

SECOND SAMUEL

Chapter 9

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" 2 Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant." 3 And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet." 4 The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar." 5 Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar. 6 And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant." 7 And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always." 8 And he paid homage and said, "What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?" 9 Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. 10 And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall always eat at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. 11 Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's[a] table, like one of the king's sons. 12 And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants. 13 So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet.

9:1–20:26 These chapters, together with 1Ki 1:1–2:46, are often referred to as the "Court History of David" and hailed as one of the finest examples of historical narrative to have been produced in the ancient world. Their intimate and precise detail marks them as the work of an eyewitness. (CSB)

9:1–13 The events of this chapter cannot be dated precisely, but they occurred a number of years after David's capture of Jerusalem. Mephibosheth was five years old at the time of his father's death (4:4); now he has a son of his own (v. 12). (CSB)

9:1 *I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake.* David has not forgotten his promise to Jonathan (see 1Sa 20:15, 42). (CSB)

David's desire to show kindness went beyond his promise; it came from the deep, brotherly love he and Jonathan shared. (TLSB)

9:2 *Ziba.* The chief steward of Saul's estate, which had been inherited by Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, Saul's firstborn (see 16:1–4; 19:17). (CSB)

9:3 *is there not still someone of the house of Saul.* Saul had other descendants (see 21:8), but Ziba mentions only the one in whom David would be chiefly interested. (CSB)

9:4 *Makir*. Apparently a wealthy benefactor of Mephibosheth who later also came to David's aid (17:27). (CSB)

Lo Debar. A town deep in Gileadite territory in Transjordan (Jos 13:26, "Debir"), far from the family estate and from David's court. (CSB)

Lit, "no pasture." (TLSB)

9:6 *Mephibosheth*. Lit, "exterminator of shame," i.e., of idols. (TLSB)

9:7 *restore to you*. The property Saul had acquired as king had either been taken over by David, or Ziba as steward had virtually taken possession of it and was profiting from its income (see 16:1–4; 19:26–30). (CSB)

you shall eat at my table always. More a matter of high honor than economic assistance. Mephibosheth's general financial needs were to be cared for by the produce of Saul's estate (v. 10). (CSB)

Land would provide income for Mephibosheth He would become part of the royal court. See note, 1Ki 2:7. (TLSB)

9:8 *dead dog such as I*. An expression of deep self-abasement. The author has used the "dead dog" motif with great effect. First Goliath, scornfully disdaining the young warrior David, asks, "Am I a dog ...?" (1Sa 17:43)—and unwittingly foreshadows his own end. Then David, in a self-deprecating manner, describes himself as a "dead dog" (1Sa 24:14) to suggest to Saul that the king of Israel should not consider him worth so much attention. In the Nabal episode, that "dog" (a Calebite) and his sudden death characterize Saul and foreshadow his unhappy end (see note on 1Sa 25:3). Here a grandson of Saul and in 16:9 a relative of the dead king who curses David are similarly described. For the author, "dead dog" fittingly characterizes those who foolishly scorn or oppose the Lord's anointed, while David's own self-deprecating (see 1Sa 18:18; 2Sa 7:18) is conducive to his exaltation. (CSB)

9:10 Ziba had probably already been living on and farming Saul's lands in Gibeah. (TLSB)

servants. Common for the chief servant to have servants of his own. (TLSB)

9:12 *Mica*. See 1Ch 8:35–39 for his descendants. (CSB)

Possible contender for the throne. Cf 1Ch 8:34–40. (TLSB)

Ch 9 David learns that Jonathan's son is alive and immediately gives him the lands of Saul and brings him to dine at his table for the rest of his life. We should show such love to our potential enemies. Just as David invites Mephibosheth to eat at his table, the Lord Jesus invites us to eat at His table, where He serves us His body and blood. He provides the Holy Spirit to strengthen us. • Gracious Lord, thank You for loving us, providing for us, and sending Your servant to tend and keep us until our Lord Christ's return. Amen. (TLSB)