

2 Samuel 9 • From Outside to Inside

Introduction

Nearly every character and story in the Old Testament teaches us something greater concerning the character of God, the work of the Messiah, and the work of God on behalf of mankind. This is called a “type”, wherein Scripture is revealing something deeper about the work and character of God. For instance, Joseph is a “type” of Christ at His first coming, David a “type” of Christ at His second coming. In 2 Samuel 9 we could learn a lot just by accepting the story for its literal value of how to treat others; however, the characters all represent greater spiritual types that teach us something about the greater work and character of God for all eternity.

¹Then David said, “Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”

²Now 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.”

³The king said, “Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?”

And Ziba said to the king, “There is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet.”

[Read v.1-3]

[Note: “Mephibosheth” is pronounced meh-FIB-oh-sheth.]

Q: In verse 1, why does David ask the question about anyone left in Saul’s house? What had happened to Jonathan, and what was the nature of the pact between Jonathan and David?

A: Saul had four sons: Jonathan, Abinadab, Malchi-shua, and Ish-bosheth. The first three sons died with Saul on the battlefield against the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:2). The fourth son, however, was either too weak or too cowardly to go to war, and it was he who Abner declared king of “Israel” (nearly all the tribes other than Judah, the tribe David was from; see 2 Samuel 2:8-10.) Abner, of course, was really the one in charge and he was fanatically faithful to King Saul, the Lord’s anointed. That is why David had so much respect for him. When David and Jonathan were pals, they made a pact (1 Samuel 20:14-17, 42) that they would look after each others “descendants” (literally “seed”) forever. In asking if there is anyone left in the house of Saul, David is also fulfilling his covenant with Jonathan.

Q: In verse 1, what is it that David wants to show to the house of Saul? What is the meaning of the word and how often is it used in chapter 9?

A: “Kindness.” The word is used 3 times (v.1, 3, 7). In the Hebrew, the word is **hesed** which is translated in other places as “loving-kindness,” “grace,” “mercy,” “favor,” and numerous other related ways. It’s basic meaning is that favor is shown out of the goodness of one’s heart, not because it is earned or deserved. **Hesed** is the OT equivalent of the NT word translated “grace,” which we generally understand to mean “unmerited favor.”

Application: Begin to make application. A king is seeking out someone to show kindness to. How is this similar to the actions and character of God Himself?

Q: In verse 1, for whose sake is David desirous of showing “kindness”?

A: For Jonathan’s sake. Jonathan put his life on the line for David’s sake, and in a sense, died for the unworthy (Saul).

Application: How do Jonathan and Saul teach us something about the work of the Messiah? (Jonathan as a type of Christ, the house of Saul as a type of mankind.)

Q: In verse 2, we are introduced to a servant by the name of Ziba. What is the nature of Ziba’s response? Ziba fulfills the desires of the King and knows all about Mephibosheth. Who does that make Ziba a type of?

A: Ziba’s response is immediate and precise. He is fully trusting of the King. Ziba is a type of arch-angel.

⁴So the king said to him, “Where is he?”
And Ziba said to the king, “Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar.”

⁵Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

⁶Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, “Mephibosheth.”

And he said, “Here is your servant!”

⁷David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly.”

Q: How is Ziba’s answer to David qualified in verse 3, and why? How did this crippling take place?

A: Ziba qualifies Jonathan’s son’s existence with the phrase “*who is crippled in both feet.*” Ziba is probably shaking in his boots, having been a servant in the household of Saul and fearing for his own life. He is informing David, however, that Jonathan’s son, being crippled in both feet, is not a threat to the throne, because (1) being crippled in both feet makes him an unlikely warrior, and (2) being thus deformed, he is not qualified to become king. Neither can he enter the Temple according to Old Testament Law.

[Read v.4-5]

Q: Is there anything significant in where Mephibosheth is now living?

A: Only that it is in the Transjordan area which, technically speaking, is not in the original boundaries of the Promised Land.

[Read v.6]

Q: How did Mephibosheth enter into the presence of the King?

A: He paid him homage and absolute respect. Culturally, anyone with a deformity was considered unworthy to come into the presence of a king, and spiritually unworthy to enter the Temple.

Q: How did David address Jonathan’s son, and what was his response? Do you see any similarities with other incidents recorded in Scripture?

A: David calls him by name, and Mephibosheth answers, “*Here is your servant!*” (similar to “*Here am I!*”). [Cross reference if you wish Genesis 22:1; Exodus 3:4; 1 Samuel 3:4; Isaiah 6:8.] It’s the similar response of those called by God, furthering the analogy of David and Mephibosheth as spiritual types that teach us something greater than just the surface level of the story.

[Read v.7]

Q: How does David address Mephibosheth? What are the three promises David makes to Mephibosheth, and where have we seen these before?

A: He says, “*Do not fear....*” (Ever heard that phrase before?) The three promises include the man, the land, and the clan.

- **The Man:** David will show loving-kindness (unmerited favor) to Mephibosheth because of David’s relationship with Jonathan.
- **The Land:** David will restore to him all the land that Saul’s house owned.
- **The Clan:** David will treat him like his own son, including him in his family and allowing him to eat at his table. We’ve seen these three promises given to Abraham by God.

Note: these are all unconditional promises. Mephibosheth did not ask for them; they all came out of the goodness of David’s heart.

Application: *What does this teach us about the work of the Messiah, both in His First and Second Coming?*

⁸Again he prostrated himself and said, “What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me?”

[Read v.8]

Q: What was Mephibosheth’s response in verse 8?

A: He acknowledges his unworthiness. Dogs of any kind are not highly regarded in Scripture. In fact, the Gentiles were often referred to by the Jews as the equivalent of dogs (e.g., Matt. 7:6; 15:26-27).

Application: *Mephibosheth is like all who were once exiled and dead, but now made alive again by the call of the King. God’s grace extends to everyone.*

⁹Then the king called Saul’s servant Ziba and said to him, “All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master’s grandson. ¹⁰You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in the produce so that your master’s grandson may have food; nevertheless Mephibosheth your master’s grandson shall eat at my table regularly.” Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

[Read v.9-10]

Q: What did David instruct Ziba to do? What would this be a type of?

A: Ziba and his house are instructed to take care of Mephibosheth. Ziba would be a type of arch-angel and his sons and servants, angels.

Q: However, what is the greater instruction? The greater change for Mephibosheth personally?

A: To regularly eat at the king’s table. Much more than just his basic needs being taken care of, Mephibosheth was brought into fellowship—a real relationship—with the king.

¹¹Then Ziba said to the king, “According to all that my lord the king commands his servant so your servant will do.” So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table as one of the king’s sons.

[Read v.11]

Q: What was Mephibosheth’s privilege in verse 11, and what is that figurative of?

A: Mephibosheth is a type of sinner who has been crippled by sin. Through no achievement or accomplishment or goodness of his own, the King (God) has called him in and shown favor upon him for the sake of Jonathan (Jesus). Mephibosheth is now treated as a son of the King.

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

—Romans 8:16-17

¹²Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth. ¹³So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate at the king's table regularly. Now he was lame in both feet.

[Read v.12-13]

Q: Where does Mephibosheth live out his life (v. 13)?

A: He used to live in the Transjordan (technically, outside the Promised Land). He now lives in Jerusalem.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

—Revelation 21:1-4

Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

—Revelation 22:1-5

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

—Revelation 22:12-17