

SECOND SAMUEL

Chapter 9

David and Mephibosheth

David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" ² Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" "Your servant," he replied. ³ The king asked, "Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?" Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet." ⁴ "Where is he?" the king asked. Ziba answered, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar." ⁵ So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. ⁶ When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "Your servant," he replied. ⁷ "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table." ⁸ Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" ⁹ Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. ¹⁰ You and your sons and your servants are to farm the land for him and bring in the crops, so that your master's grandson may be provided for. And Mephibosheth, grandson of your master, will always eat at my table." (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.) ¹¹ Then Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do whatever my lord the king commands his servant to do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. ¹² Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica, and all the members of Ziba's household were servants of Mephibosheth. ¹³ And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king's table, and he was crippled in both 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 can 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 *There is still a son of Jonathan*. 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 (see note on 2:8). (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 will always eat at my table. 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 like me*. An expression of deep self-abasement. The author has used the "dead dog" motif with great effect. First Goliath, scornfully disdain 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)