

2 Samuel Chapter 9

Verses 9:1 – 20:26

These chapters now begin with “the house of Saul” (9:1), and end with “Sheba ... a Benjamite” (see 20:1).

As with Saul, David is shown to be a failed king, albeit a repentant failure.

It was only the grace and mercy of the LORD and His irrevocable covenant that kept David from being removed from the kingship, as Saul had been (7:15).

The emphasis in this section is upon the troubles of David, troubles brought on by his own sin.

(In verses 1-13), David remembered his promise to Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:15, 42), and sought out a descendant to whom he could show kindness.

The grace of David’s actions is accentuated by the fact that “Mephibosheth” was a member of Saul’s family, and some that was in David’s position might have suspected Jonathon’s son of wanting the throne.

The next episode of Mephibosheth’s story is recorded (in 16:1-4 and 19:24-30).

2 Samuel 9:1 "And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

“Shew him kindness for Jonathan’s sake”:

David continued to display loving loyalty toward Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:42), by ministering to the physical needs of his crippled son, Mephibosheth (4:4).

The “kindness” of “David” related to the covenant bond into which he and Jonathan had entered, (see the note on 1 Sam. 20:14-17).

David’s kindly behavior toward “Jonathan’s” helpless son in raising him from a lowly state and providing for his every need stands as an illustration of God’s own grace to men in their need (Eph. 2:4-7).

At the time of this chapter, it had been somewhere between 15 and 20 years after the battle that Jonathan and Saul died in.

David had made a covenant with Jonathan to watch after his family.

All of these years since the death of Jonathan, David had been extremely busy in wars and establishing himself as king of all Israel.

David is finally secure in his office as king and looks for Jonathan's family.

2 Samuel 9:2 "And [there was] of the house of Saul a servant whose name [was] Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, [Art] thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant [is he]."

“Ziba”:

A former servant of Saul, who is first mentioned here.

Mephibosheth (Jonathan’s son) was unknown to David during this period of time.

He had not even known of his birth, much less his survival, that’s when both his father and grandfather were killed.

It appears that it came to David's attention that someone who had worked in the house of Saul was now with them.

David sent for Ziba (Saul's servant).

David still had kind feelings toward Saul, Jonathan, and their tribe.

He possibly thought he might help Ziba.

David wants to help all who are left of Jonathan or Saul.

2 Samuel 9:3 "And the king said, [Is] there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, [which is] lame on [his] feet."

In extending kindness to Mephibosheth, who was crippled and in need of mercy, David exemplified the “kindness of God,” who shows mercy to all who are crippled spiritually by sin and longing for grace (Rom. 5:6-8; Eph. 2:8-9).

David even gave God credit for the kindness that was in his heart toward Jonathan and Saul and their descendants.

We know this must have been good news to David that his best friend did have a child that he might help.

He would certainly need the help of David, since he is lame.

2 Samuel 9:4 "And the king said unto him, Where [is] he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he [is] in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar."

“Machir, the son of Ammiel”:

A man of wealth (see 17:22-29).

“Lo-debar”:

A city located in Gilead, east of the Jordan, about 10 miles south of the Sea of Galilee.

Machir, it seemed, had cared for Jonathan in his home.

He seemed to be a wealthy man, who had a very generous heart.

Later, we will see his father, Ammiel; befriend David when he is having trouble with Absalom.

Lo-debar is probably the same as Debir, which is in Gilead north of the river Jabbok.

2 Samuel 9:5 "Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar."

Messengers; it may be Ziba, none being more proper than he that knew him, and where he was.

"And fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lode bar”:

They demanded him in the king's name, and being delivered to them, they brought him from thence to Jerusalem.

At the time this happened, he would have been glad to come, because David had become a very famous and powerful king.

2 Samuel 9:6 "Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!"

“Mephibosheth”:

See the notes on 2:8-11 and 4:4.

Mephibosheth had no idea why David had sent for him.

It was the general rule, that the king, who takes the throne, destroys all the members of the family they replace to keep them from coming back to power.

Mephibosheth thinks he will be killed.

He bows to David to show he recognizes him as king.

He even speaks of himself as the servant of David, to show he is not trying to take the throne from David.

David's love for Jonathan is possibly, in the tone of voice he speaks his son's name.

2 Samuel 9:7 "And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually."

“Restore thee all the land of Saul”:

The estate belonging to Saul was probably quite substantial.

“Eat bread at my table”:

David desired to honor Mephibosheth by bringing him into the royal palace and providing for his daily needs (2 Kings 25:29).

David went above and beyond what could have been expected, returning the family property, appointing servants for Mephibosheth, and allowing him to eat “at” his “table.”

It was a very high honor to eat at the king's table and be his friend.

Mephibosheth is certainly relieved that he is not to be killed.

In his wildest dreams, he never expected to get back his grandfather's land.

This will not please Ziba because he held some of this land.

David leaves no doubt, the reason he is doing this is in memory of his old friend Jonathan.

2 Samuel 9:8 "And he bowed himself, and said, What [is] thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I [am]?"

“Dead dog”:

A “dead dog” was considered contemptible and useless.

Mephibosheth saw himself as such in that he knew that he had not merited David’s kindness and that there was no way for him to repay it.

David’s offer was an extraordinary expression of grace and beauty of his covenant with Jonathan (1 Sam. 18:3; 20:15, 42).

For the phrase “dead dog” (see the note on 1 Sam. 24:14).

Mephibosheth had a very low opinion of himself it seems.

This could however, be a way of expressing the difference in the station of the king and himself.

Compared to the king, he was the dog.

It also is a very unusual way of saying thank you.

Mephibosheth is very well aware that this is not deserved, but freely given.

2 Samuel 9:9 "Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house."

“Ziba”:

Who had been his servant.

"And said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son":

Meaning either, as some, the son of Mephibosheth, Micha after mentioned; or rather Mephibosheth himself, the grandson of Saul, whose servant Ziba had been.

"All that pertained to Saul, and to all his house”:

All his paternal estate, or what he had acquired, or in any wise belonged to him and his family.

Which David had in possession, and which he readily and cheerfully delivered up to Mephibosheth, having so great a regard to the memory of his father.

This was a very sad day for Ziba. This is a total restoration of the personal holdings of Saul.

Of course, the statement master's son actually means grandson.

By a few words spoken by David, Mephibosheth is a rich man with many servants.

2 Samuel 9:10 "Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in [the fruits], that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread always at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants."

“Fifteen sons and twenty servants”:

This number shows the power and influence of Ziba.

It also shows that the land given by David was substantial.

All of these are now to serve Mephibosheth.

He would now live in Jerusalem, as a very rich man.

The crops from the land will be cultivated and harvested by Ziba's sons and servants and the wealth from it will belong to Mephibosheth.

This does not mean that Ziba's family will have nothing.

It does mean they will not have it all as before.

2 Samuel 9:11 "Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, [said the king], he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons."

Till the land, and bring the fruits of it to Mephibosheth, for the support of his family; he promised to be fair, as he had been as faithful to his trust.

"As for Mephibosheth, said the king, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons":

Which is repeated, for the confirmation of it, and to show that he should be treated with equal respect, and fare as the king's sons themselves did.

Though the clause "said the king" is not in the original text, and the words are thought by Abarbanal and others to be the words of Ziba continued.

Who promised to do what the king had ordered, though Mephibosheth had eaten at his table, as one of the king's sons, and needed not anything, and needed not to eat at the king's table.

And if it was his pleasure, he would maintain him out of this estate like the son of a king.

But the phrase "my table" seems to be too arrogant for Ziba to say, and rather fits the mouth of David the king.

We see the rank and privilege that went with eating at the king's table.

He is now a prince, like all the sons of the king.

We see that David's rule was absolute, because Ziba gave no argument back.

2 Samuel 9:12 "And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name [was] Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba [were] servants unto Mephibosheth."

"Micha":

The descendants of Micah, the son of Mephibosheth, are listed (in 1 Chron. 8:35-38; 9:41-44).

2 Samuel 9:13 "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: For he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet."

Either in some apartments in the king's palace, or in some house in the city provided for him; for he returned not to Lode-bar, nor to any mansion house upon the estate, of Saul restored unto him.

"For he did eat continually at the king's table":

To which he was invited, and he accepted of.

"And was lame on both his feet":

Or "though" he was, yet this was no objection to David, he admitted him notwithstanding his infirmity; or any obstruction to Mephibosheth, who found ways and means to be carried to the king's table daily.

This crippled son of Jonathan had a family.

His family lived in the house of Ziba and all of Ziba's people were servant to Mephibosheth.

2 Samuel Chapter 9 Questions

1. What inquiry does David make in verse 1?
2. How long had it been, since Jonathan had died until this inquiry was made?
3. Why had David not tried to find Jonathan's family earlier?
4. Who did they find, that had been servant to Saul?
5. Who was Mephibosheth?
6. Was David aware that Jonathan had a son, when he called Ziba before him?
7. Why did David inquire of the family of Saul?
8. Who was the one the servant mentioned?
9. What physical ailment did he have?
10. Where was this son of Jonathan staying?
11. What does Ammiel do for David later?
12. Where were they living?
13. Why would Mephibosheth not run away, instead of coming to David?
14. What did he do, when he came into David's presence?

15. What are the first two words David says to him?
16. What does David give him?
17. What does he call himself in verse 8?
18. What are some of the possibilities, why he called himself this?
19. Who did David call, to carry out the things David had given Mephibosheth?
20. What will happen to Ziba and his family?
21. How many sons did Ziba have?
22. Where shall Mephibosheth eat?
23. What rank goes with eating at the king's table?
24. What was the name of the son of Mephibosheth?