

Joab and Abner

2 Samuel 2:1 – 3:5

by Don Falkos

copyright 2017 Donald Falkos Storytelling LLC

David and his men moved to Hebron. The leaders of Judah anointed David as king of their tribe. Meanwhile, Saul's surviving son, Ish-Bosheth, was made king over all the other tribes of Israel. Abner, who had been Saul's military commander, retained that position under Ish-Bosheth. Joab was the leader of David's army. Abner and Joab led their men to Gibeon.

Abner suggested, "Let's have a few of our men fight hand to hand here in front of us." Twelve men were chosen from each side. They faced off. Then each man grabbed his opponent and stabbed him in the side. They all died together. A fierce battle followed. Abner and his men were defeated and ran away.

Joab's brother was a very fast runner. He ran after Abner. Abner shouted at him, "Stop chasing me! I don't want to kill you. I would never be able to face your brother again." He refused to turn back, so Abner thrust the butt end of his spear all the way through the young man's body. He fell to the ground and died.

Abner's scattered troops regrouped. Then he called to Joab, "We must stop killing each other! The only result of this fighting will be bitterness between our tribes – Israelite against Israelite." Joab blew the ram's horn, and the battle ended. Both armies went back home, and Joab buried his brother.

The war between those loyal to Saul and those loyal to David lasted a long time. David became stronger and stronger, while Saul's dynasty became weaker and weaker. During the time David was in Hebron he took more wives and had six sons, one by each of his six wives.