolls

[May] the blood of [Abner son of Ner f]all o[n] Joa[b]'s head and on a[ll] Joab's house. May [Joab's] hou[se never] be without [someone with a discharge] or a leper or a man who holds the] spindle or who falls by the sword or who [la]cks food."

Latin Vulgate

And may it come upon the head of Joab, and upon all his father's house: and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue of seed, or that is a leper, or that holds the distaff, or that falls by the sword, or that wants bread.

Masoretic Text

They turn around upon a head of Joab and unto all a house of his father, and not cut off from a house of Joab a discharge and an epidermal disorder and a holding fast in the crutch and a striking down in a sword and lacking of bread.

Peshitta

Let it rest on the head of Joab and on the head of all his father's house; and let there never fail to be in the house of Joab one who has a discharge or who is a leper or who is a beggar holding a bowl or who falls by the sword or who lacks bread.

Septuagint

Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that has an issue, or that is a leper, or that leans on a staff, or that falls on the sword, or that lacks bread.

Significant differences:

The first verb is a difficult verb in the Hebrew. It perhaps should be *to fall* in the original, although we are lacking the first letter in the Dead Sea Scrolls. This would help to better explain why the Greek, Latin and Syriac are in agreement here.

I do not have access to the actual Dead Sea Scrolls, but to an English translation of them; therefore, I don't know what to tell you about the second verb. In any case, the Greek, Latin and Syriac are in rare agreement here as well.

Now, very interestingly, *his father's house* is found in the Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Syriac, but not in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Interestingly enough, *Joab* and *his father* are made up of the exact same consonants; just in a different order. This should help to explain how one got confounded for the other.

Now, despite all of these significant differences, the overall meaning remains the same; and there is no reading which impacts even a secondary doctrine.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Joab and his family are the guilty ones. I pray that Joab's family will always be sick with sores and other skin diseases. May they all be cowards, and may they die in war or starve to death."

The Message

Joab and his entire family will always be under the curse of this bloodguilt. May they forever be victims of crippling diseases, violence, and famine."

NAB

May the full responsibility for the death of Abner, son of Ner, be laid to Joab and to all his family. May the men from Joab's family never be without one suffering from a discharge, or a leper, or one unmanly, one falling by the sword, or one in need of bread!"

NJB

...may it fall on the head of Joab and on all his family! May the House of Joab never be free of men afflicted with haemorrhage or a virulent skin-disease, whose strength is in the distaff, who fall by the sword, who lack food.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Joab and his family are the guilty ones. I pray that Joab's family will always be sick with sores and other skin diseases. May they all be cowards, and may they die in war or starve to death."

HCSB

May it hang over Joab's head and his father's whole house, and may the house of Joab never be without someone who has an infection or leprosy or a man who can only work a spindle or someone who falls by the sword or starves."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Updated Emphasized Bible

Let it be hurled upon the head of Joab, and against all his father's house, —and let there not fail from the house of Joab—one who has an infected discharge, or a leper, or one who leans upon a crutch, or one who falls by the sword, or who lacks bread.

ESV

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!"

MKJV

Let it whirl about the head of Joab, and on all his father's house. And let there not fail from the house of Joab one who has an issue, or who is a leper, or who leans on a staff, or who falls on the sword, or who lacks bread.

Young's Updated LT

It does stay on the head of Joab, and on all the house of his father, and there is not cut off from the house of Joab one having an issue, and leprous, and laying hold on a staff, and falling by a sword, and lacking bread."

What is the gist of this verse? David pronounces a curse upon the house of Joab's father and upon Joab, asking that a variety of maladies be associated with their lines.

2Samuel 3:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chûwl (חֻוָּל) [pronounced khoo'l]	<i>to turn, to turn around, to be twisted</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2342 BDB #296

This word has a variety of Qal meanings, many of which proceed from the main meanings given (*to turn, to turn around, to be twisted*). Chûwl means ❶ to dance [in a circle]; ❷ to be twisted, to be hurled [on or against something]; ❸ to twist oneself, to writhe, to writhe in pain (used of giving birth—Isa. 26:17 45:10 51:2); ❹ to bring forth [in birth]; ❺ to tremble (probably from the palpitation of the heart—see 1Chron. 16:30, Psalm 96:9); ❻ to be strong, to be firm; ❼ to wait, to stay, to delay; ❽ to spin, to rotate on an axis. This latter meaning is closer to the basic meaning of the verb and is obviously very applicable to the planet earth (Psalm 114:7).

This does not appear to be the verb found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (which it is *to fall*); and the Greek and Syriac use the verb *to rest* instead; in the Latin, we find the verb *to come*. The verb in the MT is admittedly difficult here.

2Samuel 3:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘al (אֶל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
rô’sh (רֹשׁ) [pronounced <i>rohsh</i>]	<i>head, top, chief, front, choicest</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7218 BDB #910
Yôw’âb (יָוָבָּה) [pronounced <i>YOH-aw^bv</i>]	<i>Yah is father and is transliterated Joab</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3097 BDB #222
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
‘al (אֶל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ; also kol (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kol</i>]	<i>all, all things, the whole, totality, the entirety, everything</i>	masculine singular construct without the definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
‘âb (בָּאֵב) [pronounced <i>aw^bv</i>]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3

This is the reading in the Greek, Hebrew, Latin and Syriac; the Dead Sea Scrolls have *all the house of Joab* instead. The difference between the Masoretic text and the Dead Sea Scrolls is the order of the consonants. Recall that *Joab* means *Yah [is my] Father*. That a copyist at some point in time accidentally confound the order of those 4 letters is quite reasonable. If the 3rd person masculine singular suffix for *his father* is moved to the front of the word, the result is *Joab*.

Translation: [These things] dance in a circle upon [or, encircle] the head of Joab and against the entire house of his father.... This requires some interpretation here—the verb is a plural verb; however, there is no plural noun or plural concept which we have already examined which we have previously covered which reasonably applies here. Furthermore, the verb seems to be an odd verb to find here, as it is often used for *dancing in a circle*. The idea is, the things which David will name in the remainder of this verse will encircle the head of Joab and the house of his father.

Bear in mind here that Joab and Abishai are David's nephews, so he is wishing these things upon his nephews and upon the house of their father (David's brother-in-law).

2Samuel 3:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

2Samuel 3:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (אֶל or אַל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
kârath (קָרֵת) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAHTH</i>]	<i>to be cut off; to be cut down; to be destroyed, to be consumed; to perish, to fail</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503
We have the verb <i>to fail</i> in the Greek, Latin and Syriac. Since I only have access to the English translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls, I don't know what the verb actually is here. However, despite the differences of text, the overall meaning is the same, as you can see by reading through the various ancient texts.			
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
Yôw'âb (יָוָעֵב) [pronounced <i>YOH-aw^bv</i>]	<i>Yah is father and is transliterated Joab</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3097 BDB #222
zâb (זָבֵךְ) [pronounced <i>zaw^bv</i>]	<i>a flowing, a discharge; a reference to an illness</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #2100 BDB #264
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
tsâra' (צָרָא) [pronounced <i>tsah-RAWG</i>]	<i>an epidermal disorder [or, skin condition]; a leper, leprous; a bruised area</i>	Pual participle	Strong's #6879 BDB #863
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châzaq (חָזַק) [pronounced <i>khaw-ZAHK</i>]	<i>to take, to strengthen, to repair, to hold fast, to grab</i>	Hiphil participle	Strong's #2388 BDB #304
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
pelek ^e (פְּלֵקָה) [pronounced <i>PEH-lehk</i>]	<i>the whirl of a spindle, district, circle, circuit; a staff, a crutch</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6418 BDB #813

Translation: ...that will not be cut off from the house of Joab discharges, epidermal [or, skin] disorders, holding fast to a crutch,... David here begins to enumerate a list of difficulties which he wishes upon the house of Joab and upon his father's house (since, apparently, Abishai had a part in Abner's death). The first 3 things which David wishes upon his house are medical disorders—he calls for Joab's house to suffer from infected discharges (of blood, pus), epidermal disorders (including leprosy, which is one meaning for this verb) and for them to require a crutch upon which they must depend.

Bear in mind that physical infirmities are often passed along genetically. Furthermore, a propensity for other physical disorders is also often passed along genetically as well.

2Samuel 3:29c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
chereb (כֶּרֶב) [pronounced khe-RE ^B V]	<i>sword, knife, dagger; any sharp tool</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2719 BDB #352
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châçér (חָסֵר) [pronounced khaw-SAYR]	<i>wanting, lacking, needing; void of</i>	masculine adjective construct	Strong's #2638 BDB #341
lechem (לְחֵם) [pronounced LEH-khem]	literally means <i>bread</i> ; used more generally for <i>food</i>	masculine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #3899 BDB #536

Translation: ...being struck down by the sword and lacking in food. David continues his curse upon Joab's house, that many of those in his line will die by the sword or will find themselves lacking in basic necessities. *Being struck down by the sword* can be a reference to capital punishment as much as to death on the battlefield (the latter of the two would be a more noble death). We have other instances in Scripture where infirmities, hereditary disease and poverty are a part of discipline to a man and his family: 1Sam. 2:31-33, 36 2Kings 5:27.

Essentially, David is not going to personally prosecute Joab, although he makes it clear that what Joab did was wrong. David, in essence, calls upon God to curse Joab and his house; he calls upon God to give Joab justice.

Matthew Henry makes some interesting comments at this point: *Let the blood cry against him, and let divine vengeance follow him. Let the iniquity be visited upon his children and children's children, in some hereditary disease or other. The longer the punishment is delayed, the longer let it last when it shall come. Let his posterity be stigmatized, blemished with an issue or a leprosy, which will shut them out from society; let them be beggars, or cripples, or come to some untimely end, that it may be said, He is one of Joab's race.*" This intimates that the guilt of blood brings a curse upon families; if men do not avenge it, God will, and will lay up the iniquity for the children. But methinks a resolute punishment of the murderer himself would better have become David than this passionate imprecation of God's judgments upon his posterity.⁷¹ When I first read this, I thought, now; it is always better to let God be the judge. However, then I thought about it—part of our responsibility as a society is to deal with those who break the law. *An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth...* So let me be specific here: for a personal wrong, where one has not broken the law, then you leave vengeance in God's hands. However, for a

⁷¹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:22-39.

situation where one has broken the law—particularly a crime as heinous as murder—that person should be prosecuted by the law. David had a responsibility to his nation to punish this wrong. Wesley makes the same observation: *But would not a resolute punishment of the murderer himself have become David better, than this passionate imprecation on his posterity?*⁷²

Now, of course, you may think, *that just isn't right to curse both Joab and his progeny for what Joab has done.* However, not only is this right, but this is the normal order of things.

Let's Talk about the Cursing Joab's Progeny

1. Let's begin with poverty. If God strikes a family with poverty, then it is in the natural order of things for that family to remain in poverty, sometimes for many generations. Even in the United States, where opportunity abounds, it is not unusual for welfare recipients to continue from the mother, to the daughter to the granddaughter. With character and hard work and good decisions (which is the result of having character), anyone in this line can break the poverty curse; however, some people tend to *learn* poverty from their parents. They find out that, they can get pregnant and that the government will help take care of them and their children, even without a father present (especially, without a father). They see their mother living with and sleeping with a variety of men; having children by a variety of men; choosing men without any personal character; they see their parents lie and cheat in order to receive greater benefits; and they learn this behavior. So, it is not out of the ordinary to find in the US 3 or 4 generations of welfare women.
2. We make an attempt to support masses of people who have no reason to make good decisions or to act responsibly; in other societies, with even less potential upward mobility, poverty continues to impact families for many, many generations.
3. Bear in mind, even though this behavior is partially learned, and partially inflicted by God, any person with character and Bible doctrine can break the poverty in their family.
4. Hereditary ailments, by their very definition, are passed on from one generation to the next. We do not know fully how our genes and environment interact. For instance, two people can have the *alcoholic gene*, and one might be inflicted by the disease and another not (I know one woman who never drank any alcohol ever because she came from a family where there was alcoholism). These diseases can kick in sometimes years later (like allergies or asthma can suddenly appear, where there were no problems before); and then we may see this carried on for several generations. This is the normal order of things; and this can be a part of God's curse on any given person and those in his family line.
5. Just as there is blessing by association, there is disapprobation by association as well. A believer who is growing spiritually is going to be a blessing to his family and friends, and to his job and those associated with him. A believer who is not growing; who continually makes bad decisions; and who continually goes against God, God's authority, and God's established authority, is going to be a cursing to all those who are associated with him.
6. I can give you a very simple example of this from the television show *Wife Swap*. One set of parents despised authority and simply gave their children everything that their children desired. Both kids were miserable; one, in the midst of one of these shopping trips, at age 4, talked about how he wanted to get out of this world that he was in. He was so miserable, he was making suicide threats—a 4-year-old! He got this way because his parents made a ton of bad decisions, including those involved in raising him. The parents were not intentionally trying to harm their son; they were not trying to make him miserable; they were trying to make him happy, but they paid no attention to divine establishment laws. You cannot simply ignore God's laws, and think that things are going to work out for the best for you.
7. Joab is a stone-cold murderer who does not recognize anyone else's authority but his own. Therefore, he will be a cursing to himself and to his own family.
- 8.

What is amazing is, we can observe bad behavior and poor values going from generation to generation; and yet, we rebel against a doctrine which simply describes the natural order of things.

⁷² John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, 2Sam. 3:29.

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Application: Just recall, every bad decision that you make will impact your family; and the more bad decisions that you make, the greater this impact will be.

Application: There are going to be innumerable times when you are the victim of an injustice and that the perpetrator will appear to get off scot-free. I have been unjustly treated on a number of occasions, and I have not always seen what has happened to those who have stolen from me or who have treated my unjustly; however, where I have seen the results, I can guarantee you that the people involved received strong discipline for their actions. You do not have to run around and try to punish those who do wrong to you; there is a time to let God act on your behalf.

And Joab and Abishai his brother killed to Abner, upon which he killed Asahel their brother in Gibeon in the battle.

2Samuel
3:30

(Joab and Abishai, his brother, had murdered Abner because he had killed Asahel their brother in Gibeon during a battle).

(Joab and his brother Abishai had murdered Abner because he had killed Asahel their brother in Gibeon during a battle).

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And Joab and Abishai his brother killed to Abner, upon which he killed Asahel their brother in Gibeon in the battle.

Septuagint

For Joab and Abessa his brother laid wait continually for Abenner, because he slew Asael their brother at Gabaon in the battle.

Significant differences:

The first verb makes more sense in the Greek because of the lamed preposition which follows. However, the Latin and Syriac are all in agreement with the Hebrew (they lack their equivalent of the lamed preposition). The remainder of the verse is the same.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

The Message

(Joab and his brother, Abishai, murdered Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel at the battle of Gibeon.)

NJB

(Joab and his brother Abishai had murdered Abner because he killed their brother Asahel at the battle of Gibeon.)

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

(Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.)

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV

So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.

Young's Updated LT

And Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner because that he put to death Asahel their brother, in Gibeon, in battle.

What is the gist of this verse? This verse quickly sums up that Joab and Abishai murdered Abner because he had killed their brother in battle.

2Samuel 3:30a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^o (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Yôw'âb (יָאָב) [pronounced YOH-aw ^b v]	<i>Yah is father</i> and is transliterated <i>Joab</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3097 BDB #222
w ^o (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'Abîyshay (אֲבִישַׁי) [pronounced ub'-ee-SHAH-ee]	<i>my father is Jesse</i> and is transliterated <i>Abishai</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #52 BDB #5
'âch (נָخ) [pronounced awhk]	<i>brother, kinsman or close relative</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
hârag (הָרָג) [pronounced haw-RAHG]	<i>to kill, to slay, to execute; to destroy, to ruin</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #2026 BDB #246
lâmed (לָמֶד) [pronounced l ^r med]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

The meanings of the lâmed preposition broken down into groups: ❶ *to, towards, unto*; it is used both to turn one's heart *toward* someone as well as to sin *against* someone; ❷ *to, even to*; in this sense, it can be used with a number to indicate the upper limit which a multitude might approach (*nearly*). ❸ Lâmed can be equivalent to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς), meaning *into*, as in transforming *into* something else, changing *into* something else (Gen. 2:7). This use of lâmed after the verb hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW] (Strong's #1961 BDB #224) is one thing *becoming* another (Gen. 2:7). ❹ Its fourth use is the mark of a dative, after verbs of giving, granting, delivering, pardoning, consulting, sending, etc. This type of dative is broken down into several categories, but one includes the translation *by*, which would be apropos here. ❺ *With regards to, as to*. Similar to the Greek preposition eis (εἰς) plus the dative. [Numbering from Gesenius]. ❻ *On account of, because, propter*, used of cause and reason (*propter* means *because*; Gesenius used it). ❼ *Concerning, about*, used of a person or thing made the object of discourse, after verbs of saying. ❽ *On behalf of anyone, for anyone*. ❾ As applied to a rule or standard, *according to, according as, as though, as if*. ❿ When associated with time, it refers to *the point of time at which or in which* anything is done; or it can refer to *the space of time during which* something is done (or occurs); *at the time of*.

It appears that the lâmed preposition is simply used here to indicate the object of the verb.

Ăb ^e nêr (אָבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
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Translation: (Joab and Abishai, his brother, had murdered Abner...) Here we have an short explanation as to why Joab killed Abner. Abishai is also named here, which indicates that there was some collusion on their part. We don't know what exactly; we don't know if Abishai was hiding in the shadows when Abner was lured to the middle of the gate (to the sentry's post?); but, whatever happened, Abishai had a hand in it.

2Samuel 3:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘al (אַל) [pronounced gahl]	upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
<p>When not showing a physical relationship between two things, ‘al can take on a whole host of new meanings: <i>on the ground of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, concerning, besides, in addition to, together with, beyond, above, over, by on to, towards, to, against, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to.</i> It is one of the most versatile prepositions in Scripture. This word often follows particular verbs. In the English, we have <i>helping verbs</i>; in the Hebrew, there are <i>helping prepositions</i>.</p>			
‘ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	that, which, when, who, whom	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
<p>This combination of ‘al and ‘ăsher mean <i>because, because that, in that</i>.</p>			
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
‘êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
‘Āsâh’êl (אָשָׁהֵל) [pronounced guh-SAW-HALE or guhs-aw-ALE]	God has made; transliterated Asahel	masculine proper noun	Strong's #6214 BDB #795
‘âch (אָח) [pronounced awhk]	brother, kinsman or close relative	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #251 BDB #26
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Gib ^e rôn (גִּבְעֹן) [pronounced gibv ^e -GOHN]	hill, hill-city; transliterated Gibeon	proper noun, masculine singular	Strong's #1391 BDB #149
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mil ^e châmâh (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced mil-khaw-MAW]	battle, war	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4421 BDB #536

Translation: ...because he had killed Asahel their brother in Gibeon during a battle). This seems odd to me that this explanation would be added—that Joab and Abishai killed Abner because he had killed their brother, as Joab had already been seen to have lost his temper when he spoke to David about Abner; and the reason for his anger is obvious in the previous verse. However, I find myself repeating and reminding as I go through these explanations, sometimes for adjacent portions of verses; therefore, I don't think this should be seen as unusual that this explanation is added here.

Darby suggests⁷³ that some of Joab's motivation is jealousy as well as revenge; however, the entire tenor of this narrative, along with the clear statement of v. 30, is that Joab killed Abner primarily out of revenge. There were a number of commentators⁷⁴ who said, Joab killed Abner because he feared David would esteem Abner higher than himself. This is a conclusion which requires some thinking on Joab's part. What we find here is, Joab hears about Abner eating with David, he throws a fit, and then sets about to kill Abner, bringing him back to the city of Hebron within hours of his leaving. This all occurs quickly, indicating Joab's highly elevated emotional state. He does not stop to think; he does not weigh his options; he does not ponder this situation, wondering to himself, "If I kill Abner, these are the likely results; if I don't, then these are the likely results." There is little or no deliberation on Joab's part—he acts out of pure passion (I am referring to a passionate hatred and desire for revenge). So, even without this verse before us, we could reasonably conclude that Joab acted out of revenge and anger, rather than out of a concern for his pecking position in David's army.

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Maybe you are thinking, *but Abner killed Asahel; of course Joab should seek revenge.*

In Defense of Abner

1. Before I say anything, let me acknowledge that Abner was exceptionally bright, manipulative, and that what he said when he and Joab faced off in the previous chapter guided their actions throughout. Abner was a warrior and alive after a long period of time because he could function under pressure. There is nothing wrong with this.
2. When Asahel was pursuing Abner, Abner tried to dissuade him in any way possible. At this point in time, Abner was being more sincere than manipulative. Now, Abner knew that he would have to kill Asahel, if Asahel would not discontinue the chase; however, in a kill or be killed situation, he cannot say, "Look, Asahel, old friend, you are going to force me to kill you if you don't stop chasing me." Abner, in a time of war, would not sacrifice surprise, nor should we fault him for acting in this way.
3. What appears to be the case is, Abner had a backup plan, and that, once he got further along the road, he would be met and backed up by a number of Benjamite warriors. What also appears to be the case is, Joab and Abishai were the only two soldiers who pursued Abner at this point.
4. Abner could have killed Joab and Abishai at this point (or, at least, made an attempt to). The odds were in his favor, and, this being war, he could not be faulted for acting quickly and without mercy.
5. Abner, instead, pleads with them to end this aggression. For these few moments, at least, Abner recognizes just how polarizing a few deaths can be.
6. Joab and Abishai cease their pursuit (which probably saved their lives); and did not regroup and pursue Abner when reunited with their men.
7. Now, so that you do not think my portrayal of Abner is completely one-sided; he does continue the war against David soon thereafter. Whether this comes from further reflection or at the behest of Ishbosheth, we do not know.
8. There appears to be a temporary truce and/or peace between northern and southern Israel at this time, beginning at least with the time of Abner's argument with Ishbosheth. I suspect that Abner pulled back his troops sooner than this to reconsider the situation, as he was taking heavy casualties at the hand of David's army.
9. Finally, Abner's alliance with David marked a truce between himself, the small force of men that he traveled with (at least the 20 mentioned here, although he most certainly had a larger army which was also beholden to him). Therefore, if David chose not to pursue the matter of Asahel's death (and there is no reason that he should), then Joab had not reason, apart from personal revenge, to pursue it either.

Both Abner and Joab had feet of clay, just like you or me. However, they both clearly understood the rules of warfare and the rules of peace; Abner acted within these rules; Joab did not.

⁷³ John Nelson Darby, *Synopsis of the Old and New Testaments*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:1–39.

⁷⁴ For instance, Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:28–30.

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I should touch on the liberal fringe here: Gnana Robinson tells us that the end of v. 27 and that v. 30 were added later, and are in obvious contradiction with one another.⁷⁵ Robinson, like many liberal theologians who do not believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, like to point out every contradiction that they find, even though, most of the time, there is not even an apparent contradiction.

Who Actually Killed Abner?

1. Robinson, among others, allege that someone later added the end of v. 27 and all of v. 30 to the text; and that there is a contradiction between these two verses.
2. What is most likely when a word or a verse or a passage is added, is the person who adds that verse has some sort of motive:
 - a. The most common motive is a theological one; they have a distorted view of Scripture, and they add some words to support their own false views. A good example of this is the end of the book of Mark, now conceded by most textual critics to be an addition (this is where disciples of Jesus are going to be drinking poison and handling poisonous snakes).
 - b. Once in a great while, a change will be made in hopes of removing an apparent contradiction. Although I do not have an example of this, in our exegesis of 1Sam. 24:21, we find a negative used in the Greek text rather than the hypothetical particle found in the Hebrew. This is actually how a hypothetical is used when dealing with an oath in the Hebrew. Not the best example, I know; but an indication that translators will attempt to smooth things out for their readers.
 - c. It would make little or no sense for two copyists (or whatever) to, on separate occasions, perhaps hundreds of years apart, decide to embellish what we have. "Oh, yeah, by the way, Joab killed Abner and here's why." The other one, year later throws in v. 30, and says, "Oh, yeah, by the way, I think it was Joab and Abishai who did it, so I am going to stick that into this passage, even though someone might interpret this as a contradiction down the road."
 - d. Do you see that there is essentially no real motive for someone to much later add either verse?
3. Furthermore, there is no contradiction here. Joab and Abishai are brothers and Abner killed their brother, Asahel. No doubt, they spoke about this, and possibly even vowed to one another to kill Abner (recall that when they both came upon Abner after Asahel had been killed, they were alone and Abner had with him a small army of Benjamites, so they were in no position to kill Abner there or to even make threats).
4. Joab was the one to actually sink his dagger into Abner; that is clear by v. 27.
5. However, it is also clear that Joab and Abishai decided together to avenge their brother and they no doubt put together this plan as a team. That would be the indication of v. 30.
6. Our own law recognizes that if two people plan a murder together, and yet, only one pulls the trigger; they can both be charged with a capital crime. Our passage gives us a Biblical basis for that opinion. Joab pulled the trigger (well, used his knife); and both Joab and Abishai planned the murder together; therefore, they are both responsible, as we note in v. 30.
7. David, in v. 39, will also acknowledge that there is more than one person responsible for Abner's death.

When a person jumps to the conclusion time and time again that this or that passage has within it a contradiction, that should indicate to you that person's bias. When I first exegeted this passage, and even after I went through it a second time, the idea that there is an apparent contradiction here never even occurred to me. I understand how our law works here; assumed that both young men were responsible for Abner's death (obviously, I read between the lines); and did not even think that there might be a contradiction here until I read Robinson's commentary.

⁷⁵ Gnana Robinson, *1 & 2 Samuel; Let Us Be Like the Nations*; International Theological Commentary; Eerdmans's Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, ©1993; p. 167.

Obviously, I get a little worked up over reading Gnana Robinson's commentary; so why do I bother to read him (her?)? I like to get a different perspective now and again; I like to view these events through the eyes of a theologian with whom I would not agree with. When someone points out, "Here's another contradiction in the Bible," I like to look it up and see if there really is a contradiction, or whether this person is simply blowing smoke. Some of these people think there are hundreds of contradictions in Scripture; however, they tend to list the same ones over and over again; which contradictions have been clearly and satisfactorily answered again and again. It is their strong negative volition which causes a person to list "contradictions" for which there is an explanation, even when they know the explanation. This is not an intellectual search on their parts for truth; it is an attempt to discredit the truth. The other way of expressing this is, throw enough feces against the wall, and some of it is going to stick. They want someone else to come along, read what they have written, and then say, "Oh, the Bible *is* filled with contradictions; this guy lists 289 contradictions." That guy might know the explanation for 250 of the contradictions on his list, but he lists them anyway—he *has* to, because he wants so desperately to discredit God's Word.

We have seen a similar situation with the liberal bloggers of this era and President George W. Bush. A friend and I used to have political arguments via email, and he would again and again bring out these unsubstantiated charges against Bush, which would be posted by bloggers all over the world. A blogger does not have to substantiate anything; they can draw as many inferences as they desire; they can make whatever accusations that they want. They are primarily beholden to their own political views, and, at this point in time, liberals hate Bush with a passion. So, whatever Bush does is wrong; and the motivation behind his every action is either to cover up something, to promote big oil, or to get himself reelected. It was a common accusation that Bush started the war in Iraq simply to get reelected president (which is a heinous accusation). Again, if you throw enough feces against the wall, the expectation is, some of them will stick.

Let me add, with some trepidation, that this works. There are people who have been to one or two *Bible contradiction* website and they believe that the Bible is riddled with contradictions; there are people in this era who have heard all of these accusations against Bush, and they accept these as truth (there has to be truth in some of them, right?).

Let me give you another area where we find this done—some prosecuting attorneys will file multiple charges against a defendant—sometimes in the hundreds—because the impression that this gives to the jury is, *well, some of these charges have to be correct; a man cannot have all these charges against him without being guilty of something*. One of the best examples of this is in the documentary, *Capturing the Friedman's*, where a pedophile is accused and then convicted of multiple counts of pedophilia, all of which occurred within the space of a few hours. If memory serves, there were 270 counts/charges filed. He was convicted and I am sure there was some psychological advantage to there being so many counts/charges filed (even though it would have been physically impossible for all of these charges to be true). Now, being a person who believes in Scripture, I believe in law and order and despise pedophilia; however, I despise a miscarriage of justice even more. When a prosecuting attorney has to file hundreds of counts and charges, it often means that there is not really enough evidence to convict this person of the primary charges.

If you are personally dealing with such a one who does this, and you have to pursue it, for whatever reason, ask them to pose the most serious and mostly completely substantiated accusation. Let me use George W. Bush as an example. In all of the accusations made against him, what I would see over and over again, is "Bush is a liar." I used to get emailed jokes based upon this assumption. So, with one person, I asked, "Okay, give me an example." The example most often given is, Bush manipulated the CIA intelligence and then lied about Saddam Hussein possessing weapons of mass destruction.

The facts of the matter are these: Saddam actually used chemical weapons already in local wars. One of his top aides in 1998 said to a German journalist that Saddam did have weapons of mass destruction, and that we would never find them. President Bill Clinton, around the same time period, said that we know Saddam has weapons of mass destruction (and no one ever called Bill Clinton a liar for saying this). Hillary Clinton, several years later said, "We have known for a long time that Saddam has weapons of mass destruction" (or, words to that effect); no one called her a liar for making this statement. And, if Bush was the sneaking, conniving liar that he is made out to be, he could have easily *planted* weapons of mass destruction when Saddam had been toppled, which would have drummed up greater support for the war. In calling Bush a liar, all recent history concerning Saddam is completely ignored.

My point in all of this is, when faced with someone who has multiple complaints, charges, etc., and you need to pursue this matter, deal with the complaint or charge which they feel is the best documented of the bunch, and judge on those merits.

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David Mourns Abner's Death and Eulogizes Abner

And so says David unto Joab and unto all the people who [are] with him, "Tear your garments and encircle mourning clothes [around yourselves] and grieve to faces of Abner." And the King David is walking after the bier.

2Samuel
3:31

Then David said to Joab and to the people with him, "Tear your [own] clothing and put on [lit., fasten to yourselves] sackcloth [i.e., clothing which signifies mourning] and grieve in front of Abner." And King David walked after the funeral procession [lit., open cot upon which the dead are carried].

Then David said to Joab and to the people who were with him, "Tear your own clothing and put on sackcloth and grieve, walking in front of the funeral procession." And King David walked after the funeral procession.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so says David unto Joab and unto all the people who [are] with him, "Tear your garments and encircle mourning clothes [around yourselves] and grieve to faces of Abner." And the King David is walking after the bier.

Septuagint

And David said to Joab and to all the people with him, "Tear your garments, and gird yourselves with sackcloth, and lament before Abenner." And king David followed the bier.

Significant differences:

No significant differences; there is a relative pronoun found in the Hebrew which is not found in the Greek. This has no effect upon the meaning of the verse.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

David told Joab and everyone with him, "Show your sorrow by tearing your clothes and wearing sackcloth! Walk in front of Abner's body and cry!" David walked behind the stretcher on which Abner's body was being carried.

The Message

David ordered Joab and all the men under him, "Rip your cloaks into rags! Wear mourning clothes! Lead Abner's funeral procession with loud lament!" King David followed the coffin.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

David told Joab and all the people with him, "Tear your clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourn for Abner." King David followed the open casket.

HCSB

David then ordered Joab and all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourn over Abner." And King David walked behind the funeral procession.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV

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.

Young's Updated LT

And David says unto Joab, and unto all the people who are with him, "Rend your garments, and put on sackcloth, and mourn before Abner;" and king David is going after the bier.

What is the gist of this verse? David orders everyone, including Joab, to participate in mourning Abner's death. Abner's body is carried on some sort of a platform, and David follows him.

2Samuel 3:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
'el (אֵל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Yôw'âb (יָהָב) [pronounced YOH-aw ^b V]	<i>Yah is father and is transliterated Joab</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3097 BDB #222
w ^e (or v ^e) (!) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'el (אֵל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

2Samuel 3:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘am (אָם) [pronounced gahm]	people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
‘asher (אֲשֶׁר)	that, which, when, who, whom	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
‘êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	with, at, near, by, among, directly from	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

Translation: Then David said to Joab and to the people with him,... David is going to give orders to Joab, who killed Abner, and to those who participated in Abner's murder. It is a reasonable assumption that those who traveled with Joab are aware of what he was doing. Some of these men no doubt participated in this plot, acting as the messengers who went out to lure Abner back to Hebron.

Interestingly enough, Joab made no attempt to flee, to leave for awhile. He boldly remains in Hebron, maintaining his position as general, and realizing that David will not raise a hand against him.

2Samuel 3:31b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qâra' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAHG]	to bend, to tear apart; to tear out, to tear away; to cut in pieces [with a knife]; to cut out; to tear with words [i.e., to curse]	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #7167 BDB #902
b ^e gâdîym (בְּגָדִים)	garments, clothes, clothing, apparel	masculine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #899 BDB #93
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châgar (חָגָר)	to belt, to cinch, to gird, to encircle, to bind, to tie, to rope, to fasten around [onself]	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #2296 BDB #291
saq (סָק) [pronounced sahk]	a [corn] sack, sackcloth [worn by mourners], thick cloth [especially made of hair]	masculine plural noun	Strong's #8242 BDB #974

Translation: ...“Tear your [own] clothing and put on [lit., fasten to yourselves] sackcloth [i.e., clothing which signifies mourning]... As has been discussed in the past, the Jews were very demonstrative in their emotions. When a

person died, there was an overt demonstration of this. What was common was for mourners to wear sackcloth, which is a cloth which is generally made from hair and is very rough on the skin. It is not something one would generally wear for clothing, but something that would be used to carry things in, e.g., corn or other produce. This is going to be, by definition, undecorated, unornamented, without any form. It would signify mourning to anyone who could see them.

Obviously, Joab was filled with hatred, bitterness and revenge motivation; he wants to dance at Abner's funeral; instead, he is going to visibly grieve over Abner's death.

2Samuel 3:31c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (!) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
çâphad (צָפַד) [pronounced saw-FAHD]	<i>to lament, to grieve, to wail, to bewail</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #5594 BDB #704
lâmed (לְמֵד) [pronounced l ^e MED]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Ăb ^e nêr (אֲבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^e -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4

Together, they mean *upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of*. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning *in the judgment of*. This can also mean *forwards; the front part* [or, the edge of a sword]. L^epânîym (לְפָנִים) can take on a temporal sense as well: *before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times*.

Ăb ^e nêr (אֲבָנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^e -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
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Translation: ...and grieve in front of Abner." I don't think that the idea is, Abner is there in spirit and these men are asked to grieve before his spirit. I believe the proper understanding here is, there will be a funeral procession, where Abner's body is carried on a cot, and the chief mourners, Joab and those with him, will walk in front of the funeral procession.

Matthew Henry comments: *Let Joab, in a particular manner, lament it, which he has less heart but more reason to do than any of them. If he could be brought to do it sincerely, it would be an expression of repentance for his sin in slaying him. If he did it in show only, as it is likely he did, yet it was a sort of penance imposed upon him, and a present commutation of the punishment. If he do not as yet expiate the murder with his blood, let him do something towards it with tears. This, perhaps, Joab submitted to with no great reluctance, now he had gained his point. Now that he is on the bier, no matter in what pomp he lies.*⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:22–39.

2Samuel 3:31d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	king, ruler, prince	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיֵּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	beloved and is transliterated David	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
hâlak ^e (הַלָּךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance	Qal active participle	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
`achărêy (אַחֲרֵי) [pronounced ah-kuh-RAY]	hinder parts; behind, after; following; after that, afterwards	preposition; plural form	Strong's #310 BDB #29
mitṭâh (מִתְּהָ) [pronounced mit-TAW]	couch, bed; an open casket, a bier, a stretcher on which the dead are carried	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4296 BDB #641

Translation: And King David walked after the funeral procession [lit., open cot upon which the dead are carried]. What we have here is a funeral procession. Joab and those who are with him (including Abishai and any who participated in his scheme to murder Abner) are walking in front of the procession wearing sackcloth and mourning Abner's death. David walks behind the funeral procession. Although there are probably reasons to walk in front and in back of a funeral march; I don't really know what they are. Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge suggests⁷⁷ that the one in the front is the chief mourner, which would be Joab. Matthew Henry said that David takes the place of the chief mourner,⁷⁸ and David is walking at the end of the procession.

Wesley makes an interesting comment, which I don't know if it is true or not: *Though this was against the usage of kings, and might seem below David's dignity; yet it was now expedient to vindicate himself from all suspicion of concurrence in this action.*⁷⁹ Keil and Delitzsch give a similar comment: *To give a public proof of his grief at this murder, and his displeasure at the crime in the sight of all the nation, David commanded Joab, and all the people with him (David), i.e., all his courtiers, and the warriors who returned with Joab, to institute a public mourning for the deceased, by tearing their clothes, putting on sackcloth, i.e., coarse hairy mourning and penitential clothes, and by a funeral dirge for Abner; i.e., he commanded them to walk in front of Abner's bier mourning and in funeral costume, and to accompany the deceased to his resting-place, whilst David as king followed the bier.*⁸⁰

I believe that this is the first time that we have the phrase *the King David*.

⁷⁷ Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, 2Sam. 3:31.

⁷⁸ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:22–39.

⁷⁹ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, 2Sam. 3:31.

⁸⁰ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:31–39.

And so they bury Abner in Hebron and so lifts up the king his voice and so he weeps unto a grave of Abner. And so weep all the people.

2Samuel
3:32

So they buried Abner in Hebron, and the king lifted up his voice and he wept at the grave of Abner. All the people also wept.

So they buried Abner in Hebron, and the king lifted up his voice and wept at Abner's grave. All of the people wept as well.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so they bury Abner in Hebron and so lifts up the king his voice and so he weeps unto a grave of Abner. And so weep all the people..

Septuagint

And they bury Abenner in Chebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at his tomb, and all the people wept for Abenner.

Significant differences:

The name of Abner in the Greek moves from the end of the third phrase to the end of the fourth. The overall meaning is unchanged.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Abner was buried in Hebron, while David and everyone else stood at the tomb and cried loudly.

The Message

They buried Abner in Hebron. The king's voice was loud in lament as he wept at the side of Abner's grave. All the people wept, too.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

They buried Abner in Hebron. The king cried loudly at Abner's grave, and all the people cried.

HCSB

When they buried Abner in Hebron, the king wept aloud at Abner's tomb. All the people wept,...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB

And they buried Abner in Hebron. And the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.

Young's Updated LT

And they bury Abner in Hebron, and the king lifts up his voice, and weeps at the grave of Abner, and all the people weep.

What is the gist of this verse? Abner is buried in the capital city of Hebron; both David and the people there weep at Abner's funeral.

2Samuel 3:32a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

2Samuel 3:32a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced kaw-BAHR]	<i>to bury, to heap up a mound</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6912 BDB #868
‘êth (עֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
lâmed (לְמִדָּה) (pronounced l̄MED)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ābēnêr (אָבֶןֵר) [pronounced u ^b v̄-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp</i> , and is transliterated Abner	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Cheb̄rōwn (חוּרֹון) [pronounced khe ^b v̄-ROHN]	<i>association, league, joined</i> ; transliterated Hebron	proper noun; location	Strong's #2275 BDB #289

Translation: So they buried Abner in Hebron,... This would have been an honor. We do not know the time frame of the alliance between David and Abner—whether we are viewing this right at the beginning or whether it had gone on for a few months to a year (my guess would be a few months). In any case, Abner is viewed as a hero and as an ally, and he is buried in the new capital city of Judah.

2Samuel 3:32b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâsâ` (נִשָּׁא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
‘êth (עֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
qôwl (קָוָל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876

2Samuel 3:32b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bâkâh (בָּקָה) [pronounced baw-KAW]	<i>to weep, to cry, to bewail</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1058 BDB #113
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eL]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
qeber (קְבָּר) [pronounced KEH ^b -VEHR]	<i>grave, sepulcher, tomb; burial place</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6913 BDB #868
Āb ⁿ êner (אָבָּנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4

Translation: ...and the king lifted up his voice and he wept at the grave of Abner. I think that there is a lot which transpired between David and Abner which is not recorded. You will recall that David had the respect of the men and generals in Saul's army, before Saul sent men to David's home to take him into custody. David was a high-ranking general in Saul's army as well, which would have also put him into close contact with Abner. When we have Saul acting crazy and attempting to chase after and kill David, Abner's name is rarely mentioned (however, David does razz Abner one time for not protecting his king properly). However, my point is, for all the problems between Saul and David, David appears to be a very forgiving man, and a person who deeply felt for Abner, looking back to a time before Saul's illness began to strongly impact his own life.

2Samuel 3:32c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bâkâh (בָּקָה) [pronounced baw-KAW]	<i>to weep, to cry, to bewail</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1058 BDB #113
kôl (לֹל) [pronounced kohL]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'am (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

Translation: All the people also wept. This is an interesting situation; Abner had been the opposing general with their opposition. The war between them had been fairly fierce. Abner was taken back like a prodigal son. He also would have gotten the rest of Israel to follow David (in fact, I believe that he succeeded in that mission). So, even

if not out of sorrow, human viewpoint would think that David is back to square one in terms of becoming king over all Israel.

And so laments the king unto Abner, to say, 2Samuel
“As a death of a fool dies Abner?” 3:33

And the king sang a lamentation to Abner,
saying, “Should Abner die the death of a fool?”

And the king sang a lamentation to Abner, saying, “Should Abner die the death of a fool?

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text
Septuagint

And so laments the king unto Abner, to say, “As a death of a fool dies Abner?
And the king mourned over Abenner, and said, “Should Abenner die according to the
death of Nabal?

Significant differences:

The differences above could be attributed to interpreting the Hebrew text. By the way, *Nabal* means *fool*, which explains that transliteration of the Greek.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Then the king sang a funeral song about Abner: Abner, why should you have died like an outlaw?
<i>The Message</i>	Then the king sang this tribute to Abner: Can this be? Abner dead like a nameless bum?

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word</i> ™	The king sang a funeral song for Abner: Should Abner die like a godless fool?
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

MKJV Young's Updated LT	And the king mourned over Abner and said, Did Abner die like a fool dies? And the king laments for Abner, and says: — “As the death of a fool does Abner die?
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What is the gist of this verse? David speaks a few words in lamentation on behalf of Abner, first asking, “Does Abner die like a fool?”

2Samuel 3:33a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qûwn (קֹוּן) [pronounced koon]	to sing a mourning song, to lament	3 rd person masculine singular, Polel imperfect	Strong's #6969 BDB #884
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	king, ruler, prince	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572

2Samuel 3:33a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
el (אֵל) [pronounced e'l]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Ābənēr (אָבָנֵר) [pronounced u'bə-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4

Translation: And the king sang a lamentation to Abner,... David prepared a few words about Abner; we do not know if this is the entire lamentation, or just a portion of it.

2Samuel 3:33b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lāmed (ל) (pronounced l̥)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
’āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hă (ה֨) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong's #none BDB #209
kaph or k° (כֹּ) [pronounced k̥]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
mâveth (מַוֶּת) [pronounced MAW-veth]	<i>death, death [as opposed to life], death by violence, a state of death, a place of death</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4194 BDB #560
nâbâl (נָבָל) [pronounced naw̥-VAWL]	<i>stupid, foolish, fool, foolish with regard to spiritual matters; foolishly impious</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #5036 BDB #614

This is a person with no authority other than his own; that he can see no one higher than himself in this life, and for that reason, is a fool. In relation to man, he lacks authority orientation; in relation to God, he has no spiritual understanding or discernment. This is not a matter of being born foolish, but choosing it.

mûwth (מוּתָה) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
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It is interesting to find the imperfect tense here, which examines either an ongoing action or an action in the future. The perfect tense would refer generally to an accomplished action or to an action which is being examined as a whole. Although Bullinger alludes to this,⁸¹ he does not really offer an explanation as to why. Perhaps, David is speaking of the present memories of Abner : *should all in attendance continue to remember Abner has having died like a fool?* Often, a unexpected tense is used simply to grab your attention, and, this being the opening line of David's eulogy, it would be a powerful attention getter.

⁸¹ Figures of Speech Used in the Bible; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 522.

2Samuel 3:33b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Ab ^ə nér (אָבְנֵר) [pronounced u ^b v ^ə -NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp</i> , and is transliterated Abner	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4

Translation: ...saying, “Should Abner die the death of a fool?” The word *fool* could have several connotations; I prefer to think of it as a person with no authority other than his own; that he can see no one higher than himself in this life, and for that reason, is a fool. David is certainly not calling Abner a fool, but says here that he has died the death of a fool. The idea is, this was a senseless, useless death. Furthermore, it appears that Joab outsmarted Abner, which was quite unexpected; so that he died having been fooled and betrayed.

Gill appears to feel just the opposite; that the answer David seeks here is *no, Abner did not die like a fool; but nobly*. However, I just don't see that as being realistic, given the lines which follow. However, Gill's point is, Abner did not die as some criminal, writing, *[Abner] did not die for any wickedness he had been guilty of; he did not die as a malefactor, whose crime has been charged and proved in open court, and sentence of condemnation pronounced on him righteously for it; but he died without anything being laid to his charge, and much less proved, and without judge or jury; he was murdered in a clandestine, insidious, and deceitful manner; so the word "fool" is often taken in Scripture for a wicked man, especially in the book of Proverbs.⁸²* I am agreeable to this; Abner was not guilty of anything and his death was not the death of a criminal in any way. If the meaning of *nabal* has more to do with wickedness than with foolishness, then Gill's opinion seems quite accurate.

I think that the key here is, Abner was known for his brilliance, and yet he was betrayed here, struck down by surprise, by a man on his own side; something which should not have happened. I think this is the key to David's eulogy about Abner.

Matthew Henry seems to have the same idea, writing, *He speaks as one vexed that Abner was fooled out of his life, that so great a man as he, so famed for conduct and courage, should be imposed upon by a colour of friendship, slain by surprise, and so die as a fool dies. The wisest and stoutest of men have no fence against treachery. To see Abner, who thought himself the main hinge on which the great affairs of Israel turned, so considerable as himself to be able to turn the scale of a trembling government, his head full of great projects and great prospects, to see him made a fool of by a base rival, and falling on a sudden a sacrifice to his ambition and jealousy - this stains the pride of all glory, and should put one out of conceit with worldly grandeur.⁸³* There really is a little irony here; Abner did see himself as a man clearly involved with the great issues of politics, yet he was taken down like a fool.

Application: I find politics to be fascinating; however, there are no real or final answers in politics. Abner no doubt had a major effect upon the people of Israel, to realign them behind David; and yet, he dies before any of his work comes to fruition. And, with or without Abner, David would have come to power over a united Israel. God certainly used Abner, but God could have united Israel in a different way.

⁸² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:33.

⁸³ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:22–39.

You hands not being bound and your feet not to brass [fetters] brought near; as falling to faces of sons of injustice you have fallen."

2Samuel
3:34

Your hands were not bound nor your feet brought near in leg irons; you have fallen as one falls before men of iniquity [lit., sons of injustice]."

And so add all the people to weep over him.

And the people again weep over him.

Your hands were not bound, nor were you brought near in leg irons; you have fallen as one falls before impious and foolish men."

And the people again wept over him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

Your hands were not bound, nor your feet laden with fetters: but as men fall before the children of iniquity, so did you fall. And all the people repeating it wept over him.

Masoretic Text

You hands not being bound and your feet not to brass fetters brought near; as falling to faces of sons of injustice you have fallen." And so add all the people to weep over him.

Peshitta

Your hands were not bound nor were your feet put into fetters; as one falls before the wicked men, so have you fallen." And all the people wept again over him.

Septuagint

Your hands were not bound, and your feet were not put in fetters: one brought you not near as Nabal; you didst fall before children of iniquity. And all the people assembled to weep for him. [This is vv. 34–35a in the Greek].

Significant differences:

The Greek adds an additional negative, which I don't believe is warranted here. The Latin and Syriac leave out the first verb *to bring near*.

The MT has him falling before *sons of unjust men*; the LXX leaves out *sons of* and transliterates the word instead (*Nabal*), which means *foolish* (as per the previous verse); the Vulgate calls them *children of iniquity*; and the Peshitta lists them as *wicked men*. As usual, the Latin, Hebrew and Syriac are pretty much in agreement.

The Greek has the people assembling to weep over Abner; the Hebrew and Syriac have the people weeping again; and the Latin tells us that the people repeated what David said. This is one of the few areas where the Latin rendering seems suspect to me. What I recall from my one visit to a Catholic Church is, the priest would read something and the congregation would then read something else as a response. This may be done in several denominations or churches. Whereas, I cannot say that this phrase was added to give support to responsive readings, it does give me pause. Now, bear in mind, that, for the most part, the Latin and Hebrew tend to agree more often than any two other texts.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

No one tied your hands or chained your feet, yet you died as a victim of murderers. Everyone started crying again.

The Message

You were a free man, free to go and do as you wished— Yet you fell as a victim in a street brawl. And all the people wept—a crescendo of crying!.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Your hands were not tied. Your feet were not chained. You fell as one falls in front of wicked men. And all the people continued to cry for him.

HCSB

Your hands were not bound, your feet not placed in bronze shackles. You fell like one who falls victim to criminals. And all the people wept over him even more.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

WEB

Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put into fetters: As a man falls before the children of iniquity, so did you fall. All the people wept again over him.

Young's Updated LT

Your hands not bound, And your feet to fetters not brought nigh! As one falling before sons of evil—You have fallen!"

And all the people add to weep over him.

What is the gist of this verse? David continues his lament; he says that Abner was not brought to him in chains; and that he fell as though he fell before sons of iniquity or evil. After he says this, the people begin to weep again.

2Samuel 3:34a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
lô' (אַל or אֶל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
'âçar (רָאַכְר) [pronounced aw-AWHR]	<i>to bind, to tie [up, together, to]; to imprison, to make captive; to restrain</i>	feminine plural, Qal passive participle	Strong's #631 BDB #63
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
regel (רְגֵל) [pronounced REH-gel]	<i>foot, feet</i>	feminine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7272 BDB #919
lô' (אַל or אֶל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
lâmed (לָמֶד) [pronounced lamed]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
n ^e chôsheth (נְחֹשֶׁת) [pronounced n ^e -KHOSHETH]	<i>copper, bronze, brass; that which is made of brass or copper, money, fetter, bonds, leg irons</i>	feminine dual noun	Strong's #5178 BDB #638

It is possible that this word strictly means *brass*; however, it apparently came to mean *that which was manufactured from brass*.

2Samuel 3:34a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced naw-GASH]	<i>to be bring near, to be brought; to be offered</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #5066 BDB #620

Translation: Your hands were not bound nor your feet brought near in leg irons;... David is simply saying that, Abner was not brought to him as a prisoner of war and then executed. David is making it clear that Abner was not seen as his enemy. Furthermore, his death was a tragedy, since Abner did not die as a prisoner, but, as we have noted before, a fool, betrayed by his own allies.

Gill: As malefactors are when they are taken up for any crime, and especially when proved upon them, and condemned for it, and brought forth to be executed. This was not his case, and had he been aware of the design against him, as his hands and feet were at liberty, he might have defended himself; or if he found he had too many to deal with, might have made use of his feet and fled.⁸⁴ Had Abner been the one in the wrong, then he would have been brought to David in leg irons, with his hands bound; however, Abner had not committed a crime; those who lured him to Hebron and killed him—they are the ones guilty of a crime.

2Samuel 3:34b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kaph or k ^e (כָּפֵה)	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
nâphal (נָפַל)	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
lâmed (לְמִדְבָּר)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pâniȳm (פָּנִים)	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they mean *upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of*. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning *in the judgment of*. This can also mean *forwards; the front part [or, the edge of a sword]*. L^epâniȳm (לְפָנִים) can take on a temporal sense as well: *before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times*.

bêñ (בֶּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
'av ^g läh (עֲוָלָה)	<i>injustice; iniquity, unrighteousness</i>	feminine singular substantive	Strong's #5766 BDB #732

⁸⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:34.

2Samuel 3:34b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656

Translation: ...you have fallen as one falls before men of iniquity [lit., sons of injustice].” Joab and Abishai should have known better—they are the *sons of injustice* here. They should have trusted David in this matter. They acted outside the law when they lured Abner back and executed him.

Clarke’s comments are good: *[Abner] was not taken away by the hand of justice, nor in battle, nor by accident: he died the death of a culprit by falling into the hands of a villain. This song was a heavy reproof to Joab; and must have galled him extremely, being sung by all the people.*⁸⁵

2Samuel 3:34c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâçaph (יָצַף) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
‘am (עָם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
lâmed (לְמֵד) (pronounced f')	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bâkâh (בָּקָה) [pronounced baw-KAW]	<i>to weep, to cry, to bewail</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #1058 BDB #113
‘al (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Translation: And the people again weep over him. We don’t know the length of David’s eulogy, but it is damning of Joab and Abishai, without naming them, and sympathetic to Abner.

⁸⁵ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:33.

And so comes all the people to cause to eat David bread in still the day. And so David swears [an oath], to say, "So does to me Elohim and so he adds for if to faces of going the sun I taste bread or all of anything."

The people attempted to persuade David to eat bread while it was still day, but David swore an oath to them, saying, "May God do [evil] to me and add more as well, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun goes down."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so comes all the people to cause to eat David bread in still the day. And so David swears [an oath], to say, "So does to me Elohim and so he adds for if to faces of going the sun I taste bread or all of anything."

Septuagint

And all the people came to cause David to eat bread while it was yet day: and David swore, saying, "God do so to me, and more also, if I eat bread or any thing else before the sun goes down." [There is actually another sentence which is found with v. 35 in the Septuagint, but it matches v. 34 in the Masoretic text and is placed there instead].

Significant differences:

The Septuagint changed the order of some of the phrasing, but did no damage to the meaning of this verse.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Then they brought some food to David and told him he would feel better if he had something to eat. It was still daytime, and David said, "I swear to God that I'll not take a bite of bread or anything else until sunset!"

The Message

They all came then to David, trying to get him to eat something before dark. But David solemnly swore, "I'll not so much as taste a piece of bread, or anything else for that matter, before sunset, so help me God!"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

That entire day all the people tried to get David to eat some food. But David had taken an oath: "May God strike me dead if I taste any food or anything else before the sun goes down."

HCSB

Then they came to urge David to eat bread while it was still day, but David took an oath: "May God punish me and do so severely if I taste bread or anything else before sunset!"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV

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!"

Young's Updated LT

And all the people come to cause David to eat bread while yet day, and David swears, saying, "Thus does God to me, and thus He does add, for—before the going in of the sun, I taste no bread or any other thing."

2Samuel
3:35

Then the people came to persuade David to eat bread while [it is] still day, but David took an oath, saying, "So does Elohim do to me and more also, if before the sun goes down [lit., goes in] I taste bread or anything else."

What is the gist of this verse? David swears that he will not eat anything before the sun goes down, even though the people attempt to persuade him to eat.

2Samuel 3:35a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
kôl (כָּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'am (עֵם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
lâmed (לְמֵד) [pronounced luh-mehd]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bârâh (בָּרָה) [pronounced baw-RAW]	<i>to give to eat, to cause to eat, to persuade to eat</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #1262 BDB #136
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיְיד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
lechem (לְחֵם) [pronounced LEH-khem]	<i>literally means bread; used more generally for food</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3899 BDB #536
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'ôwd (עוֹד) [pronounced gohd]	<i>still, yet, again, besides, in addition to, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
With the bêyth preposition, 'ôwd means <i>while, while yet, while [it is] still; while [it is] yet, in the time that; within</i> .			
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: Then the people came to persuade David to eat bread while [it is] still day,... In our times, food is often brought to the house of those who are bereaved. Eating and reminiscing is a part of our culture after the funeral of a loved one. David apparently has not eaten, and this becomes apparent to many. *The people* here refer to his

staff and to his close friends. They are concerned over David, how hard he has taken Abner's death, and the fact that he has not eaten. Therefore, they make an attempt (perhaps several) to get him to eat.

2Samuel 3:35b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וְ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâbva' (שָׁבַע) [pronounced shaw'-VAHG]	<i>to swear, to imprecate, to curse, to swear an oath, to take a solemn oath, to swear allegiance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #7650 BDB #989
Dâvid (דָּוִיד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיֵּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced l') [pronounced lamed]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kôh (הַ) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
'âsâh (הָשַׁעַ) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced l') [pronounced lamed]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'Elöhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôh (הַ) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
Kôh is repeated, which often gives us a slight change of meaning (<i>here...there; on this side...on that side; hither...thither</i>).			
yâçaph (יָצַף) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414

Translation: ..but David took an oath, saying, "So does Elohim do to me and more also... It is not clear whether David is taking this oath before the people at this time, or whether he took this oath at the time that he heard that Abner had been killed. In any case, the oath, as we have seen many times in the past, is elliptical, and really makes

little sense in the English. The idea is, David is swearing by God and asking God to do evil to him and more, if he does not fulfill his oath.

I mention that this oath may have been taken earlier. David does not necessarily have to verbalize an oath before his staff in order to take one. However, given the common demonstrative behavior of the Hebrews, we would expect that he would have taken this oath aloud and before others.

2Samuel 3:35c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
’îm (אֵם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49

Together, kîy ’îm (כִּי אֵם) [pronounced *kee-eem*] act as a limitation on the preceding thought, and therefore should be rendered *but, except, except that, unless* and possibly *only*. However, these particles are not used in a limiting way *if* they follow an oath, a question or a negative. Then they can be rendered *that if, for if, for though, that since, for if, but if, indeed if, even if; for even*.

lâmed (לְמַד) (pronounced <i>leh-med</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they mean *upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of*. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning *in the judgment of*. This can also mean *forwards; the front part [or, the edge of a sword]*. L'pânîym (לְפָנִים) can take on a temporal sense as well: *before, of old, formerly, in the past, in past times*.

bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #935 BDB #97
shemesh (שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>SHEH-mesh</i>]	<i>sun</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8121 BDB #1039
tâ'am (תָּאֻם) [pronounced <i>taw-GAHM</i>]	<i>to taste; to perceive</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2938 BDB #380
lechem (לְחֵם) [pronounced <i>LEH-khem</i>]	literally means <i>bread</i> ; used more generally for <i>food</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3899 BDB #536
’ô (וְ) [pronounced <i>oh</i>]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and</i>	conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
kôl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ; also kol (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kol</i>]	<i>all, all things, the whole, totality, the entirety, everything</i>	masculine singular construct without the definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

2Samuel 3:35c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
m ^e ūwmâh (מָוֹמָה) [pronounced m ^e -oo-MAW]	<i>anything</i> , and it is usually found in negative sentences; therefore, with the negative, it is often rendered <i>nothing</i>	indefinite singular pronoun/adverb	Strong's #3972 BDB #548

Although we do not have a particular meaning given for these words together in Gesenius, we have the following translations: *anything else* (ESV, God's Word, HCSB, MKJV, NAB, NASB, NKJV, NRSV, WEB); *anything* (LTHB); *anything whatsoever* (NJB). These renderings are from 2Sam. 3:35.

Translation: ...if before the sun goes down [lit., goes in] I taste bread or anything else." I must admit to having problems with the preposition here, and how to translate it, so I just left it out, as did many other translators. David is asking for God to do evil to him if he even tastes bread or anything else before the sun goes down. This, apparently, is a part of his mourning. We saw another example of mourning by fasting back in 1Sam. 31:13 2Sam. 1:12.

What is happening is, several have come to David to encourage him to eat, and he finally responds by taking an oath before all those with him, saying that he would not eat all that day out of respect for Abner, and confirms this with an oath. This also makes it clear that, David is not quietly celebrating Abner's death. That is, he is not attending the funeral as part of some show; but then eats heartily later to celebrate Abner's death.

And all the people contemplated [it] and so [it] is good in their eyes; as all that did the king in eyes of the people was pleasing.

2Samuel
3:36

The people thought about [this] and [David's words and deeds] were commendable in their opinion, as all that the king did in the opinion of the people was good.

The people thought about what David said and did, and decided that his thinking was commendable; in fact, all that the king did was good in their opinion.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And all the people contemplated [it] and so [it] is good in their eyes; as all that did the king in eyes of the people was pleasing.

Septuagint

And all the people took notice, and all things that the king did before the people were pleasing in their sight.

Significant differences:

Even though a superficial reading of the Hebrew and Greek may not yield any differences, as the idea behind them is about the same; the Greek actually leaves out the second phrase of the Hebrew, that what David is doing is good in their eyes. This is not an accidental repetition in the Hebrew, as the verbs used in the 2nd and 3rd phrase are different. This additional phrase is found in the Latin and Syriac as well. Despite the difference here, there is no significant difference in meaning.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Everyone noticed what David did, and they liked it, just as they always liked what he did.

The Message

Everyone at the funeral took notice—and liked what they saw. In fact everything the king did was applauded by the people.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):*God's Word™*

Then all the people understood and approved of this, as all the people approved of everything the king did.

HCSB

All the people took note of this, and it pleased them. In fact, everything the king did pleased them.

JPS (Tanakh)

All the troops took note of it and approves, just as all the troops approved everything else the king did.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:*ESV*

And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them, as everything that the king did pleased all the people.

WEB

All the people took notice of it, and it pleased them; as whatever the king did pleased all the people.

Young's Updated LT

And all the people have discerned it, and it is good in their eyes, as all that the king has done is good in the eyes of all the people.

What is the gist of this verse? David's staff and the elders of Judah consider what David is doing, and determine that he is doing the right thing.

2Samuel 3:36a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
‘am (עָם) [pronounced gahm]	people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
nâkar (נִכְרֵת) [pronounced naw-KAHR]	to contemplate, to behold, to recognize, to acknowledge, to be acquainted with, to know, to know how, to care for	3 rd person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5234 BDB #647

Translation: *The people thought about [this]...* This refers to David's staff and to the elders of Judah. It is possible that they do not react to what David is doing immediately (fasting), but they think about it, possibly discuss it, and finally determine that David is doing the right thing. The verb here does allow for them to listen to David and then to recognize immediately that he is doing the right thing. However, the people do think about what David will say here and what he is doing, and favorably react.

2Samuel 3:36b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâṭab (בָּטָב) [pronounced yaw-TA ^B V]	<i>to be good [well, pleasing, commendable]; to do good, to deal well, to make glad, to make a thing good</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3190 BDB #405
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
‘ēynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced ġay-nah-YIM]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person plural suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

This phrase is literally *in their eyes*, but it can be translated *in their opinion, in their estimation, to their way of thinking, as they see [it]*.

Translation: ...and [David's words and deeds] were commendable in their opinion,... This is actually a masculine singular verb, and it refers to David's act of fasting here or to his decision to fast; in the opinion of the elders of Judah and David's staff, this is the right decision to make.

Gill: [What is in view here is] not only of his oath, that he would not eat food till evening, but of his whole conduct at the funeral of Abner; the sorrow he expressed for his death, and the oration he made on account of it, in which he pretty severely reflected on his murderer.⁸⁶

2Samuel 3:36c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kaph or k ^e (כָּפֶה) [pronounced k ^{eh}]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
kôl (לֹכֶד) [pronounced kohl]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
K ^e kôl (לֹכֶד) appear to mean <i>as all, according to all, just as all, exactly as all</i> .			
‘äsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
‘âsâh (הָשַׁע) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

⁸⁶ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:35.

2Samuel 3:36c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'eynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced gay-nah-YIM]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

Together, the bêyth preposition and 'ayin literally mean *in the eyes of*; it can be understood to mean *in the opinion of, in the thinking of, in the estimation of*; as _____ sees things to be.

kôl (כָּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'am (אָם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
tôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced towb]	<i>to be good [pleasant, beautiful, delightful], to be delicious, to be cheerful [happy, joyful], to be kind, to be well, to do well, to do right</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect (or a Qal participle)	Strong's #2895 BDB #373

Translation: ...as all that the king did in the opinion of the people was good. Recall that David, as one of Saul's generals, was well-liked and respected. The people whom he served in Judah felt the same way. Here, we are primarily speaking of the elders of Judah and David's staff; but what he said and did was good in their way of thinking.

Application: Now, I don't want to go overboard on this, but, in general, when you do the right thing and say the right thing, those around you are going to respect you, trust you and often like you. Don't misunderstand me here—this is not a universal truth. Obviously, a radical Muslim is going to despise what you do, no matter what. In the case of our standing president, George W. Bush, the political left is going to despise all that he does, no matter what. I recall that, when we invaded Iraq, a number of critics were upset that Bush did not spend more time convincing, wooing or getting the support of the international community. However, I also heard him criticized by the same people when he was more diplomatic with North Korea and Iran, and sought international support. I have heard him criticized because he has a civilian, Donald Rumsfeld, as the Secretary of State, who is involved on the highest levels of decision making with regards to our troops all over the world, because he is not a military type. However, at this point in time, there is a nominee by Bush for the CIA, and this is a military type—and many of the same people are upset because he is a military man (the news is always careful to report the criticism of Bush's stance, no matter what it happens to be). So, yes, under many circumstances, when you do and say the right thing, you will be respected and even liked; however, this is not a universal principle that we can adhere to, and having those around us like and respect us should not be our motivation—the approbation of others is meaningless. A more obvious illustration is our Lord Jesus Christ. All that He did was good; all that He said was good. He could not be

faulted for a single decision, word or action; still, there were many who hated Him, because He is God and they are negative toward God.

You have to take balanced theological positions; you cannot exalt one verse of Scripture over all else; nor can you take a verse of Scripture out of context, nor can you take one or two verses, and then just go and apply them to all circumstances. What we find in this passage would indicate that, if we do what is right and say what is right, then we will *probably* have the respect and esteem of those around us. However, there are exceptions to this.

I can give an example from my own life here: I taught for many years, and had the respect and esteem of many of my colleagues and students. I understood fully that I should do the best job that I could before God, and made that attempt. At times, this meant spending hours after school with students, helping them to understand what I was teaching. I typically worked no fewer than 10 hours a day as a teacher, and a 12+ hour day was not unusual. For years, my service to my students was known and respected. However, this changed with a particular teacher, who made it her mission to be rid of me, and this finally came to pass. Some of it, was my contribution, as I have always had trouble with authority-orientation. However, the reasons why I was asked to leave were extremely minor and could have been levied against almost any other teacher there (the amount of paperwork that we received was to a point where it was literally impossible to do everything required of us). Years have passed since then, and I have recently spoken to a former student, who has been out of school for a couple of decades, and even she has heard rumors about me and my *indiscriminate behavior*. I pressed her further for details and said, "You know, none of that is true and no principal has ever accused me of those things face to face." And she said, "Well, maybe you just weren't ever caught." I must admit, this threw me for a loop—to have all of these false rumors floating about, and the evidence is essentially, "Well, no one was able to catch you." My point in this is, you can attempt to do what is right for most of your life, and, often you will have the respect and esteem of others; however, you cannot assume that this will always be the case. Furthermore, you must be aware that all other people have old sin natures, and that these sin natures are going to come into play now and again, which will involve gossip and judging. In any case, by being filled with God the Holy Spirit and by knowing God's Word, you should endeavor to do that which is right and to say that which is right.

And so know all the people and all Israel in the day the that, that she is not from the king to kill Abner ben Ner.

2Samuel
3:37

Therefore, all of the people and all Israel knew on that day that it was not by [the will of] [lit., from] the king to kill Abner ben Ner.

Therefore, all of the people and all Israel realized on that day that it had not been the decision of the king to kill Abner son of Ner.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so know all the people and all Israel in the day the that, that she is not from the king to kill Abner ben Ner.

Septuagint

So all the people and all Israel perceived in that day, that it was not of the king to slay Abenner the son of Ner.

Significant differences:

No significant differences between the Greek and Hebrew.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Now the people of Judah and Israel were certain that David had nothing to do with killing Abner.

The Message

It was clear to everyone that day, including all Israel, that the king had nothing to do with the death of Abner son of Ner.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

That day all the people of Israel knew the king wasn't responsible for killing Ner's son Abner.

HCSB

On that day all the troops and all Israel were convinced that the king had no part in the killing of Abner son of Ner.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV 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.

Young's Updated LT And all the people know, even all Israel, in that day, that it has not been from the king—to put to death Abner son of Ner.

What is the gist of this verse? The people could see that David's grief was genuine, and they realized that he had not personally concocted any sort of plot to have Abner executed.

2Samuel 3:37a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâda' (יְדָא) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'am (עֵם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
w ^e (or v ^e) (!) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Yis ^e râ`êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

2Samuel 3:37a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yôwm (יּוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today</i> (with a definite article); possibly <i>immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw' (הּוּא) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>that; this</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

The bêyth preposition, yôwm and hûw (with definite articles) mean *in that day, on that day, in [on] the same day.*

Translation: Therefore, all of the people and all Israel knew on that day... Those who were with David on that day recognized that his grief was genuine. They knew his decisions to be wise and moral; and David's response to the death of Abner made it clear that David had nothing to do with his death.

Furthermore, David's behavior, his eulogy, and his fasting became known to all Israel, so that they fully understood that David's grief for Abner was not a show, but real and heartfelt.

2Samuel 3:37b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
lô' (אַל or אֲלֵה) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>MÉH-lek</i>]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
lâmed (לָמֶד) [pronounced <i>lēmēd</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mûwth (מוֹתֵה) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Ăb ^b nêr (אָבָנֵר) [pronounced <i>u^bv^b-NAYR</i>]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #74 BDB #4

2Samuel 3:37b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bên (בֶן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Nêr (נֵר) [pronounced nair]	lamp and is transliterated Ner	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5369 BDB #633

Translation: ...that it was not by [the will of] [lit., from] the king to kill Abner ben Ner. What the people of Israel realized was that David did not concoct some clever plan to execute Abner. Abner was clearly lured back to Hebron, and he was clearly executed; however, just as obvious was, this was not of David's doing. He took no part in this devious plan. David's words and actions made this clear to all Israel.

Keil and Delitzsch: *All the people (i.e., who were with the king) and all Israel discerned on that day (from David's deep and heartfelt trouble), that the death of Abner had not happened (proceeded) from the king, as many may probably at first have supposed, since Joab had no doubt fetched Abner back in David's name.*⁸⁷

And so says the king unto his servants, “Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen the day the this in Israel?

2Samuel
3:38

Then the king said to his servants, “Don’t you realize that [on] this day in Israel, a prince and a great man has fallen?

Then the king commented to his servants, “Don’t you all realize that on this day in Israel, a prince and a great man has fallen?

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so says the king unto his servants, “Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen the day the this in Israel?

Septuagint

And the king said to his servants, Know ye not that a great prince is this day fallen in Israel?

Significant differences:

None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

David said to his officials, "Don't you realize that today one of Israel's great leaders has died?

The Message

The king spoke to his servants: "You realize, don't you, that today a prince and hero fell victim of foul play in Israel?

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

The king said to his officers, "Don't you know that today a leader, a great man, has fallen in Israel?

HCSB

Then the king said to his soldiers, "You must know that a great leader has fallen in Israel today.

⁸⁷ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:37.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB	And the king said to his servants, Do you not know that a leader and a great one has fallen this day in Israel?
Young's Updated LT	And the king says unto his servants, "Do ye not know that a prince and a great one has fallen this day in Israel?"

What is the gist of this verse? David asks his staff a question with a self-evident answer: "Don't you realize that a great man and a prince has died on this day in Israel?"

2Samuel 3:38a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (!) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eL]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'ebed (עָבֵד) [pronounced GE ^B -ved]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

Translation: Then the king said to his servants,... I cannot account for the order in which these verses are given. We would normally expect all that David has to say, would be given all at once. However, that is not the case here. We have already studied David's vows and actions; and here, he tells his servants (his executive staff) his personal opinion of Abner. He will phrase it as a question, something which has a self-evident answer. Whether David speaks out, without being prompted; or whether he hears men speak, and he feels that he must interject some proper viewpoint, we don't know. Whether this is said immediately after the funeral, or during a dedication at the funeral, or the next day to his own staff, we do not know.

2Samuel 3:38b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hă (הָ) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong's #none BDB #209
lō` (אֲלֹא or אַלֹּא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

Hă lō` together expect an affirmative answer. In fact, these two words together present a question with an obvious, self-evident answer.

2Samuel 3:38b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâda' (יְדָא') [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
sar (שָׁרֵךְ) [pronounced sar]	<i>chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #8269 BDB #978
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹלְךָ) [pronounced gaw-DOHL]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152

When used as a substantive, as here, gâdôwl means a great [mighty, noble] man.

nâphal (נִפְלָא) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
yôwm (יּוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw' (הַוּאָךְ) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that; this</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-râ'-el-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

Translation:...“Don’t you realize that [on] this day in Israel, a prince and a great man has fallen? First of all, you should realize that we are not getting all that happened in the order in which it happened. That is, first the men come to David to try to convince him to eat; David then says a vow, then all Israel recognizes that what David is doing is right and good, and then all Israel knows that David had nothing to do with the death of Abner. Finally, once Israel recognizes this, then David makes this statement. What David says here and in the next verse will be part of the proof to the men of Judah and all Israel that David had nothing to do with Abner’s death. The writer records these things as they come to him, and these events do not necessarily come to him chronologically, as they do to most of us. For those who have come to David to try to convince him to eat, he also says this, besides the vow

that he gives: "Don't you know that a great man and a prince of men has fallen today in Israel?" David rightfully presents Abner's death as a great tragedy to all Israel.

Abner had backed the wrong horse. He was faithful to Saul, which was a difficult position to take, but Abner served in that capacity for some time. Then, probably as a response to Saul's last wish, Abner scooped up Ishbosheth and took him to a safer region from which to set up a kingdom. However, Abner recognized the same paranoia in Ishbosheth that he had seen in Saul all of these years, and now realized that he was going to be the object of Ishbosheth's paranoia. Therefore, Abner re-thought his alliances, and chose to support King David, a man he knew that he could trust.

This question seems to fit well with David's vow and with the people's urging him to eat. David, after being asked to eat, asks them, "Don't you realize what a great man Israel lost today?" Abner had recognized David's loyalty and honor; Abner was willing to support David; and Abner was willing to do all of the footwork necessary to unite all Israel under David.

Gill: *[David tells his servants that today, they lost] a great man, [Abner] being general of the army, a very valiant and skillful commander, a man of great wisdom and parts. David says nothing of his grace and virtue, only of his grandeur, his high birth and civil excellencies; he praises him in what he was commendable, and proceeds no further; and this was sufficient to show there was just cause of mourning on civil accounts; and this they might easily know and perceive, that the fall or death of such a man, which had that day happened in Israel, was a public loss, and matter of lamentation; and the rather as he was employing all his excellent talents in civil affairs, and all his interest in the people of Israel, to unite them to Judah, and bring them under the government of David.*⁸⁸

Keil and Delitzsch: *Finally, David said to his (confidential) servants: "Don't you know (or, perceive) that a prince and great man has this day fallen in Israel?" This statement shows how thoroughly David could recognize the virtues possessed by his opponents, and how very far he was from looking upon Abner as a traitor, because of his falling away from Ishbosheth and coming over to him, that on the contrary he hoped to find in him an able general and a faithful servant.*⁸⁹

We don't know exactly the order in which their funeral services went. David may have said this when first told of Abner's death; after being urged to eat; or at whatever sort of gathering occurred after Abner had been buried. It is possible that this and the next verse belong together, when it becomes known to David who was responsible for the death of Abner, and that he says these things as a response to this information. He may have been approached by his servants the day after the funeral, asking what he would do about Joab, and this and the next verse make up his response. However, we do know for certain that David eulogizes Abner at his funeral, and makes several subsequent comments to indicate his sincere grief concerning Abner's murder.

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David asks for the Lord to Avenge the Death of Abner

And I [am] the day weak and anointed king and the men the these sons to Zeruiah hard from me. Requite Y^howah to a doer of the evil as the evil."

2Samuel
3:39

And today I [am] weak [of heart] though anointed king. These men, sons of Zeruiah, [are] more severe than me. [May] Y^howah recompense to the doer of [this] evil according to his evil."

⁸⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:38.

⁸⁹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 2Sam. 3:38–39. I did some slight editing to the text.

But, today, I am weak of heart, even though I am your anointed king. These men—these sons of Zeruiah—are more severe than me. May Jehovah recompense those responsible for this evil with evil, as is due them.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	But I as yet am tender, though anointed king. And these men the sons of Sarvia are too hard for me: the Lord reward him that does evil according to his wickedness.
Masoretic Text	And I [am] the day weak and anointed king and the men the these sons fo Zeruiah hard from me. Requite Y ^h owah to a doer of the evil as the evil."
Peshitta	And I am this day troubled, and as king I see that the sons of Zoriah are too hard for me; the LORD will reward the evil doer according to his wickedness."
Septuagint	And that I am this day a mere kinsman of his, and appointed by a king; but these men the sons of Saruia are too hard for me: the Lord reward the evil-doer according to his wickedness.

Significant differences: The LXX is radically different at first, David saying, *I am a mere kinsman of his* rather than *I am weak (troubled* in the Syriac). The Syriac does not tell us that David is the anointed king. Beyond this, the verses are equivalent.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	I am the chosen king, but Joab and Abishai have more power than I do. So God will have to pay them back for the evil thing they did."
<i>The Message</i>	And I, though anointed king, was helpless to do anything about it. These sons of Zeruiah are too much for me. GOD, requite the criminal for his crime!"
NJB	I, though anointed king, am weak at present, and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too strong for me. May Yahweh repay the criminal as his crime deserves.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	Today I'm weak, though I'm the anointed king. These men, Zeruiah's sons, are too cruel for me. May the LORD repay this evildoer as his evil deeds deserve."
HCSB	As for me, even though I am the anointed king, I have little power today. These men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too fierce for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil!"
JPS (Tanakh)	And today I am weak, even though anointed king; those men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too savage for me. May the LORD requite the wicked for their wickedness!"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And I am this day weak, though anointed [but not crowned] king; these sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me. The Lord repay the evildoer according to his wickedness!
ESV	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!"
WEB	I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me. May Yahweh reward the evil-doer according to his wickedness."
Young's Updated LT	And I today am tender, and an anointed king; and these men, sons of Zeruiah, are too hard for me; Jehovah does recompense to the doer of the evil according to his evil."

What is the gist of this verse? David claims to be weak, even as the anointed king, and that Joab and Abishai are too mean for him. Rather than enforce justice on them, David calls for Jehovah God to recompense them for their evil.

2Samuel 3:39a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
‘ânôkîy (אָנוֹכִי) [pronounced awn-oh-KEE]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
yôwm (יּוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
rak ^e (רָקָה) [pronounced rahkh]	<i>tender, delicate, soft; infirm; weak, weak of heart, timid</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #7390 BDB #940
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mâshach (מְשַׁחֵךְ) [pronounced maw-SHAHKH]	<i>anointed; inaugurated, consecrated</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #4886 BDB #602
melek ^e (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MEH-lek]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4428 BDB #572

Translation: And today I [am] weak [of heart] though anointed king. David is in a difficult position. The men responsible for the death of Abner are his nephews, the sons of his sister. He admits to being weak here, even though he is the anointed king of Judah. It is very difficult for David to properly punish his own nephews for what they have done, and he admits this publically.

Gill interprets this verse: *[That David is weak] seems to be given as a reason, or for an excuse why he did not inflict just punishment upon the murderer, according to the law of God, because he was "weak"; not in body or mind, but with respect to the kingdom, that was like a tender branch, or in its infant state; and great care and caution were to be used that it was not overturned: he was a king by unction, not by birth; a son of the late king was yet up against him, and was possessed of the far greater part of the kingdom; he was indeed anointed by Samuel to be king over all Israel; but as yet he was not put into the possession of the kingdom he was anointed to; he was anointed and made king over Judah, and invested with the office of king there, and settled in it; and yet his power was not very great there. His sister's sons, Joab and Abishai, were a check upon him; he could not do what he would, their influence was so great, both in the court and in the camp; the one was general of the army, and the other a considerable officer in it, and both variant men, and very respectable among the people, for their achievements in war, and the success they had; so that they were very much out of the reach of David to bring them to justice, without shaking his kingdom; and therefore in point of prudence he thought it best to connive at this fact until he was more established in the kingdom.⁹⁰*

⁹⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:39.

The other opinion is, his persecution of his two top generals could result in a civil war, and David's military could be turned against him. We will examine several interpretations at the end of this verse.

2Samuel 3:39b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w° (or v°) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that, so that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
`änâsîym (אָנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-seem]; also spelled `îyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
`elleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced ALE-leh]	<i>these, these things</i>	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article	Strong's #428 BDB #41
bén (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Ts°rûwyâh (צַרְעִיָּה) [pronounced tz°roo-YAW]	transliterated Zeruiah	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #6870 BDB #863
qâsheh (קָשֵׁה) [pronounced kaw-SHEH]	<i>hard, severe, difficult, fierce, intense, vehement, stiff, harsh, stubborn</i>	masculine plural adjective/noun	Strong's #7186 BDB #904
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

Translation: *These men, sons of Zeruiah, [are] more severe than me.* David says that his own nephews are more severe, fierce, vehement, harsh and/or stubborn than he is. What they have done here is cold-blooded and evil of a greater intensity than David. David has just admitted to being weak when it comes to dealing with this problem, and here he admits that these two young men are more harsh than he is. The idea is, they had no compunction when it came to executing Abner in cold blood. This is more harsh than David is able to be with them. David recognizes here that both of the sons are culpable in Abner's death, and he refers to them as the sons of his sister, Zeruiah.

Essentially, David is saying that he is unable to do to them what he ought to do; he is unable to apply the law and execute them as he should. They could coldly murder Abner, but he is unable to execute them lawfully.

In what way David is weak, we are uncertain. I don't think it is a matter of his power and authority, nor do I think we should interpret that he, as anointed king, does not have the powers of a true king. I think this should be understood in such a way to contrast with the severity of the sons of Zeruiah. David himself, as their uncle, cannot bring himself to judge and execute these two young men. The second interpretation is, if he challenges their actions, he could find himself in a civil war, as these young men have already shown themselves to be calculating, cold-blooded murderers.

John Wesley interprets this verse: *Weak - In the infancy of my kingdom, not well settled in it. The metaphor is taken from a young and tender child or plant. These men - Joab and Abishai, the sons of thy sister Zeruiah. Too hard - That is, too powerful. They have so great a command over all the soldiers, and so great favour with the people, that I cannot punish them without apparent hazard to my person and kingdom; especially, now when all the tribes, except Judah, are in a state of opposition against me. But although this might give some colour to the delay of their punishment, yet it was a fault that he did not do it within some reasonable time, both because this indulgence proceeded from a distrust of God's power and faithfulness; as if God could not make good his promise to him, against Joab and all his confederates; and because it was contrary to God's law, which severally requires the punishment of willful murderers. It was therefore carnal wicked policy, yea cruel pity that spared him. If the law had had its course against Joab, it is probable the murder of Ishbosheth, Ammon, and others, had been prevented. So truly was he in these, and some other respects, a bloody man, which may be observed to the glory of the Divine grace, in his forgiveness and conversion.*⁹¹

2Samuel 3:39c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâlêm (שָׁלֵם) [pronounced shaw-LAHM]	<i>to recompense, to repay, to restore, to complete, to make perfect, to requite</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7999 BDB #1022
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y ^e howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^{eh})	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âsâh (הָשַׁעַר) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>a doer of, a maker of, a constructor of, a fashion of, a preparer of</i>	Qal active participle, masculine plural construct	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
râ'âh (רָעָה) [pronounced raw-GAW]	<i>evil, misery, distress, disaster, injury, iniquity, aberration, that which is morally reprehensible</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7451 BDB #949
kaph or k ^e (כָּפֹה)	<i>as, like, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
râ'âh (רָעָה) [pronounced raw-GAW]	<i>evil, misery, distress, disaster, injury, iniquity, aberration, that which is morally reprehensible</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7451 BDB #949

Translation: [May] Y^ehowah recompense to the doer of [this] evil according to his evil." Because David is unable to execute his own nephews, he asks the Jehovah God properly recompense them, evil for evil. What they have done, David asks that it be done to them by God.

Matthew Henry interprets this verse: *[David] was weak, his kingdom was newly planted, and a little shake would overthrow it. Joab's family had a great interest, were bold and daring, and to make them*

⁹¹ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, 2Sam. 3:39.

*his enemies now might be of bad consequence. These sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him, too big for the law to take hold of; and therefore, though by man, by the magistrate, the blood of a murderer should be shed (Gen. 9:6), David bears the sword in vain, and contents himself, as a private person, to leave them to the judgment of God.*⁹²

Even though this may seem to properly be included with the previous statement, we need this entire verse before us in order to try to interpret it. The entire verse reads: *And today I [am] weak [of heart] though anointed king. These men, sons of Zeruiah, [are] more severe than me. [May] Y^howah recompense to the doer of [this] evil according to his evil.*

How Should We Interpret David saying “I am Weak”?

Short Interpretation	Full Explanation
David is weak of heart	David does not have the strength to try and execute his own nephews. They are, in contrast to him, severe. The problem with this interpretation is, it ignores that David says he is <i>anointed king</i> . That is, that statement is made, but it seems to be simply thrown into the sentence without reason.
David is weak politically	David is saying that he is too weak to prosecute these men, as he is only the anointed, but not actual. This is a rather weak interpretation, in my opinion.
David is weak politically	David is saying, he is weak, in that Abner had not yet brought all Israel over to him. At this point, he is only anointed king of all Israel. This statement has nothing to do with his ability to judge Joab and Abishai, but is a statement of what remains undone because of what Joab and Abishai have done. He does judge Joab and Abishai in the final line, asking the Jehovah God carry out His judgment against them.
David is weak of heart and weak politically	David is still weak, as Abner has not yet brought over all Israel to him. David's two nephews control a large portion of David's army. If David chose to prosecute these two young men, the hardness of their hearts could result in a civil war in Judah. Had the armies of Israel all shown up at this point, then David could judge them and enforce this judgment, even though his nephews controlled a battalion themselves.
David's weakness is applied to Abner.	His nephews are severe, and judged and executed Abner. David was more merciful and tender-hearted toward Abner, in part because Abner would fulfill David's desire to become king over all Israel. David then calls for God to judge his nephews.
Even though some of these interpretations sound very similar, there are some nuances here. The 4 th explanation takes into account all that we find in this verse—that David says he is weak, that he calls himself the <i>anointed</i> rather than, <i>actual</i> king; and that he calls Joab and Abishai severe. This does not mean that David made the right decision here, and we may find it easy to evaluate his decision based upon hindsight 3000 years later—but what we have here is a quotation; and therefore, this is David's explanation for his own behavior.	

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So, what about this decision of David's? No matter how we choose to interpret this verse, David showed mercy to his two nephews, and I believe that his putting this off on God means that David shirked his own legal responsibility at this time. David owed it to Israel to see that these men were impartially judged and possibly even executed. David has let these men get away with murder and they will continue to act as a law unto themselves.

Gill: *After all that can be said in favour of David, he seems to have been too much in fear of men, and too distrustful of the power and promise of God to establish him in his kingdom, and was too negligent*

⁹² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:39.

of public justice; which had it been exercised, might have prevented other sins, as the murder of Ishbosheth, to which the authors of it might be encouraged by this lenity.⁹³

Maybe all of this time, you have been wondering, *why didn't God just kill Saul and hand the kingdom over to David a long time ago?* These few verses should answer this question for you—David was not yet ready. He was, no doubt, a great man; a man of integrity, a man after God's own heart. However, he shirks his responsibility here, which is a difficult choice on his part (don't misunderstand me; I don't pretend that I would have made better choices than David did). In any case, God's timing is perfect.

Application: Now, maybe you are thinking, *well, isn't it possible that David is doing the right thing? Shouldn't we always put all of our cares on the Lord?* And, sure, that sounds holy and all, but it isn't. David is king; part of his responsibility as king is to maintain lawful behavior. He cannot allow political murders to go unpunished—that is his responsibility. We all have a variety of responsibilities in our lives. You cannot shirk your own responsibilities by saying, “God, I want you to handle this one.” Leaving this responsibility undone not only plagued David later in his administration, but, essentially on his deathbed, he told his son Solomon to take care of it (see 1Kings 2:5–6, 29–35). Bear in mind, as you move up in your vocation (or in your spiritual life), God is going to drop as many responsibilities on your lap as perks. It is up to you to deal with these responsibilities—you do not get to foist them upon God and say, “You take care of this.”

Application: So that there is no misunderstanding, there are some things over which you have no control; there are some things which are not your responsibility—those things, you drop into the Lord's lap and He will take care of them. However, what is on you must be dealt with by you.

Application: People, including believers, think that the solution to many of their problems is money. “If I just had a million dollars, I could take care of all these things; if God just increased my salary by \$300/month, I could meet my monthly obligations.” However, we have seen time and time again, people who are in financial trouble, who have a bump in salary, and yet remain in financial trouble. They keep raising their own standard of living so that it outpaces their income. The solution is, use wisely what God has given you; show integrity with God's blessings; no matter what your income is, spend that money with wisdom and integrity. Don't buy so many things so that your income and your outgo barely match. Bear in mind, you have financial obligations to God—to His missions, to His churches, to the poor. If you are not responsible to God when He gives you a small amount, what makes you think that you will become more responsible to Him when He gives you a large amount?

Application: Part of raising a teenager is giving them small amounts of freedom, and letting them function under this freedom, which involves additional responsibilities. This is what a normal parent does for his teenage son or daughter. The exact balance of control and freedom is nebulous, and will vary from child to child, but there is a balance. When a teen is given additional freedom—a car (which they may have to purchase themselves), an extended curfew, less pressure about their school work—the teen must understand that with this increased freedom comes increased responsibility. The teen who steps up to the responsibility gets more freedom; the teen who ignores their responsibilities, gets freedoms taken away. Recognize that God will function the same way with us—often, He will give us more as we show ourselves to be responsible with what He has given us so far. Now, this does not mean that God is going to bestow upon every responsible believer a Trump fortune because we are so good with money—God, at the same time, has given us the ability to be content with what things He has given us. However, in principle, it is the same thing—with additional blessings come additional responsibilities. Wherever you find yourself in life, you need to take seriously the blessings which God has given you, and to recognize the responsibility which is a part and parcel of these blessings.

⁹³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 2Sam. 3:39.