

The Mephibosheth story in 2 Samuel

Saul's son **Jonathan had a son who was crippled in his feet**. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled; and, in her haste to flee, it happened that he fell and became lame. His **name was Mephibosheth**. (4.4)

Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, and fell on his face and did obeisance. David said, "Mephibosheth!" He answered, "I am your servant." David said to him, "Do not be afraid, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan; I will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul, and you yourself shall eat at my table always." He did obeisance and said, "What is your servant, that you should look upon a dead dog such as I?" Then the **king summoned 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. You and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him, and shall bring in the produce, so that your master's grandson may have food to eat; but your master's grandson Mephibosheth shall always eat at my table."** Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so your servant will do." Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons. Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in Ziba's house became Mephibosheth's servants. Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he always ate at the king's table. Now he was lame in both his feet. (9.6-13)

When David had passed a little beyond the summit, **Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him**, with a couple of donkeys saddled, carrying two hundred loaves of bread, one hundred bunches of raisins, one hundred of summer fruits, and one skin of wine. The king said to Ziba, "Why have you brought these?" Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine is for those to drink who faint in the wilderness." **The king said, "And where is your master's son?" Ziba said to the king, "He remains in Jerusalem; for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will give me back my grandfather's kingdom.'" Then the king said to Ziba, "All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours."** Ziba said, "I do obeisance; let me find favor in your sight, my lord the king." (16.1-4)

Mephibosheth grandson of Saul came down to meet the king; he had not taken care of his feet, or trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes, from the day the king left until the day he came back in safety. When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, **the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"** He answered, "**My lord, O king, my servant deceived me**; for your servant said to him, 'Saddle a donkey for me, so that I may ride on it and go with the king.' For your servant is lame. He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you. For all my father's house were doomed to death before my lord the king; but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. What further right have I, then, to appeal to the king?" The king said to him, "Why speak any more of your affairs? **I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land.**" Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him take it all, since my lord the king has arrived home safely." (19.24-30)

But **the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the oath of YHWH that was between them, between David and Jonathan son of Saul. The king took the two sons of Rizpah** daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; **and the five sons of Merab daughter of Saul**, whom she bore to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite; he gave them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they **impaled them on the mountain before YHWH**. The seven of them perished together. They were put to death in the first days of harvest, at the beginning of barley harvest. (21.7-9)