

# Mephibosheth

Last month we covered nine Old Testament rituals which were followed when two people entered into a blood covenant. We also discussed that most of these rituals were carried out in the covenant that David made with Saul's son Jonathan.

One other point we mentioned was that these covenants were binding from generation to generation. The covenant between David and Jonathan is an example of this perpetuity.

In chapters 18-20 of I Samuel, we find that Saul had become jealous of David and wanted to kill him. David was forced to leave Saul's palace and go into hiding. Thus, he and Jonathan were separated.

Before David left, he and Jonathan plotted to meet each other (I Samuel 20) Verse 41 gives an account of the first secret meeting between the two. *"And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded."*

The word "exceeded" actually means "overwhelmed." David cried so violently that he could not control himself. He was overwhelmed because he loved Jonathan, his covenant brother, as he loved himself.

Their friendship is a type of the day when Jesus, on the cross, entered into a covenant with us. Just as David and Jonathan were separated, so are we physically separated from Jesus. We are on earth and He is in heaven, but our hearts yearn to see Him. When we do rise to meet Jesus in the air, I'll probably be so overwhelmed and overcome with emotion when I stand before Him in heaven, that I will cry. This is scriptural, because the Bible says He's going to have to dry away all tears.

This covenant between Jonathan and David was an everlasting covenant that applied to future generations. In I Chronicles 8:34, we learn that Jonathan had one son, Meribbaal. Actually, that is a Caldean word; his Hebrew name is

Mephibosheth. The covenant between David and Jonathan was rightfully to pass from Jonathan to Mephibosheth after Jonathan's death.

After Saul, Jonathan, and all his brothers were killed in battle, David took the throne. But, he has not forgotten the covenant nor his love for Jonathan. Therefore, David takes the initiative and seeks out anyone of the house of Saul. *"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?" (II Samuel 9:1)*

Ziba, a former servant in the house of Saul, tells him of Jonathan's son, *"...which is lame on his feet"(II Samuel 9:36).*

In II Samuel 4:4, we learn how Mephibosheth became lame. At this time Saul and his sons were dying in battles and the house of Saul was crumbling. When Mephibosheth's nurse heard all this bad news, she realized that David would take the throne. Furthermore, because she believed Saul's lies that David was the cause of Israel's problems, she feared that the child would be killed. *"And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jesreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth." (II Samuel 4:4)*

The name Mephibosheth means "a shameful thing." He became "a shameful thing" after his nurse tripped and dropped him during a fear-filled flight. Since that time the child had been living in Lodebar (dry places) in the house of Machir (salesman). In other words, he's crippled, living in the desert, and being sold a bill of goods! All these years his nurse and whomever he had been staying with had been telling him over and over again, "The reason you live in this dump is because of David. The reason your feet are lame is because of David. David did this to you." And the boy grew up hating and fearing the household of David. Furthermore, he was living in ignorance, not knowing of the covenant that was drawn up between his father Jonathan and David.

Mephibosheth is a type of a person in the world. The devil dropped him one day and in the fall, his feet became lame and all this time the devil has been telling him, "God did this to you and it's all God's fault that you're this way. It's

God's fault you can't get off the ground. It's God's fault you've never done anything right. It's God's fault that your family is falling apart. It's God's fault for this economy. It's God's fault for all the wars and rumors of wars around the world." Sadly, the man in the world believes the devil because he doesn't even know about the covenant that was drawn up before he was ever born. Does this sound like you? For years, ignorant of what God had done? Blaming God for your situation? Thinking God was the culprit? Being sold a bill of goods? Living in dry places?

Happily, like you, Mephibosheth didn't live in ignorance forever. *"Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar."* (II Samuel 9:5)

An important point to notice is that David (who now had everything to lose and nothing to gain) took the initiative and "fetched" Mephibosheth! Like Mephibosheth, the ignorant sinner doesn't take the initiative. Aren't you glad there was a day when Jesus came out and found you, and literally picked you up and escorted you into the kingdom.

*"Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence."* (II Samuel 9:6a) Mephibosheth probably thought that he was going to be killed.

But *"...David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!"* (II Samuel 9:6b) Aren't you glad David called him by name? Likewise, Jesus knows our names.

Verse 7 of II Samuel 9 tells us what David did for Mephibosheth and why he did it. *"And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew 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."*

You see, David is honoring the covenant. He knows he will get nothing in return from Mephibosheth. The boy is poor and has been living in a shack in the desert. He has nothing to offer a king. Why, he wouldn't even make a good servant because he is lame in both his feet.

Mephibosheth is just like we were when we came to Jesus! What did we have to offer Him? Nothing! All our righteousness before Him is as filthy rags.

David's bringing in Mephibosheth and saying to him, "I'm going to restore everything to you that your father lost" is similar to our being given everything Adam lost. Like Mephibosheth, we fell and our feet became lame. From that time on, satan, the great salesman, has sold us a bill of goods, and we have blamed God for our "lame feet." Weren't you surprised one day when you came to God and found out He was a God of goodness?

Don't you know that when Mephibosheth was lying prostrate before David, his mouth hung open? Don't you know he kept thinking, "This couldn't be right. Everything I have ever heard was how bad you were, how you killed everybody, how you were out looking for me." He was overwhelmed by the generosity of David as he was offered everything that David had.

Mephibosheth's reaction to David is found in verse 8. *"And he bowed himself, and said, 'What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?'"*

Verse 9 says, *"Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant..."* In other words, David totally ignored what Mephibosheth said. There is nothing wrong with realizing that in the sight of God you're nothing. But, if you go around confessing before God that you're a worm of the dust and undeserving of all God's blessings, He cannot agree with you. He'll turn His ears from that. You may have nothing *before* you came to the Lord, but the moment you walked through the front door of His kingdom, you became the righteousness of God in Him.

What did David say to Ziba? *"...I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him." (II Samuel 9:9b-10a)*

Not only did David give back all the lands that Saul lost, but he also told Mephibosheth that he would not even have to work it. The servants that Mephibosheth got were Saul's servants who had come to work under David. David received all the servants and then gave them back to Mephibosheth. He

gave him all the land, and servants to work it so that Mephibosheth could stay in the house and eat the good of the land. All Mephibosheth had to do was be a good steward of what they brought him from the field.

When you came to the Lord Jesus Christ, He gave you back the earth and all the fullness thereof. What was lost under Adam has now been restored to the Church. Jesus gave it to you, but the beautiful thing is, He gave you all His servants to go out and till the land and bring you back the good of the land. That's not a bad deal is it? When I came to the Lord Jesus, He gave me angels and said that they were to do my bidding. He says angels respond to the voice of His Word. Furthermore, we are to send angels and messengers out into the field to do the bidding of God for us. And then, as it says here, they will bring back the fruits of it. *"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."* (II Samuel 9:10) Mephibosheth now had thirty-six people to go to work and till the land for him while he sat there and ate continually at David's table.

*"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."* (II Samuel 9:11)

It was necessary for David to make it clear to Ziba and for Ziba to make it clear to the other servants that Mephibosheth was to be treated as the king's son because there may have been a tendency for other servants in David's household to look down on Mephibosheth as the poor lame upstart who was taken out of the dry places.

Because of our position in Christ Jesus, angels don't hold anything over us. We are children in the house of God; angels are servants. They might be bigger than we are. They might have been around a lot longer, but we have been given special privileges in the house of God. There's coming a day we will rise to meet Jesus in the air and sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Guess who's going to serve this supper? The angels will be serving us. Furthermore,

we'll sit right next to the Son! In II Samuel 9:12, 13 we further read, "*And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha. And all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth. So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.*"

At the first mention of Mephibosheth and at the last mention, the fact that he was lame in both his feet is brought out. His feet being lame is not a type of divine healing. It is simply bringing up that his "walk" did not *get* him into the castle. His "walk" did not *keep* him in the castle. He was brought into the castle because of the covenant that was drawn up between David and Jonathan.

Just as Mephibosheth probably stumbled, we have all stumbled and fallen. Yet, despite our falling, a place is still prepared for us at the table of God. Have you ever noticed that when you're sitting around the table, you can't see your feet. The table of God hides all your blemishes, your faults, your failures. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, continually cleanses you from all sin. Some of you have been out of fellowship with God for a year, two years, a month, two weeks, a number of days. And because you've fallen, you're running around listening to the liar, the devil, who is selling you a bill of goods saying, "You'll never be as good as you used to be. The covenant is no good for you anymore." He has you right back out in the dry places again. I just want to tell you the table is still prepared. All you have to do is walk through the door of I John 1:9, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins,*" and the blood covenant will cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Then we can slide up to the table right next to Jesus because it wasn't our good works that got us in and it's not our good works that keep us in. We got in only because of the covenant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 6:17 tells us that God so wanted to show His immutability or His unchangingness to His children, the heirs of the promise, that He confirmed it by an oath. An oath is a covenant. God so wanted to enter into covenant with *you*, He so much wanted to show *you* how unchanging He was, that He swore to it by an oath.

The eighteenth verse goes on to say, *"That by two immutable things..."* God is immutable. He cannot change. God wanted to enter into covenant with you, but He couldn't. Covenants are only as strong as the weakest personality. Since we have crippled feet, God couldn't enter into covenant with us. He had to find somebody who did not have a crippled foot. Therefore, God the Father entered into covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ. They are both immutable. Like Mephibosheth, we merely walked into a covenant which cannot be broken and which cannot be changed.

Jesus now offers the completed covenant to us and says, "Get in on it. If you blow it, you can't break it. If you miss it, you can't break it. You didn't get in because you had good feet. You don't stay in because you have good feet. You get in because I have good feet. You can't walk it, but I did. I already walked it. Get in here and flow with me and I'll take you." *"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. "* (Hebrews 13:20-21)

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